



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards (Corporate Issue)

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

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|---|-------------------------|
| Social Services And Personal Health Scrutiny Committee | 21 February 2002 |
| Education And Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee | 13 March 2002 |
| Cabinet | 25 March 2002 |

QUALITY PROTECTS YEAR 4 - CHILDREN'S SERVICES GRANT

Report of the Director of Social Services

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to submit the Quality Protects Management Action Plan (MAP) for 2002/2003, and to outline the process of implementing the Plan.

2. Summary

2.1 Quality Protects is a national initiative intended to transform children's social services and improve the life chances of all children in need. The key elements of the programme are:

- Eleven national objectives, which set out clearly what the Government aims to achieve for children in need;
- A requirement to submit a satisfactory annual MAP upon which the receipt of grant depends. A major emphasis is on performance indicators in terms of measurement and improvement;
- The Children's Services Grant to be spent on specified priorities varying year on year;
- An important role for Elected Members.

The Quality Protects programme has been extended from three to five years (1999 – 2004) in recognition of the fact that a longer time is needed to produce the required improved outcomes, and to progress the developing Government agenda.

2.2 Two of the objectives continue to receive special priority this year with ring-fenced grant:-

- Objective 5: to ensure that young people leaving care as they enter adulthood, are not isolated and participate socially and economically as citizens. The enhanced grant is intended to enable the implementation of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 from October 2001.
- Objective 6: to ensure that children with specific social needs arising out of a disability or a health condition are living in families or other appropriate settings in the community where their assessed needs are adequately met and reviewed.

This impacts on the overall Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) for Children's Services, as tranches of the SSA have been transferred to the Children's Services Grant.

2.3 A further small ring-fenced grant will be received in years 4 and 5 for capital expenditure on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for looked after children.

2.4 Objective 7 aims to ensure that referral and assessment processes discriminate effectively between types and levels of need, and produce a timely response. The implementation of the new assessment framework from April 2001 continues to have significant impact on staffing, service delivery, training and financial resources. Leicester Social Services Department will integrate the Heritage Model for the assessment of black and ethnic minority families into the framework.

2.5 Since November 2001, officers from Social Services Department in conjunction with staff from other City Council Departments, health agencies and the voluntary sector have been preparing the MAP i.e. following issue of Department of Health guidance in late November. Various service users and carers have also been consulted.

2.6 Member involvement in this process has been through the cross-party Quality Protects Working Party. Following the approval of the MAP by the Cabinet Lead for Social Services and Personal Health, the Plan was then submitted for approval and signature to the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning, the Chief Executive, the Directors of Social Services and Education, the Chief Executive of the Health Authority and the Primary Care Trusts. The MAP was submitted to the DH on 31 January 2002.

2.7 The MAP provides a summary of the Authority's current position with regard to meeting the needs of children in need in Leicester along with our aims, aspirations and targets for improving on that position. The format of the MAP is set by the Department of Health, and serves as application for funding, an audit tool for the Department of Health and a management tool for the Department. As such it is not in a readily accessible form.

2.8 It is proposed to prepare two summaries of the MAP – an executive summary for Members and relevant professionals, and a users summary for young people and their parents. It is also proposed to hold a series of presentations for Members and officers

of all Departments during April/May 2002 to emphasise the corporate nature and commitment of Quality Protects.

- 2.9 The Members Working Party has been involved in developing the MAP and will continue to be involved in its development and implementation via reports to the Scrutiny Committee.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 (a) That Cabinet endorse the Quality Protects Management Action Plan, and the process of dissemination, implementation and scrutiny outlined in this report.
- (b) That Cabinet and the two Scrutiny Committees receive a regular report on the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

4. Headline Financial and Legal Implications

- 4.1 The very ambitious Quality Protects programme of improvements expected by the Department of Health continues to need to be funded by realigning some expenditure within children's services.

- 4.2 The children's main special grant to support Quality Protects for Leicester in 2002/2003 is £1,257,000. A further £86,000 is ring-fenced for IT for looked after children.

Two additional parts of the grant are to be earmarked for specific purposes - £2,222,000 is to be ring-fenced for the implementation of the Children (Leaving Care) Act, and £137,000 is to be ring-fenced for services for disabled children. The total is £3,702,000.

- 4.3 The implementation of the Children's (Leaving Care) Bill will be an additional financial and service delivery responsibility for the Social Services Department, requiring enhancement of our current Care Leavers service.

- 4.4 The implementation of the Assessment Framework required under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 and the consequent reorganisation of the Department's assessment services has resulted in the need for financial incentives for staff recruitment and retention which impact on children's services expenditure.

- 4.5 The Quality Protects Circular is issued as statutory guidance under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act.

- 4.6 There are no other direct legal implications arising from this report (Guy Goodman, Assistant Head of Legal Services – 252 7054).

5. Other Implications

| Other Implications | Yes/No | Paragraph References Within Supporting Information |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Equal Opportunities | Yes | The proposals will be responsive to the needs of all groups and communities |
| Policy | Yes | All paragraphs |
| Sustainable and Environmental | No | |
| Crime and Disorder | Yes | The Quality Protects MAP will address issues of crime and disorder. |
| Human Rights Act | No | |
| Elderly/People on Low Income | No | |

6. Background Papers

MAP 4 timetable
LAC (2001)28: HSC2001/20: Summary Guidance for MAP 4.

7. Consultations

Legal Services
Members of Leicester Childrens Planning Partnership

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