



Collaborative Commissioning Support Unit – February Briefing Note

31/01/2008

Children's Services Projects owned by the County, Unitary and Health Authorities in the South West and supported by LIFT SW and DCSF

Summary

This is one of a regular series of briefing notes for those involved in Children's Services projects in the South West describing the activities of the Collaborative Commissioning Support Unit (CCSU). Please forward it to any other interested parties.

The strategy for the new programme in Children's Services to be funded by LIFT SW RIEP (Regional Efficiency and Improvement Partnership) is almost complete. Implementation will start in April for three years. The strategy is led by Local Authorities and was discussed by Directors of Children's Services at their January meeting.

All authorities in the South West are actively involved in plans to improve the placement of children with Special Educational Needs in Independent and Non-maintained Special schools.

Key People

The Commissioning Forum membership address list is on the LIFT SW website.

We welcome Terry Harper, a consultant who has done much work for the region in recent years, who is working with us for three months on how to understand and use data to generate information for commissioning.

Commissioning Forum:

The next Forum meeting on [14th February at 09:30 at the Cleeve Hotel Wellington](#) will consider Transition to Adulthood with colleagues from Adult Learning difficulties. We will also discuss commissioning Connexions, Torbay's Commissioning progress and ways to use information. A Health themed meeting is planned in the Spring. Ideas and offers to present are always welcome. [Further Meetings in 2008 will be held on 22nd May and 18th September. Please book them in diaries now.](#)

Provider Forum

Ideas and offers to present are welcomed. Following recent tenders, commissioners are interested in how providers can evidence quality and outcomes as well as value for money. [Meetings in 2008 will be held on 18th April and 23rd October. Please book them in diaries now.](#)

Children's Services Supply Base Management System

The update of the CRPD is underway. The new database will be easier to use and will support improved monitoring processes. The 10 authorities who belong to the CRPD are now actively monitoring provision and learning from the process. Training on Exceptional Fee consultation was attended by seven authorities in January.

Much information on Providers and Placements across the region in both Social Care and Education has been gathered onto spreadsheets and is available to commissioners via the website or by a phone call or e-mail. Terry Harper is developing a toolkit for the use of existing information to aid commissioning and will shortly circulate the annual placement survey which has been extended from SEN to include Social Care and Health.

Training in use of the CRPD via the telephone continues for new users.

Improvement and Efficiency Projects

The Northern Group (seven authorities) have selected a final list of 11 pre-qualified suppliers of Residential Care and will commence use of the framework agreement on 1st February.

The Peninsular Placement Tendering Group now covers all Social Care and some Education placements in Devon, Torbay, Somerset, Plymouth and Cornwall with placements made by tender against a needs and outcomes statement. Learning from the process is being captured to inform further development. Hilary Major (Somerset) is leading the application of the process to SEN placements in Independent and Non-maintained Special Schools. An invitation to express interest in tendering for pre-qualification is now on the Devon procurement portal for providers not currently pre-qualified. A conference for potential new providers will be held on 25th February, and the use of the process for Education placements will be discussed at the conference for existing providers on 12th May.

Nine SW authorities are taking part in the **Eastern Group SEN Residential Schools Placement Project** led by Gloucestershire which aims to develop new relationships with Independent and Non-maintained Special Schools. Progress has been made in developing an outcome based placement process and with developing the basis of a tender for schools to join a pre-qualified list. An open conference to share ideas with Providers is planned for the end of April.

The **Bristol CHIPS information project** is complete and has developed a useful list of Key Behaviours. Savings have been identified and learning is being shared.

The mapping of **therapy provision** across the region is complete with the report awaited. Pilot monitoring of a few providers of therapies in two or three authorities is being planned.

Five authorities are taking part in a **project to tender Independent Fostering Placements**.

And Also

The current **Children's Services Programme** funded by LIFT SW (formerly the SWCoE) comes to an end in March. Following CSR07 a three year strategy for a further programme to be funded by the LIFT SW RIEP has been drawn up and discussed with Directors or Children's services and will now be submitted for national funding. This continues and develops the existing programme with ideas for new projects.

The **Regional Partnership** ran the annual SEN conference in December. The partnership funding ceases at the end of March but many of the valuable activities of the past few years should continue.

The **National Residential Contract** is on the ECM website and also on the LIFT SW website and is available for use. Further guidance notes on using the contract will be issued soon.

Congratulations to Plymouth City Council on being awarded a Gold Commendation Compact Award for Excellence in the better funding relationships category and to **Fiona Fleming** who has been awarded a **Compact Champion Award** for applying Compact principles and driving Plymouth's commissioning strategy with the Voluntary Sector.

Information on the Website:

The LIFT SW website (www.swce.gov.uk) has been revamped and the content improved. Follow the Service Area Support tab to Children's Services where Useful Papers and Documents, and Case Studies (tabs on the left hand side) are helpful. These are continually being added to – flag up anything particular that you need. The main Children's Services page summarises projects with details and PIDs to be found in Project Information

In the Members Area accessed from the bottom of the Children's Services page or from the Home page other documents can be found. Recent additions are the spreadsheets on SW Placements and SW Providers. The contact is below if you need the password. Currently the member's area is restricted to Local Authority Commissioners.

Contact

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