



Collaborative Commissioning Support Unit – June Briefing Note

29/05/2008

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

Summary

Briefing notes are issued monthly for those involved in Children's Services in the South West describing the activities of the Collaborative Commissioning Support Unit (CCSU) and the LIFT SW RIEP Children's Services Programme. Please forward it to interested parties.

In May the Commissioning Forum discussed successful Joint Commissioning with Health. Work continued on the Delivery Plan for the extended LIFT SW RIEP programme.

Key People

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

David Taylor (DCS Somerset) will chair the Programme Governance Board.

Commissioning Forum:

The Forum met on the 22nd of May for a well attended and lively meeting. Poole, Dorset and Bristol made presentations on joint commissioning with Health and Gloucestershire gave an update. Working Groups looked at the proposed new programme, focussing on support for commissioning, and specific efficiency and improvement projects. Presentations have been put on the website. [The last meeting of the year will be held on 18 September.](#)

SW Region Provider Forum

Presentations from the meeting on 18th April have been placed on the website. It is hoped that following the Outcomes discussion a small group will take this further. [The second meeting in 2008 will be held on 23 October.](#)

Children's Services Supply Base Management System

The work on the updated CRPD has now begun testing. The new database will be easier to use and will support improved monitoring processes. Contacts in the 10 authorities who belong to the CRPD have received details this month. The new CRPD newsletter is on the website.

Almost all information for the Annual Placement Survey has now been received from authorities. This year it includes SEN (Schools), Social Care and Independent Fostering placements plus limited Health information. Spreadsheets have been collated and will be used to update and extend information on Providers and Placements. This is currently available to commissioners via the website or by a phone call or e-mail. Placement information is used in procurement plans for both SEN residential placements and Independent Fostering. Later in the summer the usual comparison document will be produced to permit authorities to identify benchmarks, focusing on data that is important to commissioners.

An information toolkit to aid commissioning will also be placed on the website.

Improvement and Efficiency Projects

[The Northern Group](#) list of pre-qualified suppliers of Residential Care is in use.

[The Peninsular Placement Tendering Group](#) covers all Social Care and some Education placements in Devon, Torbay, Somerset, Plymouth & Cornwall with individual placements made by tender against a needs and outcomes statement. Tenders are being evaluated for additional providers who wish to be added to the pre-qualified list. (This tender is now closed). The process to extend further into SEN placements is being successfully piloted in Somerset and is spreading to the other authorities – it is intended that as with Social care, all placements will soon be made this way. Peninsula providers met on 12th May for a well attended conference.

[The Eastern Group SEN Residential Schools Placement Project](#) (nine authorities) is led by Gloucestershire and will develop new relationships with Independent and Non-maintained Special Schools. An invitation to tender to join a pre-qualified list was issued in early May and advertised in OJEU and other places. It closes at 12:00 noon on 4th July and no tenders can be accepted after this time. It is important that Independent and Non-maintained Schools engage with this activity and those that do not do so will be disadvantaged in future – **URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED** if you have not yet engaged.

[A project to tender Independent Fostering Placements](#) involving five authorities will also be lead by Gloucestershire and is now making rapid progress. It will use the new National Fostering Contract planned for launch in September.

New LIFT SW RIEP Programme

The draft delivery plan for a further programme to be funded by the LIFT SW RIEP has been drawn up with Directors of Children's Services. The new programme

is more ambitious and far reaching than current work and has additional funding. New areas of work include:

- Capacity Building within authorities based on the Local Area Agreement priorities
- Support for Commissioning
- New Efficiency and Improvement projects.
- Joint Provision with Health for youngsters with severe EBD and Mental health issues
- Continuing development of provision and use of Information

The Governance Board is chaired by David Taylor (DCS Somerset) and meets for the first time on 9th June to agree the Delivery Plan. Advanced funding has been made available to allow projects that have been defined to start without delay.

And Also:

[Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth](#) held a stakeholder meeting in connection with their Pathfinder project on Short Breaks (part of Aiming High for Disabled Children)

The [National Fostering Contract continues to progress](#) with drafts on the ECM website.

Deloitte and Touche on behalf of DCSF are carrying out a national investigation into the [future of Secure Accommodation](#) which is expected to report later in the summer.

Deloitte and Touche on behalf of DCSF have also carried out an [evaluation of Regional Commissioning](#) including the Peninsula work and other activities of the Collaborative Commissioning Support Unit (CCSU) with favourable comments made.

Information on the Website:

The LIFT SW website (www.swce.gov.uk) has been revamped. 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.

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

Contact

Please ring John Lees on:

T: 01594 832600

or e-mail: j.lees@dorsetcc.gov.uk