

Legislation – the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill

Existing legislation and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill (LGPIH Bill, currently before Parliament) contain provisions that will place obligations on local authorities and their partners that promote partnership working and help ensure that local priorities are tackled in a coherent way. For example, the LGPIH Bill will

- provide a statutory foundation for LAAs, linking them explicitly to the Sustainable Community Strategy and will require that all the key local public agencies co-operate to agree their targets and take account of them in the exercise of their functions.
- provide that each Primary Care Trust and Local Authority will carry out a joint strategic needs assessment to inform the choice of the priorities they wish their LAA to focus on.
- bring in a duty to involve local citizens much more fully in local decision-making and service design.

In addition, the Bill introduces new powers for the Audit Commission, which will merge with the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate: The Audit Commission will have the power to inspect computers on which documents are held and produce three types of reports on English local authorities:

- the risk that authorities may fail to perform their functions;
- the rate at which authorities' performance is improving;
- authorities' use of resources.

For further information, please visit:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmbills/016/en/07016x-b.htm

New Items on Children's Social Services Returns for 2008-09

On 28th September, the Department for Children, Schools and Families sent a letter to all councils giving six months notice new data items that Local Authorities will need to collect from April 2008.

Changes to current children's social service data collections and the introduction of new data collections have been discussed with the External Scrutiny Group and agreed by the DCSF Star Chamber Board. Headlines are:

- Changes in data items and codes in the SSDA903
- Some of the information currently collected via the Outcome Indicators for Looked after Children (OC2) will be added to the children looked after return (SSDA903).
- The Children in Need (CIN) collection has been re-developed for 2008-09 and will cover all children in need at child level during the data year 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.
- A new data collection on the behavioural and emotional health of children in care

There are no changes to the Private Fostering (PF1) and the Child Protection Register (CPR3) returns for 2008-09. For further information please visit: www.dcsf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/returns.shtml