

Lifting the Burdens from Children and Young People's Services cont.

(c) *What indicators would it be useful to have as part of a 'local basket' for discretionary use.*

2. The work of Government 'Fieldforces', primarily working through Government Offices

There are approximately 37 field forces supporting the work of children's services covering policy areas such as the national strategies in education, SEN, substance misuse, CAMHS, Early Years etc

Questions:

- (d) *What is your general experience of working with the Fieldforces? How much value do they add to your work?*
- (e) *What suggestions would you make for improving the relationship between Local Authorities and the fieldforces?*

3. Inspection and regulation

The Task Force is interested in how the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process will work from 2009.

Question:

- (f) *Drawing on your experience of APA and JAR to date, what proposals would you make to ensure that CAA does not become too burdensome?*

4. ICT and systems – Integrated Children's System, Contactpoint etc

There are concerns that ICT and systems developments in children's services are disjointed and imposing significant burdens on Local Authorities.

Questions:

- (g) *What has been your experience of implementing the ICT/systems agenda? (we are particularly interested in the implementation of the Integrated Children's System and contact point)*
- (h) *How can more coherence be brought to this area of work?*

5. General initiatives

Children's services are subject to a wide range of initiatives from central government, covering a wide range of policy areas.

Questions:

- (i) *Which specific initiatives, or types of initiative, do you find either helpful or unhelpful and why?*
- (j) *The Taskforce is interested in exploring the idea of establishing a permanent presence inside the Department for Children, Schools and Families to liaise with its policy teams on new initiatives, changes to the performance regime, the content of statutory*

guidance etc. Do you support this idea?

The deadline for submissions is 10th September 2007.

Responses should be sent to: James White, Policy Associate to the LBTF - james.white@sheffield.gov.uk or Rachel Gapp, Head of Policy and Performance LBTF - Rachel.Gapp@lga.gov.uk Tel: 0207 664 3069.

Local Area Agreement Roadshows

During February and March 2007, over a thousand people participated in a series of roadshows organised by the Government Offices (GOs) to discuss the new arrangements for Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

The feedback from the roadshows is contained in a report produced in April by the Office of Public Management (OPM).

On 27th June, the Department of Communities and Local Government published a response to the OPM report explaining how it is taking forward the issues raised. Both reports can be found at: www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1511636