

Placements Northwest

PROVIDER NEWSLETTER

MAY UPDATE

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- National Contracts Updates
- Latest information on the Joint Working Groups
- News on Inflationary Uplifts

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North West Provider Conference

The NW Provider Conference this year was held on the 19th May 2008 at the Haydock Park Racecourse. The event attracted over 130 delegates and the initial feedback is that it was a very positive and enjoyable event.

Speakers included Brendan Clark (Commissioning & Market Management Dept at the DCSF) who gave a national update and Mike Lindsay (Officer for Children's Rights Director, OFSTED) who introduced the child's perspective.

Delegates also benefited

from the chance to meet people involved with Placements NW and network with Local Authority Commissioners and Contract Officers and colleagues from the Independent and Voluntary childcare sector. Handouts and presentations from the day will be available on the Placements NW website: www.placementsnorthwest.org.uk

Part of the Conference's programme was dedicated to Service Specific Workshops, which were facilitated by Provider members of the Joint Working Groups. The

areas covered by the Workshops included a discussion about Provider membership of the Joint Working Groups; feedback regarding the Workshops will be posted on the website as soon as it is made available to us.

The workshops identified lots of useful feedback relating to how Placements North West can be developed in the future. The PNW Team appreciates this feedback and will be aiming to respond to all the issues raised via future communications.

Management Information

Developing a better understanding of how and what LAs are commissioning is a key task for Placements Northwest. To this end a census of commissioned places was undertaken in September 07 and a number

of MI reports were provided to LAs in late February.

Work has now begun on information for providers which will be circulated in the form of a report in the next two months. If provid-

ers have any particular questions they would like to see answered or views on how this information are more than welcome to contact Adrian.

JOINT WORKING GROUP UPDATES



The aim and objective of these groups, which are coordinated by Placements NW, is to facilitate consultation and discussion between purchasers and providers promoting an integrated approach to encourage the provision of sustainable services for children and young people in care and education. Group members are responsible for wider consultation and dissemination of information within their own networks.

Residential Joint Working Group

“Whilst Placements North West is keen to support provider forums in any way possible we would wish to reiterate that all provider forums are completely independent to Placements North West. We are, however, pleased to be involved as ‘invited guests’ enabling us to have face to face contact with as many providers as possible.”

The Residential JWG met on the 20th May and the meeting concentrated on issues relating to provider registration, the core cost specification, the monitoring outcomes pilot and the National Contract issues. Meeting Minutes will appear on the website shortly.

On a related issue the second Residential Provider Network Forum meeting was held on the 21 April. One of the key

areas for discussion was for Providers to agree a process for nominating representatives for the Residential Joint Working Group in the medium to long term. It is planned that in the interests of continuity current and ‘new’ provider representatives would meet to coordinate the timing of and changes to provider representation.

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West is keen to support this forum in any way possible we would wish to reiterate that all provider forums are completely independent to Placements North West. We are pleased to be involved as ‘invited guests’ enabling us to have face to face contact with as many providers as possible. We believe this is the best way to develop purchaser /provider partnership working and to improve the communication and consultation process.

Education Joint Working Group

The pilot of the Placements NW registration, annual registration renewal and financial Standard Fee Inclusions documentation has been completed and the documents have been amended. These documents are available to view only at this stage on the Placements NW website: www.placementsnorthwest.org.uk.

The Registration Process has now been agreed in principle for Fostering, Education &

Residential Providers. Registration will begin initially for Fostering in June and then Education and Residential will follow. Information will be stored centrally in PIMS and will improve the quality of the information it holds, which is available to all the 21 LAs. Providers will be contacted prior to any request for registration.

Next steps for the Joint Working Group will be to

develop an ‘Outcomes’ monitoring document. The Group will be focusing on developing mutually agreed individual outcomes and measures for named CYP in provision, which is compatible with the National Outcomes Framework. Other issues which the JWG will discuss include: key stage monitoring; parental expectations; and transition to college/adult services. The Group is next scheduled to meet on 20th June 2008.

Leaving Care Joint Working Group

Progress continues within the Joint Working Group to develop a Regional Leaving Care Contract and it is hoped that an advanced draft document will be ready shortly, which will be circulated to the LA Contract Officers for comment before being sent for legal scrutiny. The Group is next scheduled to meet on 2nd June 2008.

It has recently been highlighted that Organisations are increasingly being asked to provide services for parents and babies/children. Jean Warren would like to hear from anyone who has

experience/views in relation to this.

It is recognised that one of the major objectives of this Group is to establish a linked Leaving Care Provider Network in the region to ensure that maximum communication and consultation is achieved. Clearly, this will allow all provider stakeholders to have an input and influence future direction. In view of this, the Group's representatives are interested in hearing from any Leaving Care Providers in the NW, willing to attend and contribute to the establishment of

such Provider led meetings the first of which will be facilitated by Placements NW on the 3rd June from 10am until 1pm (lunch available) at Room Four Conference Venue, 58 Leigh Street, Golbourne, Warrington. WA3 3PA.

Please direct any initial expressions of interest or enquiries to Jean at: jean_warren@btinternet.com

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Fostering Joint Working Group

The Fostering JWG met on the 22nd April and the meeting concentrated on issues relating to provider registration, the core cost specification, the monitoring outcomes pilot and National Contract issues. Meeting Minutes will appear on the website shortly. At the meeting, FJWG Providers agreed to pilot the Registration Document during May with a view to rolling out the final version to Fostering Providers during June.

As some of you will now know management of the Regional Fostering Panel transferred to Placements North West. Some of you will also be aware that we have instigated minor changes to the annual submission process and as always welcome comments with

regard the impact of these changes from a provider perspective. The Panel now meets on a 6 weekly basis and meetings are currently held at Manchester Town Hall.

For those of you unfamiliar with the work of the Panel, its role is to assess, evaluate and score Annual Quality Assurance Submissions from Independent Fostering Agencies. The following authorities are currently represented: Tameside, Manchester, Stockport, Rochdale, St Helens, Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, as well as Placements North West.

We all now actively encourage more authorities to attend the meetings. Obviously the more au-

thorities able to attend this forum increases the validity of this vital piece of qualitative work.

David Smith is continuing to represent the North West Authorities on the Working Group for the National Fostering Contract. The next meeting is scheduled for the 19th June and if anyone has any comments regarding the current draft documentation and or any related feedback following the recent consultation event on the 23rd April, please do not hesitate to contact your Provider reps Bernie Gibson (Fostering Solutions) or Pat Walton (Together Trust).



“There will be 3 workshops at the National Commissioning and Contracts Conference at Swanwick in October:”

NATIONAL CONTRACTS

The National Residential Care Contract is in the first year launch/review period. The DCSF has agreed to facilitate the review of the Contract in September 2008. This will be overseen by the National Contracts Steering Group, which is an implementation and monitoring Group convened by the DCSF from a representative group from the independent and voluntary residential sector and LA Officers. Jean Warren is the representative for the North West Authorities.) The Group has been monitoring the implementation of the Framework over this first twelve month period.

A well attended NW Fostering Contract Consultation Event was held at Haydock Park on the 23rd April, facilitated by Sue Brunton-Reed, (an Independent Consultant commissioned by the DCSF.) Sue has said that the contributions received from attendees were positive and constructive. The timescale for developing the Contract is September 2008. The DCSF have

agreed to support the development of National Leaving Care & Secure Accommodation contracts.

A sub-group of the National Contract Steering Group recently convened to consider the feasibility of developing a national registration & accreditation process, which may include having a national Information Sharing Protocol. A regional comparative exercise is being undertaken and further discussion/consideration will be made.

There will be 3 workshops at the National Commissioning and Contracts Conference at Swanwick in October: Regional Commissioning Pilots; National Contracts (Focusing on ‘Outcomes’); IFA Contract.

The DCSF is committed to developing a suite of national contracts without individual authority or regional variations and Placements NW fully supports this aspiration. Where regional differences exist, we are work-

ing to resolve these.

As many of you will know and appreciate many NW Local Authorities still have concerns regarding aspects of the National Contracts. It was therefore agreed by the Placements NW Steering Group that these concerns should be articulated in the form of a regional addendum initially with reference to the Residential National Contract but with relevance to all the National Contracts. Placements NW have subsequently obtained a legal view. The matter was then discussed (including the legal comments) by the Placements NW Steering Group on the 13th May. It was agreed at this meeting that a briefing paper would be prepared outlining the various options and their consequences for further consideration by participating authorities. This paper will be issued within the next couple of weeks.

As soon as we have more information we will contact Providers via the Joint Working Groups and Provider Forums to obtain your views.

Inflationary Uplifts

It is proposed that future fee negotiations will be based around a fair price for the quality of care/education provided and there will be a clear link between performance and the fee paid. Developments are ongoing to establish a process for evaluating Provider performance, both in terms of organisational best practice, the detail in the 'standard fee' and individual placement outcomes. Many of these enhanced processes will shortly be incorporated within the Placements Information Management System (PIMS)

So far as the 2008/09 fee negotiations are concerned and in accordance with the regionally

agreed strategy, Placements NW has collated information from those authorities who have responded with details of provider requests for increases. Using the Provider Performance Quality Assurance Form we have concentrated on getting involved with and influencing negotiations with those Providers with the

greatest 'spend' and volume of placements regionally. Time and resource constraints have meant that it has been difficult to get involved in all negotiations from a regional perspective. We appreciate that this is clearly an area for further development and discussion in the future.



PLACEMENTS NORTHWEST.org.uk

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The Placements North West Project is a collaborative approach to the strategic and operational activities involved in finding and purchasing Out of Authority Placements. It is accountable to the 21 Directors of Children's Services in the region who have agreed to collaborate under a single unified structure that replaces the previous sub regional projects.

All future activity will be guided and monitored by a Steering Group that is chaired by Joan Feenan, DCS Cheshire County Council. Other members of the group include strategic leads from Local Authority Children Services Departments, Partnership North West (SEN) and the Strategic Health Authority, Partnership North West (SEN) and the Strategic Health Authority