

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Social Services & Health**

Date: 6 September 2001

Title of Report: Review of Social Services Relationship with Other Agencies

By: Director of Social Services

Purpose of Report: Update to Social Services response to the Scrutiny Committee for a Healthy Community report by the Project Board

RECOMMENDATION: **To note the response and actions to be taken.**

INTRODUCTION

1.1 This update report should be read in conjunction with the original report of 20 March 2001 - copy attached.

1.2 In June of this year meetings were held with both voluntary and statutory sector partners to review their perceptions of the Department and its relationships with partner agencies. This incorporated a briefing session on the joint review process and carried forward the process of Social Services listening to its partners and taking forward the recommendations of the review.

1.3 The joint review position statement seeks to offer transparency about the strengths and areas for development within the Department and is a good communications tool with outside agencies.

UPDATE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPORT DATED 20.3.01 (Scrutiny Committee report recommendations given in *Italics*).

R1 *'Continue to develop the areas of good partnership practice recognised by this review.'*

The development of good partnership relationships has continued. Since the Social Services Department reorganisation in the spring of this year, the quality of the relationships has improved as shown in detail in the recommendations below.

At a recent meeting with the Social Services Inspectorate and DoH South East Regional Office it was recognised that the partnership working between the NHS and Social Services had improved over the last year, and that in a number of areas we were working very closely together.

R2 *'In developing future relationships with partners and other agencies take note of the lessons that can be learnt from this review in relation to:*

R2.1 *'The process for consulting'*

The Department has continued to work to the standards of the Departmental Consultation Strategy. Examples of active consultation with partner organisations include the review of the Social Services Eligibility Criteria, the Day Care Reviews and the East Sussex Social Services Joint Review.

R2.2 *'Dealing with the perception of being a centralist organisation.'*

The Department continues to strive to improve a wide range of partnership initiatives at a county and local level. The appointment of two Partnership Managers and a Community Development Manager in the recent reorganisation has given the Department the capacity to engage in the agenda for modernising service provision and to work creatively with other service providers, voluntary organisations and community groups. This has been and will continue to be vital for a range of initiatives including the possible development of three new Sure Start projects within the county, the invitation for the county to participate in the second wave of the Children's Fund, and the further integration of health and Social Services.

R2.3 "Empowerment of local managers.'

A revised Scheme of Delegation has been developed within the restructured Department. A new layer of locality-based management has been introduced and many new managers appointed. A series of induction training sessions has occurred to support the skills development of new managers.

R2.4 'Staff moving between posts.'

Within the restructured Department improved clarity of responsibility has been achieved within the Divisions. This has resulted in the development of better and more consistent links with partner agencies and organisations. Staff support, supervision and induction procedures will facilitate staff stability.

R2.5 "Representation to partnership boards and groups.'

Great strides have been achieved in the consistent representation of the Department with partnership boards and groups by the appointment of two Partnership Managers with a responsibility to facilitate the active involvement of operational managers in partnership working as necessary. The role of the Community Development Team is being reviewed to provide a more focussed link to partner organisations. Close links have been achieved with the PCT and PCG'S, which have resulted in a wide range of service initiatives. These include:

- ◆ An initiative to achieve greater integration of children and families services between the Department, Education, Hastings and Rother PCT and voluntary organisations. A possible pilot initiative for children with disabilities may be a tangible result of this.
- ◆ A pooled budget for services for older people between the Department, Bexhill and Rother PCT and Hastings and St Leonards PCT.
- ◆ A pilot joint assessment protocol for older people in the Eastbourne area.

R2.6 'Establish agreed objectives and commitment to a shared agenda.'

A range of agreed service objectives and commitments have been achieved and continue to be developed. Among others the Partnership Managers sit or represent the Department on:

the 5 county Health Improvement Partnerships and the Health Improvement and Modernisation Board,

- ◆ the 5 current PCT/PCGS,
- ◆ the Hastings Regeneration Partnership Board,
- ◆ Carers County Planning Group,

- ◆ the 2 existing Sure Start projects.

In addition to this the ongoing development within the County of a range of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) will have a vital role in the future setting of service priorities and developments. The developing importance and widening membership of the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership and the Promoting Independence Co-ordination Group reflect the principles of the LSP at a service co-ordination level.

The development of a Compact in conjunction with local voluntary and partner organisations is underway within the county, and is being led by the Social Services Department. This work will establish agreed principles of partnership work, and will develop a series of 'Codes of Practice' giving detail to the overall principles of the Compact. This key work will be brought to COMT in autumn 2001 and will hopefully be ratified by partner agencies in both the voluntary and statutory sectors.

Appendix 1 contains excerpts from the joint review position statement entitled 'Overview of relationships with other agencies' and 'What we have learnt from others looking at us'.

R3 *'Work with its partners and develop targets and monitoring procedures that inform all senior managers, Members and partners of progress towards the development, implementation and conformance to targets in relation to partnership working.'*

The County Council's Best Value Performance plan sets out the priorities for the Local Authority and timescales for the achievement of those priorities. A series of Best Value Reviews is being undertaken to assess the performance of services in meeting those priorities. These reviews involve consultation with service users and with partner organisations as an integral part of the review process.

It is envisaged within the development of LSPs that consultation with relevant communities will inform the development of priorities and targets, and that these will be subject to a process of ongoing monitoring from the beginning of service delivery.

R4 *'Encourage partners to develop their own partnership policies.'*

The Department's Partnership Managers and Community Development Manager have active roles in supporting the development of partnership working practices within partner agencies and voluntary organisations. The development of a County 'Compact' will facilitate the development of common standards of good practice and co-operation.

R5 *'Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships.'*

The Partnership Managers and the Community Development Manager, along with colleagues in the Policy and Performance Review Unit and the operational divisions continually evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships and the future direction of service development in the partnership context. This is an ongoing process within regular supervision arrangements.

R6 *It is recommended that the Chief Executives Policy Co-ordination*

Team which is developing a Corporate Partnership Protocol should take into consideration;

- ◆ the expectations of all partners;
- ◆ the involvement of social services in developing the protocol;
- ◆ Member's role in the local partnership groups.

The Department is working closely with the Chief Executives Policy Co- ordination Team in the developing agenda of Community Planning and Local Strategic Partnerships at both a county and local level.

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Agenda Item No..

Committee: **Social Services Committee**

Date: 20 March, 2001

Title of Report: Review of Social Services Relationship with Other Agencies

By: Director of Social Services

Purpose of Report: To set out a response to the Scrutiny Review of Social Services relationship with other agencies

RECOMMENDATION: **That Committee note the content of this report and agree the response set out in it**

Introduction

1.1. The Social Services Department is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Scrutiny Committee report. This review has taken place at a time of change not only within the Social Services Department, but also of raised expectations of partnership working from Central Government. There is a separate report on the Committee's Agenda today concerning moves towards greater integration of Health and Social Care, which is of course highly relevant.

1.2. The timing of the report is therefore helpful as it will enable the Social Services Department to consider the recommendations and appropriately develop the work of officers within the restructured Department.

1.3. It is important to note the comment in the Scrutiny Report which said "the report contains recommendations for action by the Social Services Department but also recognises that there is action that 'partners' also need to take if future partnership working is to be successful".

1.4 The implications and recommendations regarding partnership working in the report also impact on all County Council Departments. In some instances, comments made in the report would appear to be examples drawn from broader partnership working relationships, e.g. Community Planning.

2.0. Responses to the findings of the report

2.1 The detailed comments and findings under section 6.1 and 6.2 are noted. There are many current partnership arrangements ranging from loose alliance to formal contracts. It is important to ensure that partnership arrangements are clear, focussed, and effective. In order to manage joint planning and partnership arrangements as efficiently as possible, two key groups, the Children's Service Planning Group, and the Promoting Independence Co-ordinating Group, are responsible for co-ordinating the process.

2.2 The NHS Plan, the Health Act (1999), and the Health and Social Care Bill are important in setting the target of greater integration of Health and Social Care Services. A separate item on this Agenda reports progress on this.

2.3 Whilst recognising that clarity over roles and responsibilities on the key partnership boards are important, these arrangements are currently evolving, and there is a need for flexibility in order

that the groups can be dynamic. A clear understanding of the purpose of a partnership board and overall outcomes would be supported. This responsibility lies with all agencies involved, including other Council Departments. There are of course many areas where Social Services are expected to take a clear lead.

2.4 The need for increased stability and consistency is entirely accepted. There is a clear intention to achieve greater consistency and the new departmental structures within Social Services contains two new posts of Partnership Manager, who will have an important role in co-ordinating, facilitating and promoting effective partnership.

2.5 Within the last year, there has also been established the Health & Social Care Partnership Board. With representatives of the County Council, District and Boroughs, the NHS, the Voluntary sector and the Independent sector, this is a key body to co-ordinate partnership arrangements.

2.6 Concerning the view expressed that the Department is a centralist organisation, it is vital that there are two elements in place; firstly clear countywide strategy on key issues, and secondly, a high level of locally devolved flexibility to implement that strategy in the context of local needs, circumstances and opportunities. Both are essential.

3. Response to Recommendations

The response to each recommendation is set out below:-

R1 Officers will continue to develop the areas of good partnership practice recognised by the review, and using the opportunities presented by the NHS, National Plan and associated developments.

R2 Officers will take note of lessons learned in the review as follows:

R.2.1 Incorporate the recommendations on timescales, clarity and feedback into the Departmental Consultation Strategy and monitor its implementation. Ensure that the Department integrates the quality standards to be set out in the corporate approach to consultation. Monitor the performance indicators relating to user surveys and report on these within the Performance Assessment framework.

R.2.2 Seek to deal with the perception of being a centralist organisation by clarifying and informing partner organisations at County level and where the Scheme of Delegation for decision making allows for local flexibility in implementing decisions.

R.2.3 Develop within the restructured Department a Scheme of Delegation in all service areas, see R.2.2. Ensure that communication between County Hall and locally based officers is efficient and effective in relaying DMT decisions on policy and practice.

R.2.4 As soon as the restructuring of the Department is in place, the process enabling staff stability and providing support will be implemented.

R2.5 Improve its representation on partnership boards and groups by the appointment within the new structure of two Partnership Managers. One will cover the east of the county, the other the western half They will attend Health related partnership meetings including PCG/Trust boards, Locality Health Improvement Partnership groups and local. Health and Social Care Partnership planning groups. The Health and Social Care Partnership Board, Promoting Independence Co-ordinating Group and Children's Services Planning Team will monitor the

implementation. Outcomes will include integrated care; joint commissioning and pooled budgets.

R3 The Department will take responsibility for developing with Partners targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely to provide for accountability and effective monitoring. It will provide commitment to agreeing a shared agenda within all partnership working arrangements in East Sussex.

R4 Will encourage partners to develop their own partnership policies.

R5 Arrange to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships.

R6 Support the Corporate approach recommended in the Corporate Partnership Protocol, taking into consideration;

A the expectations of all partners;

B the involvement of Social Services in developing the protocol;

C Members' role in local partnership groups

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APPENDIX ONE

EXCERPTS FROM THE JOINT REVIEW POSITION STATEMENT

3.3 Overview of relationships with other agencies

In line with the Modernisation Agenda we have expanded this section to include work with all partners within East Sussex, not just statutory agencies.

Social Services works in partnership with:

- ◆ East Sussex, Brighton & Hove Health Authority
- ◆ Two Primary Care Trusts and three Primary Care Groups
- ◆ Five borough and district councils
- ◆ Five NHS Trusts
- ◆ Three local health economies
- ◆ A pan Sussex police force
- ◆ A pan Sussex probation service
- ◆ East Sussex Area Child Protection Committee
- ◆ East Sussex Youth Offending Team
- ◆ Independent providers of services
- ◆ The voluntary sector

The sheer number of partners makes good communication and consultation a challenge in itself. It should also be acknowledged that the pace of change nationally and locally with regard to partnership working has intensified. Nevertheless, Social Services is committed to build on the positive relationships established with its partners so far.

A number of county planning groups are in place and these multi-agency groups contribute to the planning processes of health and social care within East Sussex (these are described in Key Areas Framework, Section 2).

In addition the National Frameworks (NSF) call for joint implementation plans front key stakeholders, particularly health and

2.4 What we have learnt from others looking at us

In the past four years Social Services has been examined by, or provided information for, several external adjudicators. These include:

- ◆ Two SSI Inspections
 1. Inspection of Community Care Services in Rural Communities, August 1998
 2. Inspection of Children's Services, June/July 2001
- ◆ The SSI Annual Review of Performance in 2000 - 2001

- ◆ The published Performance Assessment Framework Performance Indicators for 1999-2000
- ◆ District Audit
- ◆ Best Value Reviews

Each report has been presented to Social Services Committee along with a detailed action plan of how Social Services was responding to issues raised.

Following the positive SSI Inspection of Children's Services, an action plan was drawn up to deal with the helpful recommendations made, as well as steps to build on the many identified strengths. Various inspections have suggested we could improve the ways we share examples of good practice. This is being addressed by the creation of operations managers within the new structure, and the much needed establishment of a Policy & Performance Review Unit.

How our users saw us

"I found all the people I dealt with very helpful and informative, a pleasure to talk to and listen to for advice."
Service User's comment on users' experience form.

In 1999 Social Services commissioned MORI to undertake a consultation exercise with users and carers looking at satisfaction with services. The findings showed:

- ◆ High levels of satisfaction with service provision, whether provided in-house or by the independent sector.
- ◆ High levels of satisfaction with assessment services.
- ◆ 90% of people considered they were given the help they needed.

There were areas identified where there was scope for improving performance. A programme of management action was put in place to address these.

"Absolutely satisfied with help received. Most patient and could not ask for anything better than received. Always a polite response from the department."
Service User's comment on users' experience form.

As part of the SSJ Children's Services Inspection questionnaires were sent to 50 parents with 18 replies received. The parents and children (and social workers) of 10 of these families were interviewed. Two-thirds of the service users who responded expressed satisfaction with aspects of the services and with their individual social worker. Most of them felt that they had been involved in deciding what help their family needed, and some of the service users interviewed spoke highly of the help they had received. Just under half of those who responded to the questionnaire felt that things had improved since Social Services had become involved with their families.

How our partners saw us

The SSI inspection of Children's Services commented on how Social Services and Education worked well together in East Sussex. Other agencies reported generally good working arrangements with Social Services, particularly on the ACFIC where it was felt that agencies had co-operated well in drawing up new procedures.

A Scrutiny Committee Review of partnership arrangements found that Social Services had taken positive steps towards establishing effective partnerships, but needed to improve performance on consultation, empowering local managers, reducing the number of staff moving around, representation on partnership groups and managing expectations. These themes were echoed in recent meetings with partners to brief them about the Joint Review.

The recommendations from the Scrutiny Review were accepted and an action plan produced to address the issues. Social Services recognise that it is important to ensure that partnership arrangements are clear, focussed and effective. The Children's Services Planning Team and the Promoting Independence Co-ordinating Group are seen as the key forums to manage joint planning, develop partnership arrangements, and set realistic targets based on what is achievable. The review recognised that Social Services has an evolving range of other partnership arrangements ranging from loose alliance to formal contract. The Scheme of Delegation has been revised in line with the new departmental structure, the two new partnership managers are now in post and negotiations have started on how best to improve consultation with our partners. Initial feedback about the impact of partnership managers is positive.