

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETINGS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND
EDUCATION COMMITTEES : 26 JANUARY 2000**

NOTE: A full copy of the report mentioned below is available from Peter Hull, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Telephone: 01992 555565)

**QUALITY PROTECTS MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN AND SPECIAL
GRANT : 2000/2001**

Hertfordshire will, in 2000/2001, receive £1.674m Quality Protects Special Grant. Proposals for spending this special grant have been submitted to the Department of Health attached to the second Quality Protects Management Action Plan (MAP) for 2000/2001. Given the size of the Action Plan a copy has been deposited in the Members' Room and other copies are available on request.

Priority areas where the special grant will be spent are as follows:-

(1) Placement Choice

This priority area is concerned with increasing the choice of adoption, foster and residential placements for looked after children.

(2) Assessment

Will meet demands of increased numbers of child protection and looked after children cases.

(3) Audit

This will improve audit and quality assurance systems to ensure that services are delivered according to requirements and are meeting local and national objectives.

(4) Leaving Care

This priority area requires the County Council to increase support for those 16-18 year olds living in and leaving care, including steps to prevent inappropriate discharge from care.

(5) Listening to Children

This priority area is concerned with listening to the views and wishes of children, young people and their families and enhance these views, for example, through the development of an independent advocacy services.

(6) Management Information

This priority area concerns enhancing the development and use of management information systems.

(7) Managing Change

Targeted on human resource issues, communications and financial management strategies and on work to strengthen the governance of children's services.

Proposed expenditure against the above priority areas is set out in Appendix 1 attached to this report. Special grants can only be spent on the Government's priority areas. The Appendix shows proposed expenditure in 2000/2001 as well as estimated expenditure in 2000/2002 and new proposals are shown with an asterisk against them.

The majority of funding has been included in front line services. Consequently the majority of the expenditure will be for an increased number and quality replacements that will be required for looked after children and district team services. There has been a larger increase in demand on district social workers in the last few years owing to rising numbers of looked after children, child protection cases and by the demands made on them by more rigorous assessment care planning and review systems. This has been compounded by a shortage of social workers resulting in increased competition between local authorities to recruit them. The priority areas focus on enhancing recruitment and retention of social workers or freeing them from tasks that will be carried out elsewhere.

The Department of Health has been requested to simplify future processes for the preparation and submission of the annual quality protects management action plan for evaluation by the Social Services Inspectorate.

Julia Price / Keith Emsall
Chairmen
County Hall
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26 January 2000