

Children's Services Joint Improvement Support Plans



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Introduction

In October 2008, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) published the *Children's Services Improvement Support Protocol* developed with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) to improve the delivery of support and challenge to local authorities as leaders of Children's Trusts.

The protocol describes an improvement support framework where the Government Office (GO) is responsible for bringing partners together to join up professional knowledge about how to support the improvement of local services. The protocol specifies that the GO Children's Services Adviser (CSA) will take on the role of lead professional adviser for the local authority in relation to improvement services for children and young people.

In each local area, the CSA will work with improvement support providers to develop a Joint Improvement Support Plan (JISP) providing a joined-up offer for the authority. The JISP is intended to be a concise summary of support agreed with the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

To support the JISP process, we are publishing *Children's Services Improvement Support – A National Prospectus 2009-10* describing the range of improvement support currently available, including support which can be purchased through a central *Children's Services Improvement Framework*. Annex 1 gives further information about these documents.

This guidance is intended for everyone that has a role in the production of JISPs – GOs, authorities as the leaders of Children's Trusts and improvement support providers.

Developing JISPs

Aim

The aim is to improve the delivery of support and challenge for local authorities (and Children's Trusts) to help raise outcomes for children and young people. The objectives are to:

- provide a concise and joined-up forward look of planned improvement support;
- drive the tailoring of support to local priorities and plans;
- build a picture of regional and national improvement support needs based on analysis of local needs; and
- continually improve the quality of improvement support provision.

Approach

The starting point for a dialogue about improvement support needs for April 2009 onwards is: the evidence from Ofsted's latest Annual Performance Assessment of the authority and, where relevant, a Joint Area Review and any other inspection; the annual reviews of both the statutory early years and education targets by National Strategies and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets for children and young people by the GO; and, the Children's Trust's own self-assessment of progress in reforming the children's workforce using the *One Children's Workforce Framework and Tool*.

In future years, the starting point will be assessment and inspection evidence available through the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) arrangements, to be introduced from April 2009. This will include annual CAA reporting, any interim feedback which is given to services and shared with GOs, and reports of programmed or triggered inspections.

Following these assessments, the CSA will initiate a dialogue with the DCS about the authority's improvement support needs and how these might be met. The CSA will broker support addressing local priorities from improvement support providers.

There are a range of potential sources of support for authorities as the leaders of Children's Trusts - for example, support is available from:

- DCSF and other Government Departments and their Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs);
- GOs;
- centrally contracted private sector delivery partners and other field forces, including National Strategies;
- the optional national Commissioning Support Programme (CSP);
- the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO); and
- Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs).

The CSA will use the JISP as a catalyst for improvement support providers to share information and ideas about how to support the local authority and Children's Trust. The CSA's role is to ensure that the finalised package of support is joined-up, tailored and proportionate to local priorities and needs.

The CSA will discuss the delivery of provision with the DCS at appropriate points during the year and broker changes and/or additional support as required. The CSA will also seek feedback on the quality of improvement support provision and communicate this to improvement support providers.

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JISPs will hold summary information about local priorities and improvement support needs together with basic details about improvement support provision. The JISP will only record specific offers of differentiated support (as opposed to generic offers/programmes which will be outlined in the *National Prospectus*). The JISP will indicate the approximate amount of support/resources that will be received from different providers.

The National Strategies Deployment Plan and the deployment plans of other improvement support bodies (where these exist) will be held with the JISP providing additional information to enable the CSA and the DCS to monitor the quality and delivery of provision. Deployment plans need to be flexible to allow for changing circumstances.

Format

JISPs will be produced using a standard template requiring the CSA to summarise improvement support provision for each identified local priority (Annex 2). The descriptions of improvement support in the JISPs should be concise summaries of support in the form of a process or outcome objective. The table below gives examples of the type of descriptions of support that would be appropriate for JISPs. Deployment plans will hold more detail about work activities, resources and timelines.

Timetable

In the strategic engagement cycle, the detailed discussions about improvement support needs will take place after the local priorities have been determined and any changes to LAA targets agreed. CSAs will initiate discussions with DCSs in late 2008/early 2009 and aim to complete JISPs by the end of March 2009. CSAs will discuss improvement support needs and update plans in-year as required in response to changing circumstances and needs.

National Indicator	Improvement Support Provider	Examples of Tailored Support
112 Under 18 conception rate	Regional Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator	By May 2009, conduct 2 visits to help develop a new sexual health policy for young people
		By July 2009, provide advice to help local managers develop a business case for new contraception funding
		By September 2009, the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team will have conducted an intensive 3 day diagnostic visit and reported on local services
109 Delivery of Sure Start Children's Centres	Together for Children Adviser	By June 2009, provide 3 days support in re-evaluating children's centre portfolio necessitated by changes in local demography
		By November 2009, give 3 days facilitation support to ensure better working practices across the authority's outsourced delivery partners
		By June 2009, provide 2 days support to review and shape the authority's capital build programme

Roles and Responsibilities

The production of the JISP will require effective partnership arrangements between the GO, the authority as the leader of the Children's Trust and improvement support providers.

The table below provides an illustrative model of the improvement support planning process. The GO will discuss and agree arrangements and the timetable in each region with authorities and improvement support providers.

Roles and Responsibilities				
CSA/GO Team	DCS as leader of Children's Trust	Improvement Support Provider/Field Force ¹	RIEP	C4EO/ Commissioning Support Programme ²
Agrees priorities for improvement with DCS	Identifies improvement support needs for each priority – though in some cases may not require external support	Contributes to identifying priority areas	Identifies regional improvement priorities in consultation with GO and LAs informed by regional arrangements	Offers sharing of best practice in specific areas for voluntary take-up by LAs and Children's Trust partners

1 Regional and local advisers employed by improvement support providers are often referred to as field forces.

2 The descriptions of the roles of the C4EO and Commissioning Support Programme are for when these organisations are fully operational. The JISPs will be reviewed and updated as they develop their wider programmes/offer of support.

Roles and Responsibilities				
CSA/GO Team	DCS as leader of Children’s Trust	Improvement Support Provider/Field Force ¹	RIEP	C4EO/ Commissioning Support Programme ²
Invites and coordinates offers from relevant improvement support providers challenging any undifferentiated offers	Decides what optional support to access from C4EO and Commissioning Support Programme or to purchase themselves, including through using the Children’s Services Improvement Framework	Develops tailored offer of support (which may include the production of deployment plans eg National Strategies)	Develops cross-authority programmes	
Coordinates systematic review of improvement support package with LA	Assesses package assembled by GO and identifies any revisions required	Discusses offer with authority (not necessarily at DCS level)	Discusses offer with Regional Children and Young People’s Forum	Discusses offer with authority or Children’s Trust partner
Feeds back LA views to providers and commissions revised support as necessary		Revises offer as required		Revises offer as required
Sends revised JISP to DCS for approval and copies finalised JISP to key partners	Approves JISP or requests further changes	Receives a copy of the agreed JISP	Receives a copy of the agreed JISP	Receives a copy of the agreed JISP

Roles and Responsibilities				
CSA/GO Team	DCS as leader of Children's Trust	Improvement Support Provider/Field Force ¹	RIEP	C4EO/ Commissioning Support Programme ²
Identifies regional improvement priorities from analysis of JISPs and discusses with LAs and RIEP at Regional Children and Young People's Forum	Identifies potential contribution to regional sector-led programmes	Engages with partners to support sector-led programmes	Develops plans and programmes for sector-led learning and support at regional level	Develop plans and programmes for sharing of best practice
Organises improvement support provider clinics as appropriate to align support activities around key local priorities or regional /sub-regional priorities	Monitors and requests changes to support in-year as required at regular strategic engagement meetings	Engages in deeper discussion with authorities and Children's Trusts in the region to ensure improvement support needs are being met. Engages with GO meetings and clinics to align activities at local, regional or sub-regional level	Delivers and reviews cross-authority learning programmes	Delivers and reviews information about best practice

Annex 1: Children's Services Improvement Support Publications

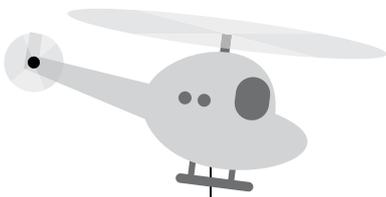
Title	Contents
<i>Children's Services Improvement Support Protocol</i>	Overall framework for the delivery of improvement support to local authorities, as the leaders of Children's Trusts, agreed with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS)
<i>Children's Services Joint Improvement Support Plans</i>	Guidance on the development of Joint Improvement Support Plans
<i>Children's Services Improvement Support – National Prospectus</i>	Summary of different sources of support available to local authorities and Children's Trusts
<i>Children's Services Improvement Framework</i>	Guidance for local authorities on procuring services and/or skilled individuals at relatively short notice from their own resources.
<i>One Children's Workforce Framework and Tool</i>	Online tool to help Children's Trusts establish the progress they have made in developing a single children's workforce

Annex 2: JISP Template

Local Authority/ Children's Trust		Director of Children's Services	
Government Office		Children's Services Adviser	

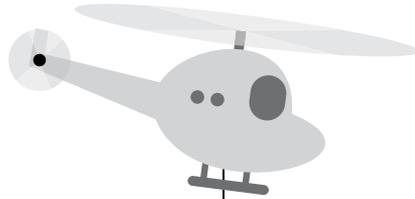
Improvement Support					
Priority	Needs	Provider	Offer	Resources	Notes
<p>This column should record the priorities agreed with the authority. This should include workforce development.</p>	<p>This column should record the authority's improvement support needs. This should include areas for potential improvements identified as a result of using the <i>One Children's Workforce Tool</i>.</p>	<p>This column should record the providers/ field forces that will deliver support to the authority.</p>	<p>This column should record offers of tailored support addressing specific local needs. This should include development activity addressing workforce reform.</p>	<p>This column should indicate the number of days support and any financial resources.</p>	<p>This column is for local use.</p>

This template may be adapted to suit regional and local circumstances



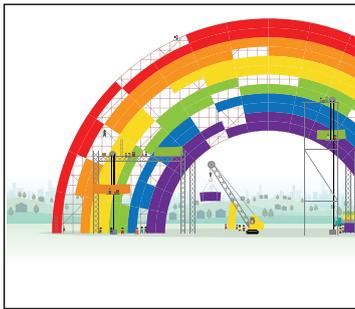
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