



August 2005

The newsletter to update Supporting People teams and service providers on the latest programmes and initiatives to help improve the way Supporting People services are delivered.

This month the newsletter covers:

1. Provider procurement training modules from the DTI
2. Public sector procurement training for local authorities from OGC
3. Provider benchmarking consultation
4. Change Management and e-capacity building
5. News from the health pilots
6. VIPs update
7. 4Ps skills development workshops
8. Efficiency Review - Backward Look Statements

1. Provider procurement training modules from the DTI

The Department for Trade and Industry has an extranet website which includes training modules on procurement for small businesses. The training modules are PowerPoint presentations for businesses who wish to learn how to tender with the public sector. There are also some notes for trainers on running the sessions locally. To see these materials click on the link below and choose the register option. Once you have registered you will be able to access the information on the site.

http://www.sbsextra.net/community/articles.php?comm_id=213&article=8016

DTI's Small Business Service is also running some regional procurement training for small businesses. London's training launch is on 16 September. Providers can book by calling Karchik on 020 8376 6262.

2. Public Sector Procurer Training for local authorities from the Office of Government Commerce

The Office of Government Commerce will be holding procurement training workshops for local authorities in each of the English regions in the near future. This training is for local authorities and looks at the efficiency, value for money and innovative benefits that can be gained by improving the procurement opportunities for smaller enterprises. This will be of interest and relevance to Supporting People officers involved in setting up new contracts, as well as to procurement professionals. So far dates have been set for the South East on 15 September in Wokingham and the East of England on 19 October in Newmarket. Local authorities who want to book should click on

<http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1003719>

3. Provider Benchmarking Consultation

The SITRA, NHF and HouseMark pilot project on benchmarking is now underway, but there is still time for providers to give their comments on the benchmarking tool so as to make it as useful as possible. The consultation concludes on 31 August, for further information click here:

http://www.spkweb.org.uk/News_and_events/Announcements/Provider+Benchmarking+Initiative.htm

4. Change Management and e-Capacity Building

LAMIP (Local Authority Market Intelligence Portal) has developed an e-Capacity Building website to help authorities increase their capacity to deliver change. It was produced in response to local authorities' need for business analysis, project management and change support.

The website has templates and guidance on change management which can be tailored as needed.

The site will also be useful for providers. You can access the site and register at:

<http://www.lamip.org/MicroSites/eCapacityBuilding/Pages/TemplateUser.aspx?PageType=StandardContent&XSL=standardcontent&Key=1>



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5. Supporting People Health Pilots

The 6 health pilots are continuing to look at how health and Supporting People can deliver common objectives together. The health pilots programme ends in Summer 2006 and in early Autumn ODPM will hold an event to highlight their findings and will issue a report and a good practice guide.

The pilots are already delivering positive results and some of the themes emerging so far are:

Managing partnerships

All the pilots have to manage partnerships but do so in different ways. Lambeth and Southwark have restricted their steering group to a few key partners with wider involvement on a 'need to do' basis. While Doncaster's steering group has representation from most partners with regular attendance from all. Doncaster's meetings are planned in advance, and the project workers are able to call additional meetings as necessary. Salford's steering group size was reduced because discussions were not relevant to all parties, which risked compromising the effectiveness of the group. Several pilots' steering groups, including Waltham Forest's and Salford's, have terms of reference but others, including Northampton, felt this would inhibit their work.

Working with partners at a strategic level

Almost all the pilots' partners remain involved in strategic work, because the central aims of the pilots reflect those of partner agencies who in turn remain committed. All the statutory partners in Salford are obliged to be involved in establishing the integrated falls service, so they understand that the pilot contributes to this shared goal. The North Lincolnshire pilot has shown the need for tangible outcomes that partners can see; services, rather than just policy developments.

The pilots also found they needed to understand their partner's pressures which can reduce their involvement. The re-organisation of a borough council in Doncaster may result in reduced representation from its housing department in the coming months. Similarly several pilots said the NHS' implementation of Agenda for Change had impacted health partner's strategic contributions.

Working with partners at an operational level

Successful operational partnership requires the roles and responsibilities of partners to be clearly articulated and understood. Several pilots have formalised partner agencies' roles and responsibilities in protocols, whilst Waltham Forest held training on the responsibilities of the different professionals involved.

Understanding partners' operational pressures is critical to successful joint working. Without appreciating organisations' agendas it is difficult to respond to their needs. Northampton's housing department was closed for a month, during which the pilot had to find alternative ways of providing some aspects of tenancy support. Similarly Lambeth and Southwark had to develop flexibility in their support role to balance the needs of service users and organisational demands of the services being accessing. This means they sometimes accompany service users to hospital appointments ensuring their attendance at the specified time.

A difficulty the pilots have faced is capacity. Several of the pilots providing new services have had to balance higher than anticipated referral rates, often for people with more complex needs than expected, against the developmental pressures faced by new services. Inevitably pilots had to consider the impact on quality, as well as the logistics, such as cover for weekends or when project workers are on leave. Several pilots had difficulties maintaining momentum when key team members leave or are away.

Pilot workers

To work across organisational boundaries each pilots' workers need extensive knowledge of many complex sectors. Doncaster's team need to understand how drug, community and acute mental health services work, as well as housing, probation and employment services. Rarely does one individual know all this; pilot workers had expert information and specialist training from partners.



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Pilot workers also need different types of management support; general management support such as training, petty cash and personnel, and specialist managerial support or supervision which once again partners have been able to provide. Doncaster's team have supervision from specialist drug agencies whilst Northampton's team has support from the specialist housing agency they work with. Pilots must also consider the risks of working in these complex circumstances, ensure that risk assessment procedures exist, that lone or joint working policies are up-to-date and that occupational health issues are considered and debriefing processes in place.

For an update on each of the projects and contact details click here

http://www.spkweb.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CEB7AC8D-2D44-4CDE-A36CC20DBC041C22/4624/NewsletterJune21st_1_1.doc

6. The Value Improvement Project programme

The implementation and project planning stages of the Value Improvement Projects are now complete! You can find Project Plans and other documents on the spkweb.

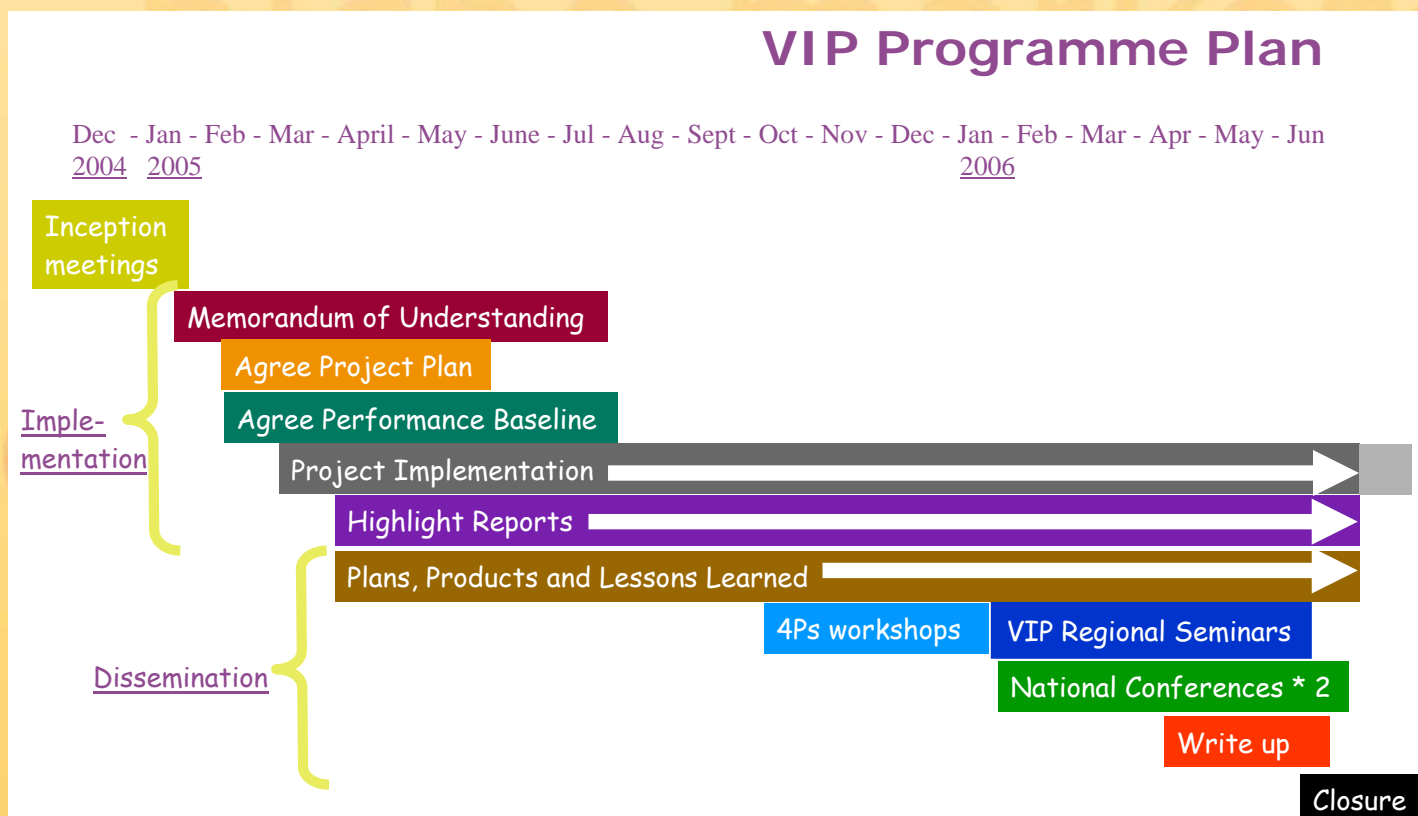
http://www.spkweb.org.uk/Subjects/Capacity_building/Value+Improvement+Projects/

The Projects are now focusing on redesigning service delivery and developing their procurement plans, in conjunction with providers.

The Procurement phase for most of the Projects is scheduled to start in late autumn with the award of contracts to be completed before June 2006. A number of the Projects have secured additional resources from the Regional Centres of Excellence to get specialist technical help with market analysis and business process re-engineering. The Care Services Efficiency Delivery programme at the Department of Health (which is responsible for supporting the delivery of efficiency gains in Adult Social Care services) is also advising on the work being undertaken to develop integrated packages of housing related support, social care and health services.

The focus of the ODPM's involvement in the Projects is now on capturing the learning and planning the dissemination stages of the programme. When the Specialist Products and lessons learned are made available by the Project they will be published on the spkweb. We will be writing to all Administering Authorities in September to advise them of the arrangements for the skills development workshops to be facilitated by the 4Ps in the autumn (see below) and the Regional Value Improvement Project seminars scheduled for spring 2006.

Here is a reminder of the overall programme plan.



7. 4Ps skills development workshops



4ps (Public Private Partnerships Programme), is the local government procurement expert, which was established in 1996 by the English and Welsh local authority associations (predecessors to the Local Government Association). 4Ps offers comprehensive procurement support to local authorities. Its national strategic procurement skills programme has been designed to help local authorities deliver efficiencies through effective procurement and programme management.

The Supporting People Capacity Building Team is working with 4Ps to design a skills development programme specifically for Supporting People. The aim is to raise awareness of the Efficiency Review and the need to prepare to undertake efficiency projects in the Supporting People sector. A series of workshops planned for the autumn will enable Lead Officers to start to consider what types of projects they may need to undertake, understand the critical success factors for improvement projects and identify the skills and support their teams need to deliver efficiency and procurement projects

The feedback from the initial regional, the South East, will also inform the programme for our regional Value Improvement Project Seminars planned for early 2006 and begin to build sustainable capacity.

More details of all these events will be available in the next few weeks.

8. Backward Look Statements

MEETING - AND BEATING- EFFICIENCY TARGETS

The ODPM has just published detailed evidence showing that councils are on course to exceed the efficiency target set by the Government. The Backward Look statements are significant for the way they highlight actual gains (£757.6m) already made last year. This includes a very creditable contribution of £21m from the Supporting People sector!

Further details can be found in the recent News Release at:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pns/displaypn.cgi?pn_id=2005_0166

Next issue

If there is anything you would like to see covered in future editions of this newsletter or if you know of any capacity building initiatives that other local authorities and providers might be interested in please let us know by e-mailing christophera.smith@odpm.gsi.gov.uk



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