

Women's Resource Centre briefing paper

Local Integrated Services

January 2012

1. What are Local Integrated Services?

Local Integrated Services is a new approach to delivering local services which brings together budgets and local assets (such as buildings) and puts communities in control of co-producing and commissioning the services that they need. It looks at ways to effectively use existing resources and explores the benefits of pooling budgets. The Government supports the testing of community commissioning to see if it can produce better outcomes and create financial savings.

Ways that community members could get involved in Local Integrated Services (LIS) will depend on what roles and responsibilities make sense to local partners. For example community members could:

- Contribute to the assessment of local service needs;
- Help to design improved public services;
- Join a multi-partner or community commissioning group that makes decisions over how local public money is spent;
- Contribute to the assessment and review of local public services.

The Cabinet Office is currently working with 9 local areas to support innovation in public services and explore the potential of community commissioning to reform services, improve outcomes and save resources.

The aims of the policy are that:

- means of devolving and sharing local commissioning decisions and responsibility are tested;
- outcomes for people and communities improve;
- resources are saved; and
- local people feel more empowered and satisfied with public services.

LIS are currently being developed in: Barnsley, Blackburn with Darwen, Calderdale, Cheshire West and Chester, Kingston-Upon-Thames, Leeds, Sheffield, Tameside and Warrington.

2. Background to the project

The development of this project has been 'organic': local authorities and other local partners including the organisation Turning Point approached the Cabinet Office to provide central government support in exploring new ways to provide public services. All of the authorities are taking a community based approach; but are looking at very different self selected areas. For example, the project in Tameside is specifically looking at how it can support families with complex needs.

The project ran throughout 2011 with pace and timeframes being determined by each of the LIS areas. In 2012 the project will provide case studies and lessons learned on how local authorities and communities can design services together and commissioning can be done differently.

The Government is keen to test the extent to which innovation in public services can offer greater value for taxpayers' money and better results for local communities. Evidence from the fields of co-production and participatory budgeting suggests that where service users and community members lead or are centrally involved in prioritising and co-designing services, the result is cost savings and improved outcomes for individuals, communities and wider society.

3. What are the next steps for the project?

Over the course of this year, the LIS areas will be: examining opportunities for community engagement, identifying strategies for co-production, mapping resources and examining issues of governance and accountability. The project has become increasingly aligned with the decentralisation and neighbourhoods work being conducted by the Department for Communities and Local Government. In particular, in December 2011 the Department for Communities and Local Government announced 10 localities that have been selected as Neighbourhood Community Budget (NCB) pilots.

As a result, the current Cabinet Office community commissioning project will end in March 2012 and the LIS areas will be invited to become part of a new Neighbourhood Community Budgets learning network. This will boost joint working and learning in this area of policy development. Learning from the LIS areas will be shared via this network and LIS areas will have the opportunity to network with a wider range of partners.

4. How does it link to other Big Society programmes?

Local Integrated Services link closely to the Government's broader policies relating to public service reform. Public service reform policies seek to open up public services to a range of providers and support the engagement of communities in local commissioning.

Examples of related public service reform policies include:

- **Community Budgets-** budgets are pooled and local public service partners work together to design services around the needs of citizens to improve outcomes and reduce duplication and waste. In 2011, the government announced that Community Budgets for families with multiple problems would be introduced nationally, and that in 2012 there would be 10 new Neighbourhood Community Budget pilots and 4 new Whole Place Community Budget pilots.
- **Personalisation-** reforms of individual services aim to give people greater power to choose services for themselves using mechanisms such as direct cash payments and personal budgets.

- **Community Right to Challenge-** under the Localism Act, voluntary organisations, parish councils and local authority employees have the right to express an interest in taking over the running of a local authority service.

Local Integrated Services also more broadly link to community empowerment programmes which seek to increase public involvement in local decision-making. They share the aim of supporting communities to collectively identify local priorities and ensure that services meet local need.

5. What does the programme offer to equality VCOs?

Whilst the Local Integrated Services partnerships are in their early stages, equality organisations could potentially have a fundamental role to play in securing and facilitating community involvement in local commissioning. All of the local authorities involved in Local Integrated Services project are keen to develop relationships with the voluntary and community sector.

Equality organisations can play a role in commissioning and represent the views of particular equalities groups but also feed in new ideas of how they can be involved in supporting the commissioning process. As part of WRC's research regarding equality and the Big Society, we are keen to hear your suggestions on how equalities organisations can be involved in the design and delivery of public services.

6. Further information

For more information about public service reform policies visit:

<http://files.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/OpenPublicServices-WhitePaper.pdf>

For further information about Community Budgets visit:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/communitybudgets/>

For more information about the Community Right to Challenge and the Equality Act:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1896534.pdf>

If you would like to learn more about other Big Society policies and programmes relevant to you visit:

<http://www.voice4change-england.co.uk/content/voice4change-england-guide-big-society-policies-and-programmes>

This briefing is part of Voice4Change England's programme of work with the Women's Resource Centre, commissioned by the Office for Civil Society, to provide advice to Government on the challenges that inequalities present to the Big Society agenda and how to address them; and the opportunities for tackling inequalities that the Big Society agenda offers.