

TAMESIDE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES PARTNERSHIP

NOTES OF A NETWORK MEETING **HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH DECEMBER 1999**

Present:	Michelle Brennan	-	Legal Aid Board
	Charles Mannan	-	Tameside Welfare Rights Unit
	David Parsonage	-	Benefits Agency
	David Meakin	-	Trading Standards & Consumer Services
	John Husband	-	TACO
	Peter Holden	-	Thompson and Cook
	Kath Davis	-	P M Beevers
	Steve Gwenlan	-	Hibberts
	Keith Platts	-	Bromley Hyde and Robinson
	Jim Gourley	-	Mencap
	Fiona Dewar	-	IT Services, TMBC
	Maria Beswick	-	Interpreting Service, TMBC
	Susan Marsh	-	TACO/TREC
	Patricia Deaville	-	Pluck Andrew
	Gulzar Ahmed	-	GMIAU
	Kevin Corscadden	-	Rupert Wood & Son
	Cath Taylor	-	Rupert Wood & Son
	Carolyn Schofield	-	Legal Aid Board
	John Galvin	-	Rogerson Galvin
	Linda Walker	-	TMBC

1. Welcome

John Galvin, Tameside and Glossop Law Society (in the Chair), welcomed network members to the meeting. He explained that a great deal of work had been taking place in Tameside in preparing for the introduction of the Community Legal Service in April 2000 and network members were now being consulted about these developments.

2. Overview of the Community Legal Service

Carolyn Schofield, Regional Planning and Partnership Manager, gave a brief overview and explained that the Government had defined a Community Legal Service as “a network of good quality legal services supported by co-ordinated funding based on the effective assessment of the needs of local people”.

A local needs assessment was presently being undertaken to identify gaps in provision and areas of unmet need which would be used to ensure services are located and delivered to people who need them by recommending improvements, e.g. new outlets/outreach work.

3. Quality Mark

Carolyn Schofield referred to the Quality Mark booklet distributed to network members with the agenda. The booklet contained a brief outline of the standards and the application process. There are three standards and sub-divisions within two of them. These are;

- Information Services Information
Assisted information
- General Help Services General help
General help including casework
- Specialist Help Services

It is envisaged that franchised solicitors and other agencies, eg CAB, TWRU will automatically be passported to the specialist help level. Encouragement should be given to providers of information and general help service levels to apply for and obtain accreditation. The aim will be to ensure that members of the public seeking legal advice/information will receive a consistent and quality service.

It was noted that a series of full day seminars had been arranged by the Legal Aid Board and Advice Services Alliance aimed at information and general help service levels and will provide an overview of the Quality Mark. Seminars in Manchester will take place on the 13th and 14th January 2000.

4. **Provider Directory**

Steve Ogden, Manager, Tameside Welfare Rights Unit, explained that the provider directory of organisations which will identify provision within the Borough and how the public can access these services, will be an important feature of the CLS. A questionnaire and guidance notes had been distributed with the agenda which network members were asked to complete. The information provided will feature in a national CLS directory and also be used to compile a Tameside directory of additional services.

Carolyn Schofield indicated that the national directory was likely to be computerised and updated on a regular basis. In response to questions regarding the provision of training for organisations on how to access the national directory, Carolyn explained that training will be provided but it would be a key task for network members to identify their training requirements.

Completed questionnaires to be returned in the stamped addressed envelope provided. Copies also to be distributed to network members not present at the meeting with a request for a return by the end of January.

5. **Referral Arrangements**

Annette Goodfellow, Manager, Tameside Citizens Advice Bureau, referred to a draft referral scheme protocol designed to ensure clients reach the most appropriate source of help and how the scheme would work in Tameside. It is intended for the protocol to be included in the Tameside provider directory. It was agreed that monitoring arrangements would need to be in place to identify changing needs. Comments from network members to be considered at the next meeting.