

TAMESIDE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF A PROVIDER GROUP MEETING **HELD ON THURSDAY 27th MARCH 2001**

Present:	Jim Gourley	-	Mencap
	Naomi O'Connor	-	Tameside Trading Standards & Consumer Services
	Virginia Scott	-	Tameside Reference Library
	Lorna Wibberley	-	Rowlands Solicitors
	Julie Kirkham	-	Dial Tameside
	Pam Tweedie	-	Dial Tameside
	Joyce Jones	-	Tameside Victims Support
	Andrew Shanahan	-	Beevers Solicitors
	Nazrul Hoque	-	Tameside Customer Services
	Pietro Bonaminio	-	Information Shop for Young People
	Jim McGoogan	-	Legal Services Commission
	Andrew Murray	-	Bromley Hyde Robinson Solicitors
	Elizabeth Simpson	-	Tameside Welfare Rights Services
	Ruth Cheesbrough	-	Tameside Welfare Rights Service
	Michelle Brennan	-	Planning and Partnership Executive, LSC
	Alan Franco	-	CLS Co-ordinator
	Linda Walker	-	Partnership Secretary

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the proceedings of the previous meeting held on 30th November 2000 were approved as a correct record.

2. Provider Directory

Members of the network were informed that the next issue of the local Provider Directory was presently being reviewed. All providers listed in the directory would shortly be asked to confirm their entry details. In response to a request, details of the availability of a free initial interview and also website and email facilities would be included in the revised edition.

3. Active Signposting and Referral Scheme

(a) Monitoring Arrangements

In February 2001, providers were asked to complete monitoring forms in respect of 'Referrals In', 'Referrals Out' and 'Active Signposting'. Alan Franco and Michelle Brennan would be contacting those providers who had not yet responded.

(b) Training for Reception Staff

Michelle Brennan and Alan Franco offered to provide training for reception staff on the referral scheme or information about the Community Legal Service generally. Providers to contact Michelle or Alan for further details.

4. Partnership Innovation Budget

Michelle Brennan gave a presentation on the proposed scope, criteria and bidding process for the Partnership Innovation Budget. Provider Network members had recently received the consultation paper produced by the Lord Chancellor's

Department on which their comments had been invited. The aim of the Partnership Innovation Budget was to encourage innovative and new ways of delivering services in priority categories of law.

At the end of the presentation, network members divided into two workshops and contributed to ideas for the partnership to consider. Initial evaluation would identify those suggestions which could be funded by the local partnership and those to be put forward as bids for the PIB.

5. Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme Pilot – Proposals

(a) Local Pilot

Andrew Shanahan, Beevers Solicitors, gave details of the the local pilot scheme which had been running at Tameside County Court since January 2001 in conjunction with Rowlands Solicitors, Shelter North West and the Citizens Advice Bureau. He reported that he felt the scheme seemed to be progressing well.

Alan Franco stated that he had been in discussion with New Charter Housing Trust about sending information leaflets with notices seeking possession to encourage people to get help at an early stage in the proceedings.

(b) Legal Services Commission Consultation Paper

Network members referred to an LSC consultation paper circulated with the agenda which set out proposals for a pilot project for funding housing possession duty schemes in the County Court. Once these proposals had been finalised, there would be a 2-stage tendering process for the selection of the schemes which would participate in the pilot. This scheme would be similar to the one already in operation in Tameside but would be under contract with the LSC. Interest had been expressed by some of the housing providers in Tameside in being part of this pilot project.

6. Immigration Advice Provision

Alan Franco reported that as from April 2001 there would be a legal requirement for any organisation offering immigration advice to be registered with an independent Commissioner from the Home Office. Tameside did not have a contracted immigration supplier but was covered by contracts of regional suppliers such as Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit and Immigration Aid Advisory Service. An LSC document listing quality assured suppliers and an explanatory leaflet including details of interpreters fees and travel expenses etc had been distributed with the agenda. One of the issues identified in the Strategic Plan was to review the effectiveness and accessibility of outreach services in Tameside. It was noted that Tameside MBC had given a commitment to take approximately 200 asylum seekers over a specified period.

7. Consumer Support Network

Naomi O'Connor, Trading Standards, informed network members that a bid to provide start up funding had been submitted to the DTI and the use of the Citizen

2000 Panel in June to identify gaps in service. The Consumer Support Network was seen as a key element in the development of the Community Legal Service in Tameside.