

Review of 10 projects with a Children, Young People or Family focus Supported through the Partnership Initiative Budget

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Executive Summary

In the summer of 2005, the Children and Family Services Division of the Legal Services Commission undertook a series of visits to interview and learn from the people responsible for delivering services funded under the Project Initiative Budget (PIB). Each of the services was in its final year of PIB funding and focussed on delivering legal advice and information to children, young people or families.

From the interviews conducted, the Children and Family Services Division was impressed at the high level of commitment from host services and project workers. Many learning points and examples of best practice were taken from the projects which will inform future policy development as far as is practicable.

Findings from the reviews are divided into 3 sections – young people, women's safety and general findings. Findings from each area are broken down into various subsections with best practice examples given at the end of the section. A series of recommendations are also made in a separate section of the report.

Young People

This section explores the need for legal advice and information tailored at young people. It then offers findings from face-to-face and web based services for young people which include:

- a number of services highlighted the importance of consulting and involving young people in services aimed at them;
- Courts were identified as poor locations to deliver outreach services; and
- various services delivering web-based projects felt they would have been more successful if more research and development time was given to establish this type of service than they had allocated. This is because web based services for young people were relatively new at the time the services developed their web-based projects and required greater lead-in time than originally envisaged.

Women's Safety

This section looks at how combating domestic abuse has increased as a government priority in England and Wales. It then details findings from the services visited which were all aimed at women and their children who were experiencing domestic abuse. Finding include:

- a co-ordinating worker to help a client access the various advice, information and support services they need to address their problems was felt to lead to positive client outcomes
- it was, unsurprisingly, particularly important for women to feel that services were located somewhere they felt safe
- word of mouth was considered to be more effective at attracting service users than publicity

General Findings

This section includes findings that are not specific to any of the project types and relate to service management, delivery and funding. Much of this learning

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could be usefully incorporated by other types of service to help encourage positive project and client outcomes. Key amongst these are:

- developing networks with other local service providers was seen to be key to a successful project and to resolving the different problems clients need to address
- regularly reviewing a service to make sure it effectively meets client need was important in delivering a successful service
- political and economic impacts can change the direction of a project

Recommendations

14 recommendations are made as a result of the findings in the three sections. Although some are specific to the particular project types that were the subject of this review, many potentially have a wider application and could be employed by service funders or providers more generally.

Introduction

1. The Community Legal Service

- 1.1 The Community Legal Service exists to provide access to the legal and advice services that people need in order to exercise their rights, resolve disputes, challenge public authorities or go to court if necessary – in short, to make legal rights a reality.
- 1.2 These rights, and the problems people experience in safeguarding them, are not vague or abstract. They can be associated with, for example,
- The breakdown of a relationship;
 - Being unable to make mortgage repayments or pay rent;
 - Becoming homeless;
 - Owing money for goods or services;
 - Receiving incorrect welfare benefit;
 - Experiencing discrimination at work or losing a job;
 - Receiving negligent care in hospital;
 - Receiving unfair treatment by the police;
 - Being subject to the criminal justice system; and
 - Being recognised as someone entitled to asylum in the UK.
- 1.3 This is not an exhaustive list. Problems that relate to civil justice are as diverse as the people who have them.
- 1.4 The Community Legal Service is founded on the principle that access to accurate information and high quality legal and advice services has a vital role to play in safeguarding basic rights, promoting social inclusion and protecting the most vulnerable people in our communities. It comprises the funders and quality-assured providers that are working with the Legal Services Commission (LSC) to deliver services that make this happen¹.

2. The Partnership Initiative Budget

- 2.1 In 2000 the then Lord Chancellor's Department (now the Department for Constitutional Affairs) launched a short-term funding stream enabling organisations at a local level to develop projects that improve access to advice and information in civil law, in particular for vulnerable people. In the first round of funding (known as the Partnership Innovation Budget), the Commission awarded funding to organisations

¹ The Legal Services Commission (LSC) is a non-departmental public body reporting to the Department for Constitutional Affairs. The Commission sets its aims and objectives in discussion with the Department, which in turn agrees its aims and objectives with HM Treasury based upon government priorities. It is responsible for developing and administering the Community Legal Service (including civil legal aid) and the Criminal Defence Service (criminal legal aid).

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that demonstrated innovative approaches to delivering legal advice and information.

- 2.2 The second (and final) round was announced in 2001 and was known as the Partnership Initiative Budget. This focused on promoting Community Legal Education (educating people about their legal rights and entitlements) and on strengthening the relationships between advice providers and community groups in order to develop better services for clients.

3. The review programme

- 3.1 For the LSC, there have been two overriding and complementary objectives in establishing the Partnership Initiative budget (PIB):
- To make possible, and extend, new and creative approaches to bringing about access to justice; and
 - To ensure it takes full advantage of the unique opportunity this affords to learn from the experience of projects testing these approaches.
- 3.2 This review is primarily intended to contribute to the second of these objectives; in also seeking to inform others who are (or may be in the future) involved in delivering, funding or reviewing similar models of providing services, it also aims to support the first.
- 3.3 This report reviews 10 projects funded through PIB that deliver children, young people or family-focussed services²:
- 6 services focussed on children and young people (of which 3 developed internet-based services)
 - 3 services focussed on women and children's safety
 - 1 service focussed on parents³
- 3.4 The remaining family-focussed PIB project was unable to participate in the review due to a lack of resources at that time.
- 3.5 In total there were 27 family-focussed projects funded through PIB. Every LSC region funded at least one project of this type, with the exception of the West Midlands and the North West (see Map 2). The PIB projects visited during 2005 were those in their final year of PIB funding and were therefore most likely to have an overview of the various stages of the development of their service.
- 3.6 Information contained in this review is based on feedback obtained during interviews conducted with people involved in delivering the

² An earlier LSC review of 22 PIB projects was published in May 2005. Children and/or family focussed projects were not included as part of this review. Further information can be found at: http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/civil/innovations/developing_cls.asp#pib

³ Since the parent focussed project stands alone, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions of best practice for other similar projects. Although we have not examined this project separately, learning from it is included.

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projects. Interviews were conducted with the 10 services during summer 2005, and covered the background to the projects, how they were set up, how they operate on a day-to-day basis, their impacts, the main challenges they have faced, and the lessons learnt. The future of the project was also discussed, since at the time the interviews took place, PIB funding for each of the projects either had finished or was due to finish by the end of 2005. A summary of the services visited is included in Table 1, with Map 1 illustrating their geographical spread.

- 3.7 Additional information, including copies of reports, anonymous client statistics, and promotional materials was also gathered to inform the report.
- 3.8 Quantitative analysis, by which we might have compared the cost-effectiveness of different ways of delivering services, has not been appropriate within this review, since the emphasis in PIB has firmly been on trialling models of service delivery. The Commission has not, therefore, required projects to work to the same timeframe, be based on particular models of delivery, or collected detailed comparative monitoring data. Neither have we sought direct feedback from clients or other partners involved in the delivery of services, although we have sometimes been provided with this.
- 3.9 The groups of projects are discussed in separate chapters, each of which gives a summary of the main findings. We also provide a summary of good practice for others considering developing similar services, based on the experiences of the projects themselves.
- 3.10 We would like to express our sincere thanks to all those who have taken part in the Partnership Initiative Budget projects for the contribution they are making to the development of the Community Legal Service. We also express our gratitude to all the services we visited. Without their agreement to participate and willingness to enter into discussions about their experiences of the PIB, this review would not have been possible.

National Overview

4. National Context

- 4.1 Research and government priority has combined to highlight the deficiency of services for both victims of domestic violence and young people. Specific sections relating to children and young people, and to domestic violence victims are discussed more fully in the respective sections which follow.
- 4.2 When PIB funding was launched, bids from interested organisations were made through the area's local Community Legal Services Partnership (CLSP)⁴. One of the selection criteria was that potential projects were to meet an area of need prioritised by the local CLSP's Strategic Plan.
- 4.3 Although each LSC region⁵ determines its own priorities based on existing service provision and service need, most identified young people and/or women's safety as priority areas.
- 4.4 The importance placed on delivering legal advice and information to families by various regions was reflective of national focus on vulnerable children and their families. Within the LSC, in March 2004, the Children and Family Services Division was created to integrate the LSC's work on children and family law⁶. Moreover, during the last financial year, the LSC spent approximately a quarter of the total legal aid budget (just over £500 million) on family work.

⁴ When in operation, CLS Partnerships across England and Wales assessed local needs for legal services and worked to ensure that funding is targeted. Partnerships included representatives of the Legal Services Commission, local authorities, Government departments and statutory organisations, the voluntary and community sector, and legal services providers.

⁵ The LSC divides the country into 11 regions, each administered by a regional office. More information on the location and functions of these offices can be found at <http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/aboutus/regions/regions.asp>

⁶ Further information about the work of the Children and Family Services Division can be found at http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/civil/fains/children_family.asp

Young People

5. Context

5.1 The term 'young people' encompasses a very broad group of people. It is inaccurate to assume that all people aged between 13 and 24 will act in a uniform way or suffer the same legal problems. It also cannot be assumed that young people suffer the same established legal problems as adults, since in addition to advice on issues such as housing, debt and employment rights, many are likely to need advice, information or emotional support around issues such as bullying, relationships, low self esteem or abuse⁷.

5.2 There are trends, however, to suggest that when they do face a legal problem, young people are under represented in seeking advice. Professor Hazel Genn, in her study *Paths to Justice* found that

Younger people were more likely to have experienced problems than their older counterparts ... younger respondents were less likely to obtain advice⁸

5.3 James Kenrick in his research for Youth Access⁹ equates this not to a disinterest among young people about their rights, but to a lack of awareness of both their rights and of the advice services that exist and could help.

- Young people are less likely to report problems, with 34% of 18-24 year old respondents doing so in 2001. There was a similar pattern in 2004.
- The youngest respondents to both surveys were most likely to report problems related to rented housing, unfair treatment by the police and homelessness.
- Young people were more likely than other age groups to have taken no action because they thought nothing could be done

Causes of Action: Civil Law and Social Justice, 2nd Edition (2006)
Legal Services Research Centre

5.4 Government priority has also turned towards children and young people with the creation of services such as Connexions and Sure Start, as well as the development of Pathfinder Children's Trusts in 35 areas and extended schools. Local services are also moving to a more joined-up approach with the introduction of Children and Young People's Plans, and Joint Area Reviews that unite 10 previous inspectorates into a single review of children's services.

⁷ Kenrick, J. *Rights to Access: meeting young people's needs for advice* (2002)

⁸ Genn, H. with National Centre for Social Research, *Paths to Justice: what people do and think about going to the law* (1999)

⁹ Kenrick, J. *Rights to Access: meeting young people's needs for advice* (2002)

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5.5 Kenrick points to the limited effectiveness of the CLS in bringing about changes in young people's access to advice services

The traditional marginalisation of youth advice services and the name 'Community Legal Service' have not been helpful in making non-mainstream advice agencies, who frequently do not recognise themselves as legal advice providers, feel they can come together with more specialist legal providers as equal partners¹⁰.

5.6 There remain areas for development at both national and local development, although PIB funding has assisted in providing some services specifically for young people.

5.7 The projects reviewed aimed to increase access to legal advice and information by young people. They fell into two broad camps, those which delivered a face-to-face service and those that developed a web-based service. Generic findings for young people's services are set out below, together with specific findings from internet-based projects. Also included are specific examples of best practice.

6. Findings from service visits

6.1 Planning

- A wide age group was targeted by services for young people so services needed to be sure they delivered advice and information in a way that was accessible and relevant to various age groups.
- Clarifying the aims and objectives of a project from the outset is a key function of any management committee or steering group. One project worker reported having to change direction frequently to accommodate the changing views of their steering group.
- Most national services' training and induction do not include a youth-specific module¹¹.
- Young people appear disinterested in learning about their rights and responsibilities. Because of this, it can be difficult to target young people to deliver information and preventative work. Young people seem to want help to overcome their immediate problems and do not appear to want information on an issue unless they are directly affected at that time.
- Young people's services need to be located somewhere already accessed by young people. This places a requirement on funders to make greater efforts in researching and planning potential delivery

¹⁰ Kenrick opt. cit.

¹¹ National Occupational Standards for providing Specialist Legal Advice to Young People have recently been developed (<http://www.nos4advice.org.uk/uploads/documents/KnowledgeUnitLA36.doc>) and could inform the required knowledge base for advice workers, once the final standards are released.

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agents and/or locations for funding to make sure services are developed in a location that will deliver success.

6.2 Environment

- The environment in which information and skills are conveyed can be a useful indicator as to style of delivery. More formal, information-based sessions are more acceptable within an environment where young people expect an educational input, such as schools and further education colleges. Delivery in locations that young people attend in their free time needs to be fun, informal and interactive, just like any other enjoyable activity they would choose to do in their own time.
- There can be difficulties accessing schools to deliver services to young people as timetables are designed up to 12 months in advance so projects must liaise early with schools to fit into the year's programme.
- Court was identified as a poor location to deliver advice outreach to young people and experience has shown that generally young people want to be in and out of court as quickly as possible.

6.3 Access

- Although projects aimed to reach young people from their early teens up to their mid-20s, most users were of school age and accessed within school.
- Word of mouth was helpful in promoting projects, but for most there was a direct correlation between school visits or publicity and service use.
- A level of 'paternalism' was encountered by a service that tried to engage with young people with learning difficulties or physical disabilities. Support services and parents often made assumptions that these young people would not understand the advice being given or that parents could best manage any problems their children encountered. Although it is clear that this paternalism and cushioning was undertaken with good intentions, in reality, it compromised these young people's independence.

6.4 Practice

- In services that are not traditionally accessed by young people, the presence of the PIB project tended to create a young people specialist within the service. Other workers could refer clients to them or seek advice or information. This new focus in the organisations led to an upskilling of the whole work force.
- Building trust and a positive relationship with young people is important, but can lead to dependency on the caseworker.
- One service found that when attending events where they held stalls,

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for example events for Freshers at university, they would receive little or no interest unless they offered free gifts and goody bags.

- Proactively assisting young people to make their case is very important in helping young people obtain their statutory entitlements, for example, in challenging decisions by statutory services and representing at tribunals.
- Service use tended to decline during the summer holidays. This time can be productively used to plan activities, evaluate the service, and create leaflets or publicity.

6.5 Partnership

- There is no standard definition of the age range that constitutes 'young people' through the advice sector.
- A number of projects were surprised by the lack of knowledge of some statutory sector staff in agencies set up to deal with young people and their problems.

7. Findings from services hosting a web-based project

7.1 Planning

- During the time frame of these PIB services, a realistic lead-in time was needed. 18-24 months was needed to research, develop and launch such a service. The services felt that, at the time they started development, there were few existing web-based services for young people when these projects were established, meaning the research and development time was extensive. The requirement for a long lead in may have changed since the development of numerous websites for young people.
- For those developing services for young people, it is critical to find out what clients want the service to deliver and where they want to access it as part of the initial research.
- Web based services were required in their Agreement Letter¹² to work with the Commission's eCLS policy team to develop the electronic aspects of their service. Many of the services interviewed had no knowledge of the eCLS policy team and had not undertaken joint working. The reason for this may be related to changes to eCLS's involvement following learning from the first PIB round. Initially a sample of web based services funded during the first round worked closely with eCLS to develop their projects. As some services felt such close involvement hindered development, eCLS changed its policy to offer support only where this was requested.

¹² The Agreement Letter is the contractual agreement between the service hosting the PIB project and the LSC. 11

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- An issue was raised by one of the services visited around copyright ownership of the data that drives any web-based service – i.e. the data that sits behind the user display. Unless specified in contracting with a web developer, this often remains in the developer's ownership, making the service tied to them for any future changes and site management.
- Web based services found that the degree of consultation, discussion and testing required closer and more frequent working than originally envisaged. Services wishing to develop a web-based service should take their physical proximity to their web designer into account when contracting.
- One service commented that if they were to replicate their service, they would have ensured they had decided on the content and look of their site before the web designer started work. Their experience was that not having a complete picture from the outset made the development more difficult as their assumption that the web developer would help them fill the missing parts of their specification were not born out.

7.2 Delivery

- Many of the web-based services felt they benefited from conducting outreach work. Without personal interaction with the client-group, some services feared they would become faceless and not gain young people's trust as the worker at the other end of the email is unknown.
- One organisation found paying Internet search providers to keep their site at the top of their search lists to be very valuable. The same service also sought to maximise their exposure by advertising in a magazine that is circulated to all teachers in the county.
- Specific skills are needed to convey empathy through email. Draft National Occupational Standards have been created for people who provide legal advice through electronic media (<http://www.nos4advice.org.uk/uploads/documents/GenericStandardsUnitLA29.doc>). Following public consultation, the final standard (as part of a suite of standards for delivering legal advice) will be available shortly.
- Sites need to be simple and respectful of their audience, without being too consciously 'youthy'.
- The seriousness and complexity of problems that young people present with should not be underestimated. Problems are also presented at a younger age than some services had initially assumed.
- Problems that are addressed in general information pages are popular with younger service users. They are least likely to admit they have a

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problem which they perceive to make them different. If their problem is discussed on these pages, their problem is normalised, as it is perceived as affecting other people too.

7.3 Young People's perceptions

- Websites provide novelty value and catch young people's attention. They must, however, be kept up to date to prevent the look or content becoming outdated.

8. Best Practice Examples

- 8.1 One service accessed young people in the classroom to raise financial awareness by delivering the financial literacy section of the school's citizenship classes.
- 8.2 A number of project workers consulted with young people throughout the life of their projects. One web-based project started with a group of young people to consult with, who then moved on to write pieces for the site.
- 8.3 One service used young people to create all their publicity as the young people they worked with had the time, had the inclination and 'because they're great at it'.
- 8.4 One service produced a series of information leaflets as part of its PIB project. These leaflets helped to improve the profile of the service in general and are now being used in various branches.

9. Summary

- 9.1 Our findings from interviews with young people's services found that children, like adults, can suffer from many complex legal, practical and emotional problems. The services offered largely welfare benefits advice although it was recognised that this cannot be delivered without some emotional support.
- 9.2 The key learning point for services wishing to either develop or fund a web-based service revolved around the potential length of time needed for proper research and development.
- 9.3 Although services have increased access to advice and information by young people, most services found that they were accessed mainly by young people up to the age of 16 and in education. Further work may need to be done to reach young people over 16, for example outreach into universities or large employers and those who are not in education, training or employment. This could be by outreach in venues such as job centres, children's centres and libraries, and by developing better referral networks between existing services.

Women's safety

10. Context

10.1 The Government definition of domestic violence is:

any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality¹³

10.2 Although there have been voluntary and community services specifically for women experiencing domestic violence since the 1970s¹⁴, domestic abuse is an area which has become a priority in the public consciousness and government agenda only relatively recently.

10.3 Domestic abuse affects thousands of families each year. The 2001/2002 British Crime Survey found that there were an estimated 635,000 incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales, of which 81% of the victims were women. The Legal Services Commission funds approximately 23,000 *civil* domestic violence cases annually.

- Domestic violence accounts for nearly one quarter of all recorded violent crime
- Approximately 1 in 4 women will experience some form of domestic violence in their lifetime
- Every year around 150 people (120 women and 30 men) are killed by a current or former partner, and domestic violence affects the lives of thousands more

Safety and Justice, Home Office (2003)

10.4 Legislation, Government papers, influential fora and emerging working practices all reflect the shift in national priority towards combating domestic abuse. Examples of these include:

- The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 which gained Royal Assent in November 2004 and has been implemented from 2005 onwards;
- Papers such as 'Safety and Justice' 2003¹⁶ and 'Domestic Violence: A National Report'¹⁷ have been published;
- Groups such as the All Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence and the Joint Risk Assessment Group (JRAG) which exist

¹³ Home Office, *Domestic Violence a National Report* (March 2005)

¹⁴ The first women's refuge opened in 1971. Raised in a speech by Sandra Horley, Chief Executive, Refuge at the 2005 Refuge national conference *Domestic Violence: Everyone's Responsibility*

¹⁵ Walby, S. *The Cost of Domestic Violence* (September 2004)

¹⁶ Home Office, *Safety and justice: sharing personal in the context of domestic violence – an overview* (2004). This paper centred inter alia on prevention, protection of victims and supporting victims in living without violence.

¹⁷ Home Office, *Domestic Violence a National Report* (March 2005)

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to ensure Government departments and the legislature are fully aware of issues relating to domestic violence;

- Working practice changes include, the roll out of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts after successful piloting, the creation by CAFCASS of a domestic violence toolkit and extensive training for their officers, and the Crown Prosecution Service's launch of Domestic Violence Good Practice Guidelines in November 2005.

10.5 Much work is being carried out at the national and Governmental level to protect those who are subject to domestic violence and bring perpetrators to justice through the law.

10.6 Despite the increased focus on domestic violence at national level, it has been recognised that the provision of domestic violence services in statutory and voluntary sectors throughout England and Wales is patchy¹⁸.

10.7 The Government's commitment to meeting the needs of victims of domestic violence was reflected in the Partnership Initiative Budget grants for projects that will deliver this type of service. The three services visited provided services for women and their children who have been affected by domestic abuse. As this PIB funding was used to test working practices, usual eligibility criteria did not apply.

11. Findings from service visits

11.1 Planning

- It is important to join up services that can help women as they will often suffer a range of problems and require different services to help with different aspects. Women in crisis can rarely access the range of services they need, so having one coordinating point to guide women through their options was found to provide positive client outcomes.
- Community outreach was found to be beneficial for clients, particularly in rural areas, or those with poor public transport networks. Outreach ensured services were provided for clients in isolated communities who otherwise may not have sought, or been able to locate, appropriate sources of legal advice and information. Those services that held outreach in another organisation's centre (rather than by appointment in the community) also found that centre workers would help to publicise the service to potential clients.
- Consideration does need to be given to workers who are predominantly community-based to ensure they have access to the support and supervision afforded to other staff members.

¹⁸ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Working with families where there is domestic violence* (2000)

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- Operating without a full time manager and with workers on widely ranging hours can cause project management difficulties. It was suggested that to operate most effectively, a full time manager and project workers hours at a minimum of a half time equivalent would be beneficial to help co-ordinate working and supervision.
- One service initially employed a project worker with a legal background. When she left, two workers with a counselling background replaced her. The service felt that the counselling background was more conducive to delivering an holistic approach to diagnosing client need.

11.2 **Environment**

- One service was based in a Sure Start centre and was aimed at providing general family legal advice so as not to limit solicitors to women-only clients. Family legal advice was promoted through advertising rather than a domestic violence service. The project worker for this service acknowledged that possibly an alternative location and/or further rounds of publicity could have promoted increased service use.

11.3 **Access**

- Women will only access a service if it is located somewhere they feel safe, be this in a women's centre, in the community, at another services premises (e.g. doctor's surgery).
- One service provided a specific service for Asian women in the community which took account of cultural differences and needs. Doing this required careful planning and attention to safety, both for the worker and clients. The worker also built links with local health workers and schools so that women could access the service safely and without causing suspicion.
- Access to the services tended to consist of a combination of self-referral and referrals from other services.
- One service found they had more clients with 'double disadvantages' than envisaged at the outset. This refers to women in crisis with further limitations to their ability to access services, for example a disability or little or no spoken English. These clients are in most need of support but are most difficult to find the right support for.

11.4 **Practice**

- Publicity tends to be less effective at encouraging clients to use a service than word of mouth.
- Services that offered a holistic diagnosis of client need, followed by supported referral provided positive client outcomes. A holistic approach was seen as key to a casework service as often the main

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problem is not the first the client presents.

- Women from BME communities require a service specific to their need. For example, interpretation services or a sensitive approach that takes account of cultural expectations upon women and the family may be needed.
- Client empowerment and confidence building is important for services helping women deal with the effects of domestic abuse.
- The PIB project has become a key service at both of the women's centres that established caseworker posts to identify need and make supported referrals. The suggestion was made that one would consider reducing funding to administrative posts to maintain the service if continuation funding could not be secured.
- Women continue to use advice, information and support services until they feel able to stand alone. This may take a number of months or years, and many individual pieces of advice or information given.
- Due to insufficient capacity to meet demand, locating a service that can help a client can take hours, even for an advice worker with considerable local knowledge.
- Referring clients to a named contact in a partner service is often more acceptable to clients than making a referral to a faceless agency.

11.5 Partnership

- Differing experiences of engaging with solicitors were found by services. Where as one found solicitors keen to engage with their services, another found that solicitors were unable to undertake outreach work to assist the service due to existing pressures upon their time.
- Networking with other services was raised as being key to providing a holistic service.
- Some of the women's services found that increasingly other services would contact them for information or advice, as well as making referrals to them. The service had come to be viewed as a specialist service and highlights the effectiveness of joint working by these services.

12. Best Practice Examples

- 12.1 One service developed part of their project specifically to work with Asian women. Due to its success this has been mainstreamed. The worker is based in the community and accesses clients regularly through strong links with other professionals. For example, clients may

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be seen during visits to their GP, school, nurse or health visitor. There is no publicity for this service given the sensitive and covert nature of the work.

- 12.2 One service created a programme for women who live, or have lived, in a violent relationship. It aims to help women to recognise an abusive relationship and how to avoid becoming involved in one again. This service is heavily oversubscribed.
- 12.3 One women's service created a Personal Safety Plan Diary with part of their PIB funding. This is a feminine-looking small booklet that allows women to diarise incidents. For it to be used as evidence in court, the service's specification included page numbers so that pages could not be inserted at a later date, thereby meeting court evidential requirements.
- 12.4 One service funded interpreters. This was to replace the common and inappropriate practice of interpretation by friends or children.
- 12.5 Two of the three services for women experiencing domestic abuse used a central triage service to diagnose client problems and make appropriate referrals. The caseworker at these services also retained overall management of the client's case, thereby acting as the co-ordinating point.
- 12.6 One service supported and empowered women to make their own referrals to other services by giving free access to telephones, fax machines, photocopiers and stationery.
- 12.7 Multi-agency training was provided by one service for the purposes of developing networking and joint working, as well as creating opportunities for raising awareness of domestic violence issues. This service also created education packs for use within schools.
- 12.8 One service conducted a self-evaluation of their service in the form of a good practice guide.
- 12.9 Guidance for clients was created by a domestic violence service. This included a step-by-step guide to using the Internet to support people to find the information they need, and a solicitor charter to help manage client expectations before a meeting with a solicitor.

13. Summary

- 13.1 Each of the PIB projects was delivered by an established domestic violence service so each had an existing client base and was well known to deliver services for women experiencing domestic violence. As this was the case, and given the sensitive nature of their work, it was not surprising that word of mouth provided more effective publicity than

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producing promotion materials.

- 13.2 Some encouraging approaches were put in place to provide services that would help women from BME communities to access the help and support they need. One service had hoped to work with a local interpretation service to train a base of volunteer interpreters to accompany women to appointments. Unfortunately, fears around competition meant this did not go ahead as planned.

General Findings

14. Findings relevant to any service provider or funder

14.1 Findings highlighted in this section are not specific to any one particular project type, but are divided into practical and policy issues.

14.2 Practical

- It is difficult for services to plan around short term projects. Unless continuation funding has been secured, it is difficult to plan future work and staffing arrangements. For example, where services wish to access schools, the experience of projects has shown that planning in school takes place a year in advance so a service must be sure of its survival to fit in with this.
- Those delivering the project or service need to be aware of the objectives and success criteria. At many of the services visited as part of this review, service managers had never shown the original service agreement to those delivering the project. In some cases, project workers had been falsely under the impression that they had to deliver certain outcomes that had never been contractually required of them.
- Networking is key to the success of any project.
- Split management doesn't work. The service running a project needs to have control of the finance, decision making and success criteria. At one of the projects visited, the service hosting the project was not the service that originally bid.
- One worker found that having 'CLS worker' as part of her job title gave her greater influence in working with other services.
- Knowing the extent of one's competence but being able to access other services that can help the client with different aspects of their problem provides better outcomes and promotes closer working between local services.
- A successful project that networks closely with other services can help to promote the whole service locally.

14.3 Policy

- Funders could work with shortlisted bids to make sure projects are located in the most appropriate service in the area. This would help to ensure services are most appropriately located from the outset and the problems of split management do not occur.
- Reporting the number of clients seen does not always reflect value for money. Clients may use a service over a prolonged period to help

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them overcome the cluster of problems¹⁹ they are experiencing, meaning that clients seen does not equate to the number of issues resolved.

- Political and economic impacts can change the direction of a project, for example, one service found that the introduction of Child Tax Credits meant that they had to refocus the direction and delivery of their service.
- A number of services found that they experienced high staff turnover. Having trained one project worker they would leave as more highly paid, permanent alternatives were available, particularly within local authorities. One service, for example, trained a volunteer who had not been in paid employment for 12 years. He then shortly after found permanent work with the local council.
- It was identified that CAB-recruited staff have to complete CitA basic training which takes between 6 and 9 months. For CAB-based projects that experience high staff turnover, this has caused difficulty as workers cannot undertake casework without 100% supervision during this time. Although the training requirements ensure uniform standards of knowledge and skills across workers, some services found that coupled with high staff turnover, this increased the risk of undermining the effectiveness of their whole service.
- Some services had difficulty engaging specialist legal advice from legal aid suppliers, particularly for outreach work. Possible explanations given from services focussed around high demand for legal aid services with a decreasing supplier base. Difficulty in accessing GPs as a group was also raised as an issue by one service.
- Delivering an holistic approach to identifying and resolving client problems was identified by many projects as key since the main problem may be the last to present.
- Regularly reviewing the service offered to make sure it constantly best meets client need is important to establishing a successful service.
- Where services operate with different confidentiality procedures²⁰ this can result in difficulties around sharing client information and making referrals.

¹⁹ Causes of Action: Civil Law and Social Justice, Pleasence, P., Buck, A., Balmer, N.J., O'Grady, A., and Genn, H. 2004 found that family 'problems' are generally in definable 'clusters' - individuals experiencing a family problem often have a number of interrelated issues to deal with, most commonly further family problems. Almost one half of all family problems were reported as having occurred in combination with one or more other family problems

²⁰ There is no nationally recommended confidentiality procedure for non-statutory services. Some services operate on the basis of professional confidentiality so that some information can be shared if appropriate where as others operate with a policy of absolute confidentiality, so that no information is shared in any circumstances.

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- Citizen's Advice national training does not include a section on young people.

15. Summary

15.1 It was interesting and promising to find that there are so many key points that are universal in their application. This suggests that findings and recommendations should be, on the whole, universally applicable too. It would appear that by learning from the experiences of PIB funded services, other services and funders could prevent potential pitfalls.

Recommendations

16. Recommendations for services developing or funding similar projects

- 16.1 Other services contemplating funding or establishing a project or service should be clear from the outset what they want to achieve and the relevant partners that may need to be engaged to deliver success.
- 16.2 Planning and research at the application stage should consider whether the service that has made a bid is the best to deliver the outcomes. Funders should also consider whether there are similar or compatible services already being funded in the area which would be better to build on, rather than replicate elsewhere.
- 16.3 Services delivering projects need clear delivery plans to help make sure realistic set up time is allocated and time during typically quiet periods (such as school holidays) is effectively utilised.
- 16.4 Consider other longer term funding. Currently continual reinvention of an existing service is needed to make it compatible with new funding streams. There appears to be little interest in funding existing services that provide an excellent service. One service suggested that if a project is recognised as delivering best practice, core funding should be made available, and reviewed every 3 years. This would be cheaper for funders than regularly paying set up costs for new projects, and would provide continuity of service for the delivery agency and for users.
- 16.5 Encouragement of networking. Networking was viewed as key to success by many of the services interviewed and was consistent between services catering for young people and those who provided services for women experiencing domestic violence. Any service thinking of replicating similar services and any funder looking to commission work through the advice sector should encourage this approach.
- 16.6 Web-based services may require a long research and development time. Consideration should be made to this in future projects with adequate time allocated to development prior to launching their service. Consultation on how the site looks and what information would be wanted are crucial to a successful site at the beginning stage and throughout to maintain relevancy and the latest 'look'.
- 16.7 Input from young people is also needed from the early stages of any project aimed at this client group.
- 16.8 Services need to be developed that target young people aged over 16. Given the growing level of student debt, it is worrying that this group

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has been reluctant to seek advice and information from the PIB services.

- 16.9 Services need to be developed to address the needs of clients who are not in education, employment or training. This is a particularly vulnerable client group for whom specific services need to be developed so their needs can be addressed.
- 16.10 Local monopolies providing interpretation services can lead to services being able to charge high prices. Working guidelines need to be in place to encourage reasonable costs to be paid for such services. Cost effectiveness could be encouraged, for example, through a requirement upon services to gather quotes for work in non-emergency circumstances.
- 16.11 Funders who wish to evaluate the projects they commission would be advised to include a requirement to participate in up to half a day of face-to-face evaluation in contractual agreements.
- 16.12 To help promote awareness by statutory services of agencies that work with young people, it would be worthwhile for advice sector young people's projects to provide some basic or problem noticer training. The experience of the service that carried this out as part of their project found it to be resource intensive as it needs to be offered regularly to account for staff turnover in statutory agencies. The service interviewed suggested this training be offered annually.
- 16.13 A nationally recommended confidentiality policy for non-statutory services would help reduce existing difficulties as a result of non-standard policy arrangements.
- 16.14 Greater availability of training on young people for statutory and non-statutory services would help highlight client need and the range of local and national young people's services available to provide information, advice and support.

Conclusion

17. Conclusions drawn from the review of 10 services with a children, young people or family focus, supported through the Partnership Initiative Budget

- 17.1 Visiting each of the 10 services that hosted a PIB project has been extremely valuable and enlightening. The information and learning that we have amassed can be carried forward by any services that either fund or host similar projects. There are also learning points for central government, particularly around contemplating more fixed term funding for successful services.
- 17.2 Each of the services felt that their PIB service had both raised the profile of their whole service and provided a valuable contribution to their local area. They each felt that through their service, they had increased their target client group's access to legal advice and information.
- 17.3 The LSC is increasingly targeting its resources at specialist acts of advice and assistance, which means there will be no further rounds of PIB funding. However, by reviewing services that have been funded under PIB some important pointers for best practice have been learnt which will be taken on board as far as practicable.
- 17.4 The projects reviewed are representative of the many services which provide a lifeline on which their disadvantaged clients depend. To these clients, the vagaries of fixed term funding and shifting priorities for grant aid are both immaterial and inexplicable; all they know is that the service they depend on is suddenly not there. The LSC would encourage all funding and commissioning bodies to develop a more strategic, and sustainable, approach to funding advice services for vulnerable people.

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Additional Information

Table 1
Overview of PIB Services Reviewed Summer 2005

Project	Host Agency	Start date, duration & PIB funding	Key Facts
Parents' Advice Project	West Somerset Advice Bureau	March 2002 3 years £87,500	Generalist money advice 1 adviser Problem noticer training given to relevant services Advice provision e.g. on tax credits Targeting parents in high-deprivation, rural areas
Internet Service for Young People	Wymondham Attleborough & District CAB	April 2002 3 years £344,804	Generalist advice (using website and outreach) 2 advisers Targeting young people in key areas of law and providing an information resource for people and agencies supporting young people.
On-line Advice Service for Young People	1. Ashford Citizens' Advice Bureau 2. Kent County Council	June 2002 3 years £262,650	Generalist advice (using website and outreach) 1 adviser, 1 promotion worker Covering Ashford and Shepway districts
Young People's Support Advice and Information Service	Castle Point Citizens' Advice Bureau	April 2002 3 years £94,621	Generalist advice (using text message, face-to-face in house and at outreach, email services) 1 adviser Originally planned a money management website
Young Peoples' Advice and Information Project	1. Caerphilly County Citizens' Advice Bureau 2. Basement Information Service for Young People	December 2002 3 years £397,276	Generalist welfare benefits and debt advice 1 adviser in each host agency Targeted at young people Building on an existing information shop and mobile unit Outreach at various locations

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Connexions Development Programme	Tees Valley Connexions	June 2002 3 years £147,670	Generalist advice and information raising in social welfare 1 adviser Targeted at young people and those who are involved with young people Drop-in and outreach sessions offered
Young People's Outreach Advisor	Banbury Citizens' Advice Bureau	July 2003 2 years £76,278	Awareness raising around rights and responsibilities in housing, employment and debt 1 Outreach Worker Targeted young people in the community Links those in need of advice with appropriate local advisers and support groups.
Advice Circle	Redcar and Cleveland Women's Aid	January 2003 3 years £161,473	One-stop referral service 1 Domestic Violence Co-ordinator and 1 Outreach Worker Targeted at women affected by domestic violence
Well Woman Advice and Guidance Project	Calderdale Women's Centre	January 2002 3 years £380,019	Generalist assisted information and advice (using clinics/home visits and telephone) 6 x part time advisers, including an Asian Women's Support Worker Targeted at women experiencing domestic violence Referrals made to specialist advisers where necessary
Opening Doors Project	Watford Women's Centre	June 2002 3 years £76,479	Diagnosing the range of client problems 1x FTE support worker Helping users access legal advice and information Targeted at women experiencing domestic violence

Map 1 Locations of services reviewed in Summer 2005

