

Directors of Children's Services

2 October 2008

Dear All

Dry Run

I am writing to you concerning the **proposed “dry run” this year of the new 16-18 commissioning cycle** resulting from the Machinery of Government changes. I am conscious that not all DCS's were able to attend Monday's ALDCS meeting and thought it would be helpful if everybody had the pertinent information in one place, i.e. this letter. I apologise for the length in advance but feel it is important that you are absolutely clear about the proposal from the LSC to work with Local Authorities on an early “dry run” of the new process and **what level of involvement you as a Local Authority would wish to have this year.**

RATIONALE

The London model devolves decision making and commissioning to the local level which will result in 32 commissioning units across the region. As all boroughs will need to have discussions with other Authorities based on significant travel to study patterns it will be helpful to have a degree of consistency in approach.

The two key processes locally will be the strategic analysis of data/local intelligence and the production of a 16-18 commissioning plan which will detail learner numbers by each provider based in a borough. If these two processes and supporting documentation are consistent across London, it will enable effective aggregation of plans and Local Authorities will instantly recognise the format and understand the data and analysis that has been used to reach its conclusions.

There will also be protocols to support the inter-borough consultations and any regional decision making and conflict resolution necessary to deliver a London-wide proposal for eventual aggregation up to the national level.

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From September 2009 it is expected that LAs and LSCs will work very closely together on the allocations process. In order to prepare for this the 14-19 Regional Planning Group supported the idea of a **“dry run” process starting from this September**. This will enable staff from both the LSC and Local Authority to begin to understand and influence how the process might work in the future, stress test the proposed system for London, develop robust processes to underpin the London model, make the London Model influential in determining future national approaches and enable a full evaluation and subsequent improvements to ensure it is ready for September 2009 when it really begins to count.

DRY RUN PROPOSAL FOR THIS YEAR

The dry run process will intersect with the LSC allocations process at key points but the LSC will make the final decisions on this year's provider allocations. The purpose of the dry run is to test the new system.

1. Recommended Minimum

1.1 It is recommended that all Local Authorities agree to complete the minimum level of engagement with the “dry run” this year. This entails the completion of a strategic analysis and highlighting 16-18 commissioning priorities/issues. The LSC will populate the 16-18 data sets for all boroughs and LSC partnership teams will assist LA colleagues with analysis but the agreement of priorities for the borough will be the responsibility of individual LAs.

2. Optional activities contributing to a full pilot

2.1 LA staff to accompany LSC Partnership Team staff on key provider planning meetings. The LSC will agree a protocol with providers to ensure they are content that discussions and information provided is treated as commercial and in confidence this year by Local Authority staff.

2.2 Hold mock inter-borough consultations to try out the new approach and guidelines.

2.3 LA to convert their identified 16-18 commissioning priorities into a commissioning plan. This will include all local providers and detail the learner numbers that the LA would commission using the new approach. LSC partnership teams would play a supporting role in this.

2.4 LAs to aggregate their commissioning plans up to the regional level to test approaches on consensus building/agreement and to look at provision that might be better commissioned regionally.

3. Evaluation and intersection with LSC Allocations Process

3.1 The “dry run” and the LSC allocations process for this year will intersect at three key points. Firstly, when LA colleagues accompany LSC staff on

real provider planning meetings, secondly when all the findings from the strategic analysis are aggregated up to inform the allocations process in the LSC Regional Planning & Allocations Group and thirdly when the pilot LA commissioning plans are aggregated to the regional level and compared with the actual outcomes from the LSC process (looking at learner numbers (growth), costs and PSA targets).

3.2 A full end to end evaluation of the process will be carried out and recommendations made to strengthen the processes underpinning the London Model.

DECISION REQUIRED FROM YOU

Having discussed all of the above at the ALDCs meeting it was agreed that DCS's would consider how they would wish to be involved in the "dry run" process this year.

Please refer to sections 1. *Recommended Minimum* and 2. *Optional activities contributing to a full pilot* and **let me know how you wish to be involved this year as a borough, ranging from the recommended minimum through to the full pilot**. If you could respond by email that would be helpful. I am also happy to talk to any of you if you wish to clarify any of the above information.

Once again I apologise for the length of this however I am sure you will appreciate the importance of being clear and ensuring that every DCS is able to make an informed decision.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and support in this important work.

Yours sincerely

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