



Fact Sheet

Budget-holding lead professional pilots

Pilots have been set up to trial the concept of the budget-holding lead professional. The aim is to test whether better service packages for core groups of children and families could be delivered by giving lead professionals a budget with which to quickly procure goods and commission services directly from providers.

Background

The HMT-DfES document *Support for parents: the best start for children* (December 2005) set out a clear ambition to promote greater personalisation of services. The paper sets out the need to establish a series of 'single account holder pathfinders' to test whether a budget-holding lead professional model might be implemented more widely.

Which local authorities are piloting the budget-holding lead professional model?

There are 16 local authorities piloting the model:

- Blackpool
- Bournemouth
- Poole
- Brighton & Hove
- Derbyshire
- Devon
- Gateshead
- Gloucestershire
- Hertfordshire
- Knowsley
- Leeds
- Redbridge
- Telford & Wrekin
- Tower Hamlets
- Trafford
- West Sussex

When are the pilots taking place?

The pilots began in June 2006 and run up to April 2008.

Why are you introducing budget-holding to the lead professional role?

The Department would like to test whether holding budgets could give lead professionals additional power to:

- ensure children, young people and families get the public services they need when they need them, rather than as and when public service organisations grant the services to them;
- reduce overlap and inconsistency from other practitioners, thus reducing the costs per "episode" of intervention.

How is the success of the pilots being measured?

An evaluation began in September 2006 to examine the cost-effectiveness of budget-holding, taking into account the views of, and effects on, children/young people and their families, practitioners and service managers.

Who are budget-holding lead professionals?

This varies as each pilot is trialling variations of the model. However, the role could be taken on by a wide range of practitioners, as the skills, competence and knowledge required to carry out the role are similar regardless of professional background or job.

How much money will they have to spend?

The money available varies from one pilot to another as the amount spent is determined on the basis of the needs identified. The amounts vary from small sums, for example, £1.50 for a bus ticket, to £1,000 for a package of counselling sessions.

What sort of things will budget-holding lead professionals be able to purchase?

This varies between pilots and the circumstances, but ranges from a one off 'crisis' payment for a child's shoes, safety equipment for the home, youth activity, counselling services or respite care.

Who will decide what is sensible and appropriate?

The budget holding lead professional decides this in discussion with the child, family and the other practitioner(s)

Find out more

The latest information can be found at www.ecm.gov.uk/leadprofessional/budgetholding