

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 9th October 2007

Subject: Briefing on Direct Payments

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 2nd July 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to undertake an Inquiry into Direct Payments. This followed initial discussion in the previous June around Leeds' overall performance in terms of Direct Payment (see Appendix 1).
- 1.2 Members of the Committee wished to examine whether Leeds City Council was maximising the provision of Direct Payments and whether Direct Payments were benefiting users.
- 1.3 A Working Group was subsequently established to draft appropriate Terms of Reference for an Inquiry. This Working Group met on 20th July 2007 and following discussion concluded that prior to agreeing Terms of Reference the Committee should receive a briefing on Direct Payments. The Working Group was of the view that such a briefing may influence whether the Committee considers an Inquiry worthwhile or not. This approach was endorsed by the full Committee in September 2007.
- 1.4 Mike Evans, Chief Officer Adult Services, has been invited to today's meeting to brief Members on Direct Payments, the particular issues around Direct Payments and the current situation as it relates to Leeds.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to discuss with the Chief Officer the issue of Direct Payments and to consider whether further Scrutiny is required.

Performance Report – June 2007 - BV-201 (PAF C51): Direct Payments

This indicator measures the number of adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31st March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over.

Direct payments are intended to give the recipient greater control over their lives by providing an alternative to services provided by social services departments. Councils have a duty to provide these services where individuals consent to this and are able to manage them. The indicator shows how well authorities are able to implement direct payments.

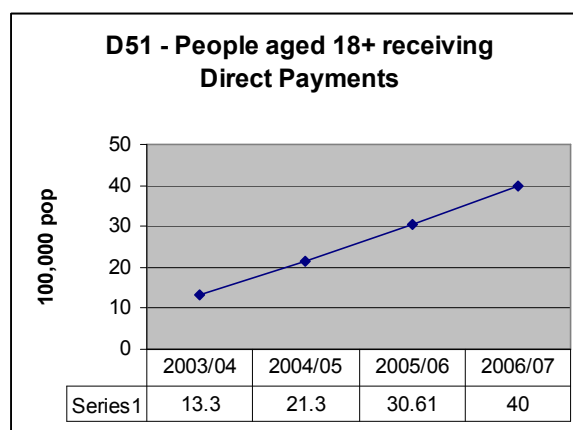
The issue

Performance has been improving since 2002/03 but at a significantly lower rate than comparator authorities. This indicator is a key threshold indicator. The threshold set for 2006.07 by the Government is greater than 15 per 100,000 pop. Aged 18+. The government has raised the threshold for 2007/08 to a rate significantly higher than current performance (60) and has announced its intention to increase the threshold to 70 in 2008/09.

Performance

Leeds performance for Direct Payments for 2006/07 is **40**. A target of 43 was set for the year. 2006/07 performance is rated in the third of five bands by the Department of Health. It is classed as “Acceptable”. The core city average for 2005/06 was 70. The Key threshold for this indicator rises to 60 in 2007/08 and 70 in 2008/09.

This area of work has been identified as a key service improvement area.



Current Improvement Plans

A two year direct payments improvement plan was implemented in April 2007. Its main components are:

- Update the department's written direct payments procedures (Last updated 22/03/06).
- Review the direct payments pay rates.
- Promote and publicise direct payments in Leeds.
- Revisit training on direct payments for assessors/ care managers to raise awareness and improve understanding of direct payments.
- Direct payments user satisfaction survey (last completed in April 2004).
- Ensure that triggers in the assessment /care planning process are effective.

- Monitor performance against area targets.
- Properly identify direct payments spend.
- Ensure direct payments users are supported effectively by ASIST.
- To make direct payments as inclusive as possible through the use of user led trusts.
- To introduce a system of accurate performance management data collection in respect of direct payments.
- To introduce a system to Identify the number and value of direct payments packages being agreed for service users who are over 65 and service users who are under 65.
- Increase the use of direct payments to purchase items of equipment.
- Budgetary sign off responsibility re-assigned from Head of Service - Adults To Service Delivery Managers – Adults, for people over 65.
- To revisit promotion of direct payments to people from black and ethnic minority Communities.
- To introduce service user involvement in the Direct Payments Project Operational Group.
- To ensure the strategy for implementing access to direct payments for all those eligible to use them is approved by members and is led by all senior staff across the council.