

THE BRIEFING

For members of the Public Sector Management Network
Volume 14, Issue 1
March 2006

Public Sector Management Network

Dear Networkers,

We are pleased to bring you the first Briefing of 2006. A lot of activity has taken place since our last communication before Xmas.

In relation to events in my professional life, I have now moved to Harvey Nash an executive recruitment company based in central London. I am looking forward to the exciting challenges that my new role as Director of Public Service and in continuing to lead the development the Public Services Management Network working with an excellent national management team.

We are currently working with new partners to transfer the existing website and re-launch hopefully in early spring 2006.

The PSMN Team are also working on Top Team 2006 which will be run in partnership with Improvement & Development Agency, SOLACE, Deloitte, The Times Public Agenda and Harvey Nash. The logistics have now been put in place with a Spring 2006 launch with the final to be held in Autumn 2006.

The next edition of The Briefing will have further details of both of these key projects. I hope you enjoy this edition of The Briefing.



Noorzaman Rashid
Chair of the Management Network

A Spotlight on Welfare Reform - Breaking down the barriers to work"

Wednesday 29th March 2006 - Central
London

Capita Conferences

Endorsed and Supported by: Disability Rights
Commission, ERSA and The Department for
Work and Pensions

Chaired by: Lord Archie Kirkwood, Former
Chair of the DWP Select Committee

**Keynote Speaker: Rt Hon Margaret
Hodge MBE MP**, Minister of State for
Employment and Welfare Reform, DWP

With expert contributions from:

- **Terry Rooney MP**, Chair *DWP Select Committee*
- **Greg Chammings**, Incapacity Benefit Reform, Project Director, *DWP*
- **Marilyn Howard**, Policy Manager, *Disability Rights Commission*
- **Professor Mansel Aylward CB**, Director, *UnumProvident Centre for Psychosocial and Disability Research*
- **Lorna Reith**, Chief Executive, *Disability Alliance*

Welfare modernization is a key and controversial reform for the Government. The hotly debated Green Paper, **A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work** heralds significant changes, with far-reaching implications for large portions of the population.

Capita's key gathering of Ministers, policymakers, independent experts and practitioners is timed perfectly to examine the Government's welfare reform strategy, with a particular focus on **preventing dependency** on IB, **improving workplace health**, delivering **extra support and choice** for people who cannot work and removing the barriers to work for lone parents, older people and those with a health condition or disability.

Benefits of Attending

- A detailed briefing and consultation on the content of the Green Paper
- Have the unique opportunity to shape policy and voice your views
- In depth case studies looking at how the highly successful comprehensive support strategies are working in practice
- Share ideas and work with a wide-ranging audience of influential policy makers, practitioners, strategists and advisors

Further information and a booking form for this conference can be found in the [conference brochure](#) or, alternatively, please call 020 7808 5284

Words in Gus' ear

Cabinet Secretary is a post which 'possesses huge power and therefore probably unparalleled capacity to make a difference to every aspect of our national life — and, of course, beyond'

Public sector managers share many tasks, processes and competencies with their private sector partners but they struggle to share the understanding behind the need for scarce resources to be rationed and targeted at those most in need. As resources become tight, it is increasingly clear that the role of the public servant is essentially to ration scarce resources to those who require them.

The need to understand the rationing model and the tension between universal taxation and targeted service provision lies at the heart of many of the service dilemmas currently being experienced within local government, says SOLACE DG David Clark.

The second issue of SOLACE Foundation Imprint takes the form of 'friendly advice' to new Cabinet Secretary Sir Gus O'Donnell. In his contribution to A Word in Your Ear: Advice to Sir Gus from a Friendly Source, Clark urges that a national debate on the functions of local government – led from the top – is long overdue. He writes: 'It is timely that Sir Michael Lyons is undertaking a review of the function of local government. It would probably be well if we all remembered that its two main purposes are to ration scarce resources to those who require them and to govern the community that they serve; and that its legitimacy to do one may well depend on its capacity to do the other.'

Clark bases his argument on discussions he has had with local authority CEXs and senior managers about the issues that really concern them. They consistently come up with the same issues, he says, survival, efficiency, capacity, legitimacy, rationing and money.

Other contributors to the Imprint include Wendy Thompson, who wants Gus to find some focus outside the civil service and Whitehall, and to see himself as the head of the public service not just the civil service.

Sir Christopher Foster argues passionately that Gus should address the quality of the policy process, which he believes has been damaged by the absence of white papers or the 'spun unintelligibility and insubstantial.

Guy Lodge from ippr suggests that the post war story of the civil service is one of piecemeal change, grafting reforms on to the existing system. The time has come, he says, to grapple with the first order issues such as permanence, neutrality and ministerial responsibility.

Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart wants everyone responsible for recommending policy to ministers to have had experience of running a local service. And the Guardian's David Walker wants Gus to give further thought to values. He says we need to know whether civil servants have values and what they stand for and believe in.

Writing in the introduction, Sir Michael Bichard, editor in chief of the Imprint, says: 'As a former permanent secretary I have seen at first hand just how difficult the post of cabinet secretary can be. It is a unique mix of policy, politics, delivery and leadership played out in the floodlights on a national stage liable to be invaded at any moment – by events dear boy! 'But it is also a post which possesses huge power and therefore probably unparalleled capacity to make a difference to every aspect of our national life — and, of course, beyond. It must therefore be exciting, exhilarating and daunting in equal measure, and I know that all our contributors wish Gus well in his task and all have different priorities for him to address.

'Two things shine through the various contributions – the importance of drawing on the knowledge and contributions of a wide range of sectors and partners and the willingness of many of those partners to help and support the Cabinet Secretary in his task.

Over to you Sir Gus!

SOLACE Foundation Imprint website:
www.solacefoundation.org.uk/imprint

Children and young people

The Children Act came into force in November 2004. Improved outcomes for children, young people, families and carers are at the heart of this legislation. To be an effective council means achieving these outcomes through formalised partnerships that engage the local community and reflect local needs.

What's new?

'Signposts' safeguarding children

The IDeA and the NSPCC have combined to provide an interactive tool to assist elected members in local authorities and non-executive leads in the health service in ensuring the safety of children and young people in their locality.

Healthy Living Centres

Two healthy living initiatives in Maldon and Plymouth ably demonstrate how the problems of health inequalities can be addressed for children and young people.

National Remodelling Team Presentation (PDF, 20 pages, 494KB)

Access the presentation from the East of England Children Services Member Network Meeting that convened on 25 January 2006.

Northumberland Report (PDF, 7 pages, 206KB)

A seminar chaired by the IDeA provided an ideal opportunity for representatives from Northumberland District and County Councils to discuss shared priorities in relation to the five outcomes as stipulated in the Children Act 2004.

Cultural Qualifications and Volunteering Programme

Discover how the London Borough of Newham is providing a nationally recognised qualification for 16-19 year olds in Playwork and/or Sports, which has had a marked impact on the young people in terms of their education, employment and training.

Out-of authority placements for children

Find out how Tameside Council in Greater Manchester drives efficiencies in its social care approach through its dedicated programme of

purchasing out-of-authority placements for children.

[Realising the potential of school-based networks](#)

In partnership with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), the IDeA has created a toolkit which examines how local authorities can use school-based networks as a key strategic lever in their change for children programmes.

[Journeys for change](#)

In a series of articles first published in 'Community Care' magazine, Paul Roberts, a Director at the IDeA, talks us through the various routes that local authorities are taking in their efforts to achieve integrated children's services.

[Childcare Bill – LGA on the day briefing](#)

The bill places a duty on local authorities to ensure there is sufficient childcare provision in a local area to "meet the needs of working parents". It emphasises the council's role as market maker, regulator and champion of parents – a role that builds on similar themes in last month's education white paper.

In fulfilling the "duty to cooperate to improve the wellbeing of children", local government is expected to initiate a leadership responsibility that brings partners together and promotes cooperation and collaboration.

The IDeA is working closely with partner organisations including the Local Government Association (LGA), the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Audit Commission at a national and local level to support local government in the improvement of children's services.

IDEA working in partnership with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and EMIE at NFER.

LOOK OUT FOR NEXT SOLACE CONFERENCE

10th to 12th October 2006

Manchester International Conference Centre

G-MEX & MICC
Manchester
M2 3GX.

This conference will focus on how councils provide leadership in the complex modern world. Long gone are the days when councils ran their areas through the simple exercise of statutory authority and positional power. Nowadays, effective community leadership – and high-quality service delivery – depend on exerting influence, every bit as much as on wielding power. They depend on winning support for an idea rather than just having the right idea. And they depend on welding together a wide range of diverse partner organisations and individuals rather than acting alone – the power of influence.

Whether communities and localities thrive increasingly depends increasingly on the skills of chief executives and senior managers in pulling things together, making connections, and creating effective networks. The conference will explore what influencing through complex partnerships means for the role of chief executives and senior managers.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BRIEFING

If you would like to forward any articles, diary dates or requests for information, then please forward to:
warrentonks@hotmail.com

You can also access the Networks website at
www.psmn.org.uk