

ACT Members Briefing – February 2008

Better Care: Better Lives: improving outcomes and experiences for children, young people and their families living with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions

Questions and Answers Briefing

What is Better Care, Better Lives?

Better Care, Better Lives is the Department of Health's recently launched direction-setting document for the future of palliative care services for children and young people in England. The document sets out 8 service development goals for service commissioners and providers to work towards:

1. Improved data
2. Equality of access to universal services
3. Responsible and accountable leadership
4. Choice in preferred place of care and expansion of community services
5. Better end-of-life care
6. Stronger commissioning and value for money
7. Successful transition between children's and adult services
8. Planning and developing an effective and responsive workforce

What can I do to support the strategy?

The success of the strategy requires an integrated approach and action from key delivery partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors. ACT has suggested priority actions for members to consider:

- Attend the local launch of Better Care, Better Lives.
- Take opportunities to play an active part in local CPC networks.
- Contact your PCT now to remind them of their new responsibilities with regard to the strategy.

- Share examples of good practice with ACT to facilitate the development of national support materials.

When is my local launch?

The national launch of the strategy took place on 19th February 2008, the rollout of the strategy includes a series of 10 implementation events based around the SHA areas which will start in the late Spring. The CSIP children's lead in your area may be able to tell you more about how you can get involved. As soon as we have any more details about these events we will contact ACT members.

14 April North West (Manchester)

28 April North East (Newcastle)

1 May - South Central

7 May - West Midlands

13 May _ South West

15 May - London

10 June - Yorks and Humber

12 June - Eastern

17 June - East Midlands

19 June - South East

What money is available?

Alongside the strategy, the Minister, Ivan Lewis, announced an additional £20m for children's hospice and hospice and home services. This funding builds on the £27 million from 2006-9 and will give children's hospice and hospice at home services the time they need to build effective partnerships with local commissioners and ensure more sustainable funding in the future.

How can the strategy help develop my service?

'Better Care: Better Lives' will give commissioners the information and guidance they need to ensure that children's palliative care services are developed in a strategic and planned way to meet the needs of all children and young people with life-limiting conditions and their families. Ivan Lewis said that he expected the strategy to support the development of services - and that we should see the extension of services such as CCN services and Diana nurses, rather than these services having to constantly defend their position.

My service is under threat - how can this help save my service?

'Better Care: Better Lives' provides the guidance to develop services in a strategic way, combined with the inclusion of a priority to improve the quality and experience of palliative care services within the NHS Operating Framework for 2008/09, and the Government's expectation that there is significant progress to be made in this area.

The Minister stated that there had been a considerable investment in the development of services and indicated that this funding has gone into baseline allocations to PCTs.

The NHS Operating Framework for 2008-9 requires PCTs to develop an operational plan by the end of March 2008 that:

ACT, Orchard House, Orchard Lane, Bristol, BS1 5DT
T: 0117 922 1556 E: info@act.org.uk W:www.act.org.uk

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- describes local targets, how they have been agreed and how they will be achieved;
- defines success;
- details milestones;
- details their proposal Local Area Agreement content on health outcomes.

The PCT operational plan will also be expected to include nationally required information on the PCT's plans for delivering progress against national and local priorities.

You could contact your PCT lead commissioner to explore how they plan to improve palliative care services for children and young people to meet the government expectations that were set out in the Ministerial letter from Lewis/Adonis in December, the NHS Operating Framework and disabled children's indicator 12 of the new PSA target. You could then explore with them how your service can meet some of the needs locally to improve children's palliative care services and about the funding that you would need to deliver this.

Additionally, DCSF are investing £370million so that disabled children can have enjoyable and valuable experiences away from their parents and carers and in turn parents and carers will have the well earned chance to take a break. You may wish to explore how your local authority are planning to use this money.

In December 2007, Ministers wrote to PCT and LA Chief Executives to remind them of the expectations about service development for children, if you need a copy of this letter, please contact us on info@act.org.uk

Isn't this just more of the same old rhetoric?

Any national strategy has to be achieved to be successful, but the Minister stated that he expects to see considerable development over the next 18 months. He also announced that he will be setting up an "implementation group" soon - of parents and practitioners. We will tell you more about this once it's up and running.

What Next?

The ACT National Conference (England) on 9th June 2008 is the place to discuss taking Better Care: Better Lives forward. We will send you details about the conference, plus booking forms in the next couple of weeks. Full details will soon be available on the ACT website – www.act.org.uk

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