

North Nottinghamshire Community Legal Service Partnership's Strategic Plan 2000/2001 is set out in Executive Summary format below.

The full Strategic Plan is available from Lorraine Olsen or Adrian Dudley

Details of the CLSP Providers Group, Funders Group and Steering Group meetings until the end of 2001 can be obtained from Lorraine Olsen or Adrian Dudley.

North Nottinghamshire Community Legal Service Partnership

Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

1 The Community Legal Service

The Community Legal Service (CLS) was launched nationally in April 2000 under the Access to Justice Act 1999. Its aim is to develop a strategic approach to the provision of civil legal advice and information services. This will be done through the development of a network of suppliers, funders and consumers of legal advice services who will work in partnership to ensure the provision of an appropriate level of quality assured services.

2 Community Legal Service Partnerships

Community Legal Service Partnerships (CLSPs) have been established to take on the work of developing this strategic approach to the provision of civil legal advice and information services.

The CLSP's are made up of people and organisations with an interest in the provision of easier and quicker access to appropriate, quality assured civil legal advice and information services in their area. Funding organisations such as County and District Councils, the Legal Services Commission and the National Lottery Charities Board will work with voluntary, private and statutory providers of legal advice and information services such as Citizen Advice Bureaux, solicitors and local authorities and consumers of their services along with other interested parties.

Two CLSP's have been established in Nottinghamshire. The North Nottinghamshire Partnership includes the District Council areas of Ashfield, Mansfield, Bassetlaw and Newark and Sherwood. The Greater Nottingham CLSP covering the City of Nottingham and the Borough Council areas of Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe.

The North Nottinghamshire CLSP was launched on 4th April 2000 and has formed three groups that work together to achieve the aims of the partnership:

- **The Steering Group**

This group is responsible for taking forward the work of the partnership, including the production of a strategy for the provision of legal advice and information services in North Nottinghamshire. The Steering Group comprises representatives of providers, funders and consumers of these services from the following organisations. The provider and consumer representatives that are members of this group do not represent the interests of their own organisations but have been elected to contribute knowledge and expertise of their particular field of advice.

Funders:	Providers:	Consumers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ashfield District Council - Bassetlaw District Council - Legal Services Commission - Mansfield District Council - Newark & Sherwood District Council - Nottinghamshire County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nottingham Law Society - Ashfield CAB - Bassetlaw CAB - Mansfield Unemployed Workers' Centre - Nottinghamshire Libraries - County Contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central Nottinghamshire Association for Mental Health - Tuxford Tenants & Residents Association - Nottingham Racial Equality Council

It is important to note that the CLSP's have no budget to develop new legal advice and information services, and their remit is to address gaps in *priority* need for legal advice and information services, not to try and address all unmet need.

The Steering Group's key areas of work are:

- An analysis of need for legal advice and information services
- Mapping current patterns of supply of legal advice and information service
- The production of a gap analysis
- Agreeing a joint strategic plan to address gaps in provision
- Raising awareness within local communities of their rights and the services available to them

- **The Providers Group**

This group provides an effective consultation forum for the CLSP. Membership of this group comprises all known providers of legal advice and information services in North Nottinghamshire, as well as a wide range of consumer groups.

Members of the Providers Group are consulted about the strategic plan and have the opportunity to provide input to the work of the Steering Group.

This group's main responsibility is the development of a referrals system to ensure clients are able to access appropriate advice when they need to. The North Nottinghamshire CLSP Providers Group agreed a system that was implemented across the partnership with effect from 19th February 2001. A sub-group of local providers will monitor and review the system on behalf local suppliers.

- **The Funders Group**

The CLSP's are attempting to develop a strategic approach to the provision and funding of legal advice and information services. They are looking to improve the way in which services that have been funded on a historical and ad hoc basis are funded in the future and to build links between funders and providers of services to facilitate a planned future.

The Funders Group is responsible for:

- Agreeing a joint funding plan
- Promoting the Quality Mark accreditation of all legal advice and information providers
- Developing a Funding Protocol that will bring together funders of legal advice and information services. Funders adopting the protocol will discuss how the money each of them intends to spend on these services can be better used by a joint planning approach. This will not compromise the funding decisions of each funder but will allow the CLSP's strategic plan to play a part in deciding where the money can be spent most effectively to address priority need.

Membership of the Funders Group comprises:

Ashfield District Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Legal Services Commission
Mansfield District Council
Newark & Sherwood District Council
Nottinghamshire County Council

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the Coalfields Alliance will also be involved in the work of the Funders Group. North Nottinghamshire Health Authority will also be kept informed of the work of the group.

The National Lottery Charities Board, the Lloyds TSB Foundation and the Severn Trent Water Trust are liaising with the Legal Services Commission at a regional level as resource issues prevent a representative attending each Funders Group within the East Midlands.

3 The North Nottinghamshire CLSP Strategic Plan

The first strategic plan for North Nottinghamshire was the subject of wide consultation with local funders, providers and consumers of legal advice and information services during March 2001. The plan details the preliminary findings of the North Nottinghamshire CLSP along with background information on the CLS and a profile of the area. It identifies where need for legal services is greatest, what is currently available to clients by legal category and locality and where there are gaps between need and supply.

Need has been identified using data from the LSC's Predictive Needs Models which has been supplemented by information obtained from local sources. The strategy also acts as a supplement to the Report & Review of the East Midlands Legal Services Commission 2000-2001. The Report and Review focuses on the priorities for funding for the Legal Services Commission in the awarding of contracts to suppliers of legal services who have attained the specialist level Quality Mark. The strategic plan for the North Nottinghamshire CLSP focuses on that particular area and its particular complexities in terms of legal services and their provision.

Current supply of legal advice and information has been mapped in a number of ways including by geographical location, by type of advice given (welfare benefits or debt for example) and the level of advice (general or specialist for example). Supply could also be mapped according to the volume of services provided and this information is crucial if the CLSP aims to meet the priority needs of its residents effectively. However, at present, there is no consistent means by which organisations record volume details, for example, some record work by caseworker hours, others by the number of new cases they undertake. The CLSP will undertake research into these issues during 2001/2.

The strategy also makes recommendations about which areas of law and which areas of North Nottinghamshire should be targeted as priorities for funding. The Funders Group will identify how funds could most effectively be spent to ensure that the gaps, which currently exist within the region, can begin to be bridged.

4 CLSP priorities on need for legal advice and information services in North Nottinghamshire.

NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CLSP	Debt	Housing	Welfare Benefits	Employment	Immigration	Mental Health	Consumer	Health & Community Care
Ashfield	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High	High	High
Bassetlaw	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High
Mansfield	High	High	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High
Newark & Sherwood	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium

5 Initial CLSP gap analysis

The work undertaken by the North Nottinghamshire CLSP has produced some initial findings on the need for legal advice and information services and the current pattern of supply. This information has allowed an early analysis of the mis-match between need and supply. This analysis is shown in the tables below by local authority area.

• Ashfield

	Debt	Housing	Welfare Benefits	Employment	Immigration	Mental Health	Health & Community Care
Need	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High	High
Current service	Specialist General Help + CW- General Help	Specialist- General Help + CW- General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help
Gap	Specialist	Specialist	Specialist General Help	Specialist	No gap	Specialist	Specialist

CW – casework

• Bassetlaw

	Debt	Housing	Welfare Benefits	Employment	Immigration	Mental Health	Health & Community Care
Need	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	High	High
Current Service	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help
Gap	Specialist	No gap	Specialist General Help	Specialist	No gap	No gap	Specialist

CW – casework

• Mansfield

	Debt	Housing	Welfare Benefits	Employment	Immigration	Mental Health	Health & Community Care
Need	High	High	High	Medium	Low*	High	High
Current Service	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help
Gap	Specialist	No gap	Specialist General Help	Specialist	Specialist	No gap	Specialist

CW – casework

- **Newark & Sherwood**

	Debt	Housing	Welfare Benefits	Employment	Immigration	Mental Health	Health & Community Care
Need	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Current Service	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help	Specialist General Help + CW General Help
Gap	Specialist	Specialist	Specialist General Help	Specialist	No gap	No gap	Specialist

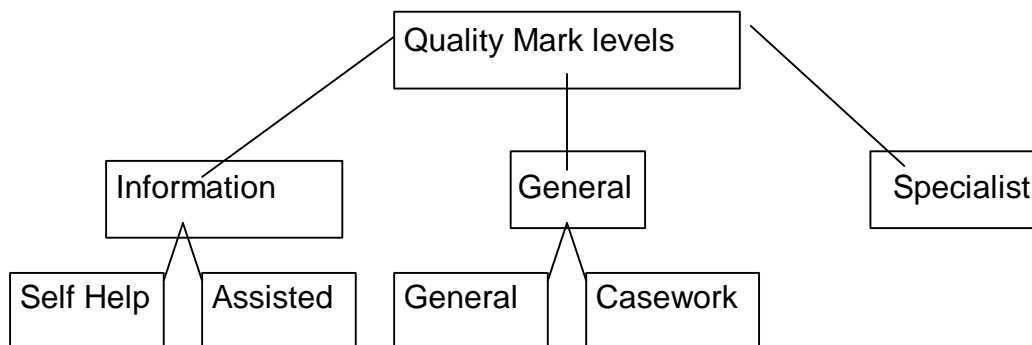
CW – casework

6 Quality Mark

Underpinning the CLSP process is the need to have quality legal advice and information services provided by organisations that have the necessary skills to deliver quality advice and information. The Quality Mark sets a standard for organisations and allows a range of Quality Mark levels that organisations need to fit into. Legal advice and information services have been encouraged to gain the Quality Mark. It is likely that, in the future, the Quality Mark will be a key indicator for funders.

The structure of the Quality Mark is set out below.

The Quality Mark can be awarded at three levels:



7 Planning a comprehensive CLS for North Nottinghamshire

Clearly where a gap is identified in the analysis, the CLSP needs to consider how to address the short fall. The CLSP has no money to develop new services, except by way of pilots for innovative methods of service delivery. The CLSP can approach this gap in supply through a range of methods:

- Identifying where money being spent on delivering existing services of a lower priority could be channelled into services with a higher priority
- Developing new ways of delivering a service that could more cost effectively meet the need – outreach services and telephone services are two examples
- Try to attract new money to the CLSP area to develop new services

The North Nottinghamshire CLSP will continue to progress this work in the year ahead.

8 CLSP's and Best Value

The work being undertaken by the CLSP dovetails with the Best Value agenda that local authorities are engaged with. The Quality Mark and the needs analysis work address two key questions in Best Value – are the services good services and are they necessary. Best Value will take this a stage further by asking whether the services provided are giving value for money.

9 CLSP Performance and National Performance Indicators

The North Nottinghamshire CLSP has achieved its targets for its first year, which are set out in the table below.

Baseline requirements	North Nottinghamshire CLSP
Each CLSP should have a Steering Group which includes representatives from the LSC, at least the majority of and preferably all, the local authorities in the area, at least one other funder of local services, at least two other providers of local legal services and at least one community organisation or user group.	Achieved
The Steering Group should be established on the basis of agreed objectives and Terms of Reference	Achieved
Needs assessment and supply mapping should be carried out in line with best practice guidance and should at least cover need for, and supply of, assistance with problems relating to debt, welfare benefits, housing, immigration and employment	Achieved
The needs assessment exercise should include a survey of the local population carried out in line with best practice guidance	Awaiting guidance

Supply maps should cover at least Quality Marked providers and should use Quality Mark definitions of levels of supply	Achieved
By the end of the first year, the Steering Group should have produced an outline strategic plan based on need assessment, supply mapping and gap analysis	Achieved
By the end of the first year there should be an agreed referral protocol and documentation	Achieved
There should be a concordat signed by Steering Group members supporting the Strategic Plan	Achieved

Additionally, from April 2001 CLSP's who have achieved the baseline requirements will be measured against three key indicators:

- User surveys of satisfaction with the quality of local legal advice services
- The % of cases requiring referral where a suitable provider was able to take cases that required further help, and in fact accepted the cases and provided the help
- Resident surveys of the availability of legal services in priority categories e.g. the % of local people reporting unmet need in priority categories of law

The work of the North Nottinghamshire CLSP during its first year has resulted in considerable progress towards achieving the objectives of the partnership. The future success of the North Nottinghamshire CLSP is dependant upon continued support from funders and providers of legal advice and information and the strategic plan is only a starting point for funders to identify their priorities for future funding. As the work of the CLSP progresses, the plan will be modified and become more sophisticated. The CLSP will review the strategic plan on an annual basis to ensure that any additional information is taken into account and that need for services can be addressed accordingly.