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Local Authority Directors of Adult Services
Local Government Association

24 November 2010

INVITATION TO SUBMIT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Gateway 15109

Dear Colleague,

Call for expressions of interest for Local Authority pilot sites for Social Work Practices

On 5 November Rt Hon Andrew Lansley MP CBE, the Secretary of State for Health, announced at the National Children and Adult Services Conference that the Government, following the successful introduction of social work practice (SWP) pilots for looked after children, planned to introduce practice pilots for the adult sector.

The SWP programme supports the government's wider agenda of building the 'Big Society'. We want to devolve responsibility away from government and bring people closer to services as a result.

SWPs will be organisations that are led by social workers but are independent of the local authority (LA), and will provide social work services for adults. They should give more discretion to social work professionals to work closely with the people who use services. They will discharge statutory duties and responsibilities of the local authority in relation to these people.

SWPs will be funded by local authorities using resources currently spent on those adults that will be transferred to the SWP. We are keen to co-produce SWPs with the sector and will work in partnership with the College of Social Work, Local Government Group, BASW and ADASS. We look forward to working jointly with councils on this exciting initiative to test whether these models of provision improve the experience and outcomes for people and those working with them.

We are now seeking expressions of interest from local authorities to be pilot sites for SWPs. At this initial stage, interested councils should submit outlines of creative and innovative models to enhance the quality of services experienced by those using the services and their carers. Depending on the level of interest, funding of up to

£100,000 could be available this year to local authorities to support the setting up of the pilots. There may also be limited funds available in 2011/12 for start up costs, but councils should note that there will be no funding for subsequent years. An expression of interest form and some frequently asked questions are available on the DH website

at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_121623

The programme, (which is subject to Parliamentary approval¹), will run for two years from the summer of 2011. Although there will be a formal evaluation, councils will be free to explore different models in line with the government's desire to allow new flexibilities within the sector. We will be looking to run pilots in a variety of settings. These could include, for example:

- bringing social work practice closer to the personalised support of people receiving care, particularly those with complex needs
- improving the transitional arrangements on the move from children's to adult services, as these can often be difficult and complex
- enabling social workers to make better links with mental health trusts
- allowing social workers to engage more closely with the new GP-led commissioning consortia.

We want councils and social workers to go beyond traditional ways of working to develop a varied and practicable set of models to test. Some of you have no doubt been waiting for just such an opportunity.

We will consider all expressions of interest received, and invite the selected councils to submit more detailed proposals early in the New Year. Once we have finalised the chosen sites we will arrange a meeting for councils to share their ideas with each other and for further discussion on the pilot process with the DH team. DfE colleagues who have experience of similar work on Looked After Children will also join us.

Expressions of interest should be submitted to our mailbox at swpenquiries@dh.gsi.gov.uk by Friday 24 December.

Yours sincerely,



David Behan
Director General for Social Care, Local Government and Care Partnerships

¹ Secondary legislation (DACO Order) requires approval from both Houses

