

Local Government Finance (Wales)

Special Grant Report (Wales) 2005 for Social Services Performance Management Development Fund

Introduction

1. This report is made by the National Assembly for Wales (“the Assembly”) under section 88B of the Local Government Finance Act 1988¹ “the 1988 Act”. It specifies a determination of special grants that the Assembly proposes to pay to county and county borough councils (“local authorities”) in Wales.
2. The Report specifies the Assembly’s determination of the purpose for which the grants are to be paid, the authorities to which the grants are to be paid and the manner in which the amounts of the grants are to be calculated. It also sets out such explanation as the Assembly considers desirable of the main features of this determination and specifies the conditions which the Assembly intends to impose on the payment of the grants to which the Report relates. Any expressions used in the report shall bear the meaning given to that expression in Annex A.

The Purpose

3. Pursuant to section 88(3)(b) of the 1988 Act, the Assembly hereby determines the purpose for which special grants are to be paid:

to provide support to local authorities in Wales towards expenditure incurred in the financial years 2005/6 and 2006/7 in connection with achieving the aims set out in the National Assembly’s Performance Management Strategy for Social Services². These are detailed and specified at Annex B.

Amounts Payable to Authorities

4. Pursuant to section 88B(3)(a) and (c)(i) of the 1988 Act, the Assembly hereby determines, as the authorities to which special grants are to be paid and the manner in which the amounts of the grants are to be calculated, the authorities and the manner of calculation described in Annex A.

Main Features

5. Annex B contains such explanation as the Assembly considers desirable of the main features of the determination specified in this Report.

¹ “1988 c.41. Section 88B was inserted in the 1988 Act by paragraph 18 of Schedule 10 to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (c.14). The functions of the Secretary of State under section 88B are exercisable in relation to Wales by the Assembly by virtue of and in accordance with the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 (SI. 1999/672)”

² Final version prepared May 2001.

Conditions for the Payment of the Grants

6. Pursuant to section 88B(7) of the 1988 Act the Assembly hereby specifies as the conditions which it intends to impose on the payment of the special grants for the purpose described in paragraph 3 above the conditions set out in Annex C.

Annex A

Calculation of the Amounts of Grant Payable to Authorities

The grant fund for 2005/6 will be £2.35m.

Authorities will be invited to make bids for grant from the fund in accordance with the criteria and allocation will depend on the merits of the bid in relation to the criteria and with regard to the strategies and project plans provided by the authority. Authorities are also asked to maximise the cost effectiveness of their proposals through combining their efforts with other local authorities where feasible and sensible. Bids which include joint proposals and which appear to make effective use of shared resources are actively encouraged as they represent best value for money for the Assembly. Funds for jointly agreed bids can be paid to an authority on behalf of others or paid to individual authorities and be pooled by those authorities provided there are clear agreements between the participating authorities about the aims, management arrangements and costs of the projects.

Allocations from the Fund over the remaining period of the fund will be broadly in proportion to an indicative allocation formula agreed during the consultation period, set down at Table A below (see overleaf).

Table A: Indicative proportion of grant by authority,³ excluding any sums reserved for collaborative projects of wider benefit.

	Percentage Share
Isle of Anglesey	3.08%
Gwynedd	4.40%
Conwy	4.79%
Denbighshire	4.09%
Flintshire	4.33%
Wrexham	4.32%
Powys	4.57%
Ceredigion	3.14%
Pembrokeshire	4.15%
Carmarthenshire	6.10%
Swansea	7.18%
Neath Port Talbot	5.05%
Bridgend	4.28%
Cardiff	7.48%
The Vale of Glamorgan	3.95%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	6.89%
Merthyr Tydfil	2.70%
Caerphilly	5.14%
Blaenau Gwent	3.21%
Torfaen	3.50%
Monmouthshire	3.27%
Newport	4.39%
Wales	100.00%

³ The distribution is based on the total of each authority's share of Standard Spending Assessments (SSAs) distributed by indicators in the children's, elderly and adult personal social services (PSS). This accounts for 70% of the allocation. The remaining 30% is based on a flat-rate distribution between all 22 local authorities.

The indicators used to distribute the SSA for PSS include population measures (except for elderly PSS) e.g. population aged 18 to 64, together with several appropriate deprivation measures e.g. dependent children in lone adult households, each with a separate weighting. These indicators were reviewed in partnership with local authorities and agreed with the Consultative Forum of Finance. Objective statistical methods were used to identify the indicators and the weights attached to them.

Annex B

Explanation of the Grant

Informing Social Care: A Programme and Action Plan

1. Introduction.

'Performance Management: A Strategy for Social Services in Wales' was launched in 2001 in order to develop performance information in social services authorities, to encourage modern approaches to performance management and to ensure that the most effective use is made of information systems. This initiative was accompanied by the Performance Management Development Fund (PMDF), a resource of £7.35m over the three years up to March 2004. The Programme and Action Plan 'Informing Social Care' has been developed as the preferred way to shape and implement that strategy from March 2004 onwards.

2. Informing Social Care: The Programme

After consultation with local authorities, health and other organisations with a commitment to improving social care services 'Informing Social Care' was issued in September 2004. It drew upon the lessons learned from the first years of the PMDF and in particular the importance of establishing a coherent framework for the programmes required to support the information systems that now play such a major part in initiatives for both adult and children's services. The overall objective for 'Informing Social Care' is the promotion of 'a strategic approach to implementing the e-government agenda for social care, and closer working between social services authorities, health care providers and other providers'..

It reflects the changing nature of social services authorities and the increasing level of complexity of modern information systems. More and more, they are required to accommodate the whole range of issues including training, information quality and information sharing that inter-department, inter-authority and inter-agency working now present. From the outset Informing Social Care recognised the close links it has with the vision to reform and revitalise the social care and health services set out in the social services White Paper 'Building for the Future' and the NHS Plan 'Improving Health Care in Wales'. Reference is also made to the 'The Review of Health and Social Care in Wales' (The Wanless Report) where specific reference was made to the central part that information is to play in effective service provision and to the information strategy for the healthcare services, 'Informing Healthcare'.

The challenges facing social services authorities to develop information systems are formidable. Across Wales, local authorities use their systems of choice but this has meant a diversity of approaches not only in the strategic systems in use but also in the smaller service-driven applications. The day-to-day impact of the many useful systems is evident but with few economies of scale and shared management arrangements coherence has been difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, 20 of the 22 social services authorities are now working in partnerships.

The objectives to be attained over the next five years include ensuring public access to social care information, a consistent approach to electronic social care records,

ensuring on-line access to systems for social care professionals, and integration wherever it is appropriate of social care information with that of partner agencies. In support of these objectives, improvements in the approaches to both information governance and information for operational and resource management will also be sought.

The Action Points set out in the document are intended to provide more immediate guidance to local authorities on the pressing items on the information agenda. These include the promotion of a more strategic approach to information systems across Wales than hitherto, the development of information systems and information quality as the basis for improving performance management, and collaboration with other social care and health providers. Other Action Points focus upon the development of the Electronic Social Care Record (ESCR), service user access to information systems, information governance, raising the skill-levels of system users, and working with system providers wherever it is appropriate. Finally, emphasis is placed on maintaining regular contact with all the local authorities and in particular to support their efforts to work more collaboratively.

3. Informing Social Care: The Action Plan.

The Action Plan provides the focus for more immediate steps to be taken not only by the Welsh Assembly Government (through the priorities agreed as part of the PMDF allocation) but also the local authorities themselves and the priorities they seek to pursue. The Action Points have been formed into distinct Groups:

- Ensuring a more co-ordinated approach to ICT issues in local authorities and partner agencies. Here, the emphasis is upon ensuring that the investment programmes in local authorities as part of the PMDF are consistent with the objectives set out in 'Informing Social Care'. Also referred to here are the necessary steps towards implementing ESCR, and working with the Informing Healthcare Programme.
- Enhancing the performance management capacity of authorities. This includes continuing the work to develop relevant performance and activity indicators for both social services and joint service information that is relevant, consistent, reliable and valid.
- Improving information governance issues and recognising that effective information sharing arrangements between care providing agencies is one of the cornerstones to ensuring that vulnerable people of all ages are protected. The plans include the development of a joint health and social care protocol as well as protocols that are relevant to wider information sharing concerns in local government and beyond ;and,
- Supporting ICT and other practical applications of information and information systems to work at the interface of social and healthcare services. Schemes should focus on key themes which can include actions to reconfigure provision to meet individual need earlier in the care

pathway, improvements in the way systems work together, steps to reduce delayed transfers of care and accelerate alternatives.

- Maintaining a regular Forum for social services authorities and partner agencies to consider ways in which information can enhance service performance.

The Action Plan will be reviewed and an assessment of progress made in 2005. Based on this an updated plan will be prepared and agreed for 2006/2007 and beyond.

4. Criteria for the Special Grant Fund

The fund is provided to enable local authorities to improve and extend performance, management capacity and the capability to meet modern management standards in social services delivery. For Part 1 and Part 2 applications, priority will be given to proposals which focus on the Integrated Children's System, (ICS), Unified Assessment Process, (UAP), and the arrangements, protocols and agreements that effective implementation requires, (including the provision of management information). Support will be provided for:

1) Staff support including:

- Data input/ data quality development
- Analysis and feedback of local data
- Use of local Performance Indicators in management
- Management Information system support
- Information governance;
- Related staff training and development,
- Benchmarking activity

2) Management Information systems and in particular those supporting the implementation of ICS and UAP including software, hardware, communications.

3) Costs relating to implementation of the strategy including consultancy, data migration, training, and information governance issues.

The criteria and conditions for Part 3 applications should be consistent with the general principles outlined in the introductory letter and the conditions set out in Annexe C.

Annex C

Conditions for the Payment of the Special Grant

Use of grant monies

1. (1) Each authority shall use the grant monies for expenditure in the financial year 2005/6 only for the purpose of implementing schemes to improve performance management in Social Services set out at Annex B

(2) An authority shall not use the grant monies for expenditure outside the financial year 2005/6 without the written approval of the National Assembly.

Proposal

2. Each authority shall by the 31 May 2005 provide to the National Assembly, for approval, a written proposal in a form specified by the National Assembly, which shall specify the proposals the authority intends to undertake.

Report

3. Each local authority shall on or before 31 May 2006 provide to the National Assembly a written report which shall set out a detailed account of the use of the funds and in particular how the funds have been used to address the key aims of the National Assembly for Wales Strategy for Performance Management in Social Services.

Audited Statement

4. Each local authority which receives grant monies shall ensure that information provided to the National Assembly is certified, on an audit form provided by the National Assembly, by the authority's Chief Finance Officer, by 30 September 2006 and by an auditor appointed by the Audit Commission, and that the form is received by the National Assembly, duly certified not later than 31 December 2006.

Further information

5. Each local authority shall provide such further information as may be required by the National Assembly for the purposes of determining whether they have complied with the conditions set out in this Annex.

Other conditions

6. (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) and to the provision to the National Assembly of a proposal in accordance with paragraph 3, the grant monies shall be payable in quarterly installments commencing April 2005. Any quarterly installments due at the date of approval by the National Assembly of the proposal required under paragraph 2, shall become payable at the date of such approval. Payments of remaining installments will be made to an authority at the beginning of the relevant quarter,

subject to the receipt by the National Assembly of a properly completed claim in a form specified by the National Assembly.

(3) If -

(a) a local authority fails to comply with the conditions set out in paragraphs 1 or 2 ; or

(b) the National Assembly having regard to any report or information received from a local authority and any other information available to it is satisfied that the authority have without reasonable excuse failed to comply with any other condition set out in this Annex,

the National Assembly may require the repayment of the whole or any part of the grant monies paid to that authority as may be determined by the National Assembly and notified in writing to the authority. Such sum as has been notified shall immediately become repayable to the National Assembly.