



Piloting the Social Work Practice Model: A Prospectus



department for
children, schools and families

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Introduction

“Our aspirations for children in care are no less than those each parent has for their own children. Children in care are often in much greater need than other children but much less likely to get the help they require. We aim to create a care system that provides every child with a safe, happy, healthy, secure and loving childhood, nurturing their aspirations and enabling them to fulfil their potential.”

Care Matters: Time to deliver for children in care, 2008

- i. Building on the *Care Matters* White Paper, *Care Matters: Time to deliver for children in care*, published in March 2008, sets out a shared vision for improving experiences and outcomes for children in care¹ and guides local partners through delivering change locally.
- ii. Our key goal is excellent corporate parenting based on listening to the voice of the child, developing strong relationships and having high aspirations. The corporate parenting role must be shared by all local partners, but the role of the local authority and its social workers is particularly crucial. Whilst the children’s social care system is working well to protect children, once in care, children still see far too many social workers. High staff turnover has contributed to the criticisms that children and young people in care have made of their experience. We need to do much more to provide a more enduring relationship between children in care and their social workers.
- iii. As part of the *Care Matters* agenda, we are undertaking a range of activity to improve the consistency and stability of social work for children in care including workforce remodelling within local authorities, supported by the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Social Work Delivery pilots, and testing a new Newly Qualified Social Worker status. The concept of Social Work Practices – independent organisations of social workers working under contract to the local authority – is another mechanism through which we might see the development of more stable and consistent social work support for children in care.
- iv. The Social Work Practice concept, which was first outlined in the *Care Matters* Green Paper in October 2006, was explored by an independent working group consisting of a range of experts in the social work arena. The group’s report, *Consistent Care Matters: Exploring the Potential for Social*

¹ The term ‘looked after’ includes all children being looked after by a local authority, including those subject to a care order or interim care order and those who are ‘looked after’ by virtue of being accommodated for more than 24 hours either under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. ‘Children in care’ is a term often used by practitioners and publications to describe children who are ‘looked after’ by a local authority and is used in that sense in this prospectus.

Work Practices, identified evidence which suggests that Social Work Practices may provide greater stability and continuity for children in care. Research shows that those who have a stake in an organisation are more loyal and less likely to leave². In part this is because they feel they do not have to leave to improve their pay and conditions. Moreover, in Social Work Practices, social workers will not be at the bottom of the hierarchy. They will be more in control, which could lead to higher morale and status in the community and more commitment to and personal involvement in their work. As regards relationships, the small size of Social Work Practices could help social workers to get closer to the children and families they work with. *Consistent Care Matters* concluded that the only way to know for sure whether Social Work Practices would provide better outcomes for children in care was to conduct carefully controlled pilots, which should include Social Work Practices run by professional partnerships of social workers, third sector organisations and private sector organisations.

- v. The Government set out its intention to legislate to establish six to nine Social Work Practice pilots in the *Care Matters* White Paper and provisions enabling the model to be tested are in part 1 of the Children and Young Persons Bill.^{3,4} Royal Assent is expected by the end of 2008 (the precise date depends on the Parliamentary timetable). Subject to Parliamentary approval of the Children and Young Persons Bill, local authorities will be selected to take part in the pilots by November 2008. Pilot local authorities will then invite tenders from prospective Social Work Practices with the aim that following a rigorous commissioning process the pilots will 'go live' in 2009.
- vi. Between 2009 and 2011, there will be an independent evaluation of the Social Work Practice model. The evaluation is being designed to test whether Social Work Practices improve outcomes for children. It will focus not only on what happens within the Social Work Practice, but also on the impact on the wider children's services system in the local authority area. In 2012, a report of the evaluation of the Social Work Practice pilots will be made public and shared with interested parties to enable decisions to be made about the future of the Social Work Practice model. The model will only be made available to local authorities post-pilots if the evaluation shows that it does improve outcomes for children in care and does **not** have a negative impact on other social care services.
- vii. To support pilot local authorities in contracting with Social Work Practices, we have worked with a range of stakeholders – such as local authority staff, private and third sector organisations, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Local Government Association and academic experts to flesh out the Social Work Practice model. We have set out key principles for how funding, contracts and monitoring should work and we intend to work with pilot local authorities to develop these to meet local needs.

2 (Postlethwaite and colleagues, 2005)

3 Social Work Practices are referred to as 'providers of social work services' in the Bill.

4 The Bill has not yet completed its passage through Parliament and may be amended. This document reflects the Bill as it stands at the date of publication.

viii. The purpose of this prospectus⁵ is to share our thinking with interested parties, enabling you to consider whether you would like to get involved in the pilots. Part 1 provides an overview of the Social Work Practice model and the aims of the pilots in terms of testing the potential benefits of the model for children and young people, social work professionals, and participating local authorities. Part 2 provides more detail on the Social Work Practice model, including the underlying principles, the roles and responsibilities of the commissioning local authority and the Social Work Practices, the process by which a Social Work Practice will become involved with a child and the evaluation approach. Finally, Part 3 outlines the next steps to getting involved in the pilots and sources of further information.

Figure 1: High-level timescales for the Social Work Practices Pilots



If you are interested in applying to pilot the Social Work Practice model, please see the Statement of Interest form at the back of this document.

5 This Prospectus is issued by the Department for Children Schools and Families and relates only to England.



Part 1

An overview of the Social Work Practice model and the potential benefits

An overview of the model

Social Work Practices will be organisations that contract with a local authority to discharge the statutory duties and responsibilities of the local authority in relation to children in care. They will be social work-led, but in order to meet the range of needs of children they will also involve or appoint others to support the formation of a strong 'team around the child'.

Social Work Practices will focus on supporting children who are likely to be in care for some time, rather than those who are in care short-term as part of a package of intensive family support. It is this group of children who will be in care long-term who have most to gain from the greater continuity and stability that a Social Work Practice may provide.

There are three models proposed for the Social Work Practices pilots: a professional model run by qualified and registered social workers; a third sector model run by a third sector organisation; and a private sector model.

Figure 2: Objectives of a Social Work Practice



Any appropriate organisation will be able to bid to the pilot local authorities as a Social Work Practice as long as it is a “body corporate”. This means that the practice must have a legal identity and the contract cannot be with an individual or several separate individuals. A wide range of organisations could be eligible to apply including those based in social enterprise or co-operative models of professional ownership, or those comprising professionals that come together to form as new organisations.

For further information on sources of support for business start-up, please see Part 4, Section B – Sources of Further Information.

If evaluation suggests that the Social Work Practices model should be made available after the pilot phase, Practices would be regulated and registered under the Care Standards Act 2000. The Children and Young Persons Bill allows for the possibility of restrictions on the types of organisations that can operate as Social Work Practices, and local authorities would be able to choose whether or not to engage a Social Work Practice.

Testing the benefits for children and young people

The aim of the Social Work Practice pilots is to test whether the model improves outcomes for children in care and the consistency of the relationship between children and their social workers.

Some children say that they see as many as thirty different social workers during their time in care. This often replicates the instability which such young people have experienced in their families.

“The qualities my ideal social worker would have are: to be friendly and compassionate, to listen to what I want and what ways I can go around things to get it, to always be there for me, not to nag at me when I don’t know what to do for my future.”

“I thought you were meant to get a working relationship with social workers, but it’s like I don’t even know her.”

The key to enabling good relationships is to provide consistency. We know social work has a high turnover of staff compared to other professions, with recruitment and retention being key challenges.

Feedback from children in care frequently demonstrates their frustrations:

“I have had around 30 social workers in 10 years.”

“You get to know one then they leave.”

“After 18 years you usually lose your social worker, even though you need them and find it difficult. You have a duty officer and when you call to make an appointment you never speak to the same one twice as they change every day.”

“With children in care, they need to always know they have someone they can turn to and talk to. I never felt that. I ended up in and out of prison and felt like I had no support. The longest I had a social worker was 3 months, then from there I’ve had 14 different social workers. It’s hard because you get to know and trust one and it leaves.”

Local authorities – as the corporate parent, client and contract monitoring authority – and independent reviewing officers will between them ensure that Social Work Practices do focus on the outcomes for each child in their care. The practices will be rewarded for demonstrating stability and improved support through an outcomes based contract and funding model. This is to ensure that the focus is fully on the children in care. As a child or young person in care, you should expect a Social Work Practice to:

- Get to know you – what makes you happy and what makes you sad.
- Work with you to resolve any problems that may be making you unhappy.
- Help you to stay in touch with your family where appropriate.
- Ensure you are healthy and doing well at school.
- Make time for you when you need it.
- Be honest, reliable and trustworthy.
- Test new ways of giving you more control over your life.
- Try to give you a much better experience of care.

Testing the benefits for professionals

Social Work Practices represent an opportunity for social work professionals to really focus on children in care, shaping the services, processes, and procedures of the practice. They will enable social workers to explore new models of delivery, flexible working patterns that fulfil the needs of all parties, and remuneration packages that reward best practice.

Social Work Practices are likely to consist of independent teams with management arrangements depending on the type of Practice. The heart of the organisation will be its practitioners – General Social Care Council registered staff. It is anticipated that in a small organisation, decisions may be able to be

made more rapidly and closer to the child or young person. There is likely to be a practice manager of some sort, and there will need to be proper arrangements to manage practice standards, accountability and risk, complaints, and peer support to aid tough decision-making, but it is intended that the pilots should test whether bureaucracy can be restricted to a minimum.

With smaller Social Work Practice, there may be greater opportunities for social workers to agree and set direction around the priorities of the practice. As they will be independent teams commissioned and contracted to provide a service for a fee that will be agreed and calculated in accordance with the contract, it is anticipated that Social Work Practices might generate resources within their budget that could further benefit young people, fund new training and project initiatives, or financially reward practitioners for making a bigger difference in people's lives.

Once a child is allocated to the Social Work Practice, the practitioners will support that child through each and every episode including when they leave care and return to their families or live independently. Once a child has been allocated to a Social Work Practice, the team members know they will be able to forge a long term relationship with the child or young people concerned.

From a staff development perspective, there are also likely to be opportunities for social workers to learn commercial and social enterprise skills as well as engage in teaching and mentoring social work students. Working in a smaller team, there are opportunities to innovate and create new ways of working.

Social workers who are members of a Social Work Practice could potentially be:

- Enabled to take greater control over your own practice in social work.
- Offered an opportunity to have a say about how the practice is run (you may even own a share in it).
- Able to make quick decisions regarding the wellbeing of a child under your care.

So, in short, it is intended that the Social Work Practice pilots will test whether social workers at the Practice have a higher level of individual responsibility and accountability and whether this will result in a more responsive, effective and appreciated service for children in care and those who work with them.

Staff should be encouraged to contribute to how the practice is run, designing the services they deliver, and celebrating the successes they achieve. We hope that with the right mix of skills, experience, and imagination, social work practitioners will be better able to have a hand in their own destinies and those of the children they support.

If you wish to participate in the Social Work Practices pilots or notify us of your interest, please see the 'statement of interest form' at the back of this document.

Testing the benefits for local authorities

The Social Work Practices pilots have been designed to be flexible in allowing local authorities the opportunities to consider whether they would like to participate, to identify the groups of children in care long term that would benefit most from the pilot and put a contract in place to ensure their needs are met. We have talked to a number of senior managers and professionals from various local authorities and listened to the issues raised regarding the perceived impact of Social Work Practices pilots.

Social Work Practices will be able to discharge certain of the local authority's statutory functions on behalf of the local authority. The local authority will, however, remain responsible for the proper exercise and discharge of its functions, and will need to have proper contract-monitoring and management information systems in place. That said, Social Work Practices provide the opportunity to test out:

- A possible improvement in the outcomes for the children served by the Practice.
- A potentially closer relationship between the child/young person and their social worker, with smaller organisations embedded in the community.
- The possibility of more innovation and more time allocated to working directly with children/young people, due to a reduced decision-making hierarchy.
- Whether the Social Work Practice model allows local authorities to dedicate more time attention to the strategic aspects of care delivery.
- Whether the Practices can develop potentially more stable and committed workforce to serve their children in care.
- The impact of a contract and funding model that includes an element of payment based on the delivery of outcomes.
- Whether a different vehicle for delivery can provide better services without additional costs.

Clearly participation in the Social Work Practice pilots has potential resource implications, as resources may have to be dedicated to the administrative, procurement, financial and human resource tasks and costs associated with commissioning a Social Work Practice, as well as the core duties related to corporate parenting. Participating local authorities will receive central support and allocated grants to cover these costs.

Local authorities will be selected to participate in the Social Work Practice pilot by **November 2008**, subject to the date of Royal Assent.

If you wish to participate in the Social Work Practice pilots or notify us of your interest, please see the form at the back of this document.



Part 2

The Social Work Practice model in detail

Developing the model

Following the Working Group report, *Consistent Care Matters*, we have worked closely with partners from ADCS, LGA, local authorities and third and private sector organisations to develop the Social Work Practice model. In doing so, we have paid close attention to the views of children and young people expressed to the Children's Rights Director and as part of the *Care Matters* consultation. Our work has also benefited from debate on the Children and Young Persons Bill in Parliament. The intention is to provide pilot local authorities and Social Work Practices with a framework within which they can work together to meet the local needs and priorities. This framework, which is set out below, may be amended over the next few months as the debate on the Children and Young Persons Bill continues in Parliament and a detailed evaluation specification is mapped out.

Key principles

Child-centred focus

Pilot local authorities and the Social Work Practices should adopt and promote values and principles which place children and their parents or carers (where appropriate) at the centre of service provision. The welfare of the child is paramount; this is the foremost principle and supersedes all others as a foundation for care planning and service delivery. The child's experience should be that their individual best interests are the primary concern of the local authority and the Social Work Practice. We are developing a model contract to aid pilot local authorities which will have this goal at its heart.

Clear lines of accountability

Under the Social Work Practice model, local authorities remain the corporate parent for looked after children and are accountable for what happens to them. The local authority should use the Children and Young People's Plan to set out their priorities for local children, including children in care, and inform commissioning of a Social Work Practice. Although the local authority will be able to delegate to a Social Work Practice the exercise of certain of its functions, the local authority will nevertheless remain responsible for the proper exercise of those functions. In this respect, the contract between the local authority and the Social Work Practice will be absolutely crucial. This is where the local authority will set out the outcomes which Social Work Practices must deliver and the framework within which they must work (including levels of delegation, roles and responsibilities, matters for and timing of consultation and reporting, etc).

Once the contract is agreed, the local authority will want to ensure rigorous and engaged contract management. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will be key mechanism through which the local authority can ensure that the Social Work Practice is providing a quality service to children in care. IROs will review and challenge the work of Social Work Practices in relation to individual children. This will add to and complement the service-wide contract management of the Social Work Practice.

The Social Work Practice will thus be accountable to the local authority under the contract. The Social Work Practice will also be accountable for its acts and omissions to the children and families in respect of whom services are provided.

Payment on outcomes for children

To ensure a focus on improving the experience and outcomes for children and young people, a proportion of the local authority's payment to the Social Work Practice should be dependent on improvement of outcomes. We have developed an outcomes framework to enable the Social Work Practice and commissioning local authority to set out the basis for any such outcomes related payments in the contract. The outcomes framework is based on six over-arching outcomes comprising the five Every Child Matters outcomes plus an additional outcome of stability and continuity.

Local authorities and the Social Work Practice will confirm the exact measures and the thresholds for which payments will be made. This will need to be informed by the evaluation requirements. All indicators will be drawn from the National Indicator Set but we also plan to include children and young people's satisfaction with the service as a critical part of the outcomes framework. Although there is scope for a degree of local discretion in relation to local priorities, all measures (qualitative and quantitative) should contribute to improving outcomes. These are listed below:

Table 1: Over-arching outcomes and key goals in the Outcomes Framework

Outcome	Key Goal
Promote Stability and Continuity	Improved stability of placement. Moves to permanence where in the child's best interests. Increased stability of social worker or lead professional. Reduced staff sickness and turnover.
Be Healthy	Improved health care. Reduced teenage pregnancy. Better emotional and mental health.
Stay Safe	Safe from bullying, discrimination or abuse. Improved quality of relationships between child and foster carers. Improved quality of relationships between child and birth family (where appropriate). Improved satisfaction by children's foster carers and birth family with services (where appropriate).
Enjoy and Achieve	Increased attendance of children in schools. Improved educational attainment.
Make a Positive Contribution	Increased participation. Reduced crime.
Achieve Economic Wellbeing	Increased chance of employment/career. Avoid poverty.

A multi-disciplinary partnership approach

Social Work Practice activity will need to be informed by priorities set by the local Children's Trust. They will also need to report into the Children's Trust in relation to delivery and on specific policy issues. In some areas, a representative of the Social Work Practice may be asked to attend key partnership meetings, whilst in others, they may be represented by the local authority.

Social Work Practices will need good working relationships with other agencies at individual child level also. They will need to build rapport with teachers, health professionals and others involved in the lives of the children they support. This is consistent with the role they will undertake as Lead Professional for the children they support.

Working closely with other agencies is not the only way that Social Work Practices can ensure the whole range of children's needs are being met. Social Work Practices may offer most benefit through engaging multi-disciplinary teams to support children, including therapists and learning mentors alongside social workers and social work assistants.

We will ensure that model contracts and contract-monitoring processes developed nationally reinforce the development of strong multidisciplinary relationships.

Roles and responsibilities

In the Social Work Practices pilot models, the local authority retains its strategic and corporate parent responsibilities and will manage the contract and partnership with the commissioned Social Work Practice. The Practice will have responsibility for undertaking delegated social work functions, managing day-to-day support and co-ordinating and monitoring service provision. It is envisaged that the Practice will work within the Children's Trust partnership strategies and priorities.

Social Work Practices' responsibilities

The key day-to-day responsibilities for organisations commissioned as a Social Work Practice in the pilots will be as follows:

- **Undertaking social work functions for children/young people they support:** This includes establishing and managing the relationship with the child, his/her birth family, foster carers and the foster carers' family (or residential social workers); developing and managing health and education plans; procuring specialised services for the child; organising holidays in conjunction with carers, and so on. The Social Work Practice would have all decision-making delegated to it in relation to children in care, except for major changes to a child's Care Plan which cannot be made outside of a LAC Review and with the agreement of the IRO.

- **Engaging with children/young people:** This includes consulting children/young people and their parents/carers where appropriate; involving children/young people in decision-making and providing updates to them on decisions made; being attentive to their needs; and providing them with an element of choice in the decision-process involved in allocating a social worker and potentially involving them in the governance of the Social Work Practice.
- **Allocating a Lead Professional or a key worker for each child/young person:** The Lead Professional will be selected from the Social Work Practice's partners or staff. The level of authority/power being invested in Lead Professional will be crucial to the role of Social Work Practices.
- **Implementing and reviewing a child/young person's Care Plan:** This includes working with local services to ensure children's needs are met, maintaining compliance with ICS (Integrated Children's System) records and case files, preparation of information for reviews, liaising with the IRO with regards new Care Plans for all children/young people, ensuring the child is secure if he/she returns to their family as part of a revised Care Plan; and applies to all aspects of the Care Plan including the Pathway Plan, Health Plan, and Personal Education Plan where applicable. If any changes are to be made to the Care Plan and/or associated plans, the agreement of the IRO should be sought.
- **Placing children/young people:** Choosing pre-approved foster carers or residential placements, or placing a child/young person with family or friends.
- **Notification of any safeguarding concerns to the local authority:** Providing notification to the relevant local authority of any child protection concerns involving a child allocated to the Social Work Practice. The local authority must conduct the child protection enquiry and the Social Work Practice will be expected to co-operate fully.
- **Keeping case records in good order:** including creating a database for inspection, research and development, and reporting on required performance indicators in line with the terms and conditions of contract.
- **Training and developing all staff employed by or acting for the Social Work Practice.**
- **Handling complaints:** The Social Work Practice should have its own complaints handling policy/procedure that is compliant with Children Act 1989 requirements. The local authority and OfSTED may wish to inspect the record of complaints
- **Complying with all requirements of the evaluation of the Social Work Practices pilots.**

Arrangements for children/young people whose plan for permanence is adoption should only be made by a Social Work Practice that is also registered as a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA) (if contracted to do so). Like all Social Work Practices, a Social Work Practice registered as a VAA would need to make clear its commitment to providing long-term social work support to children/young people even if their permanence plans change.

Local Authorities' responsibilities

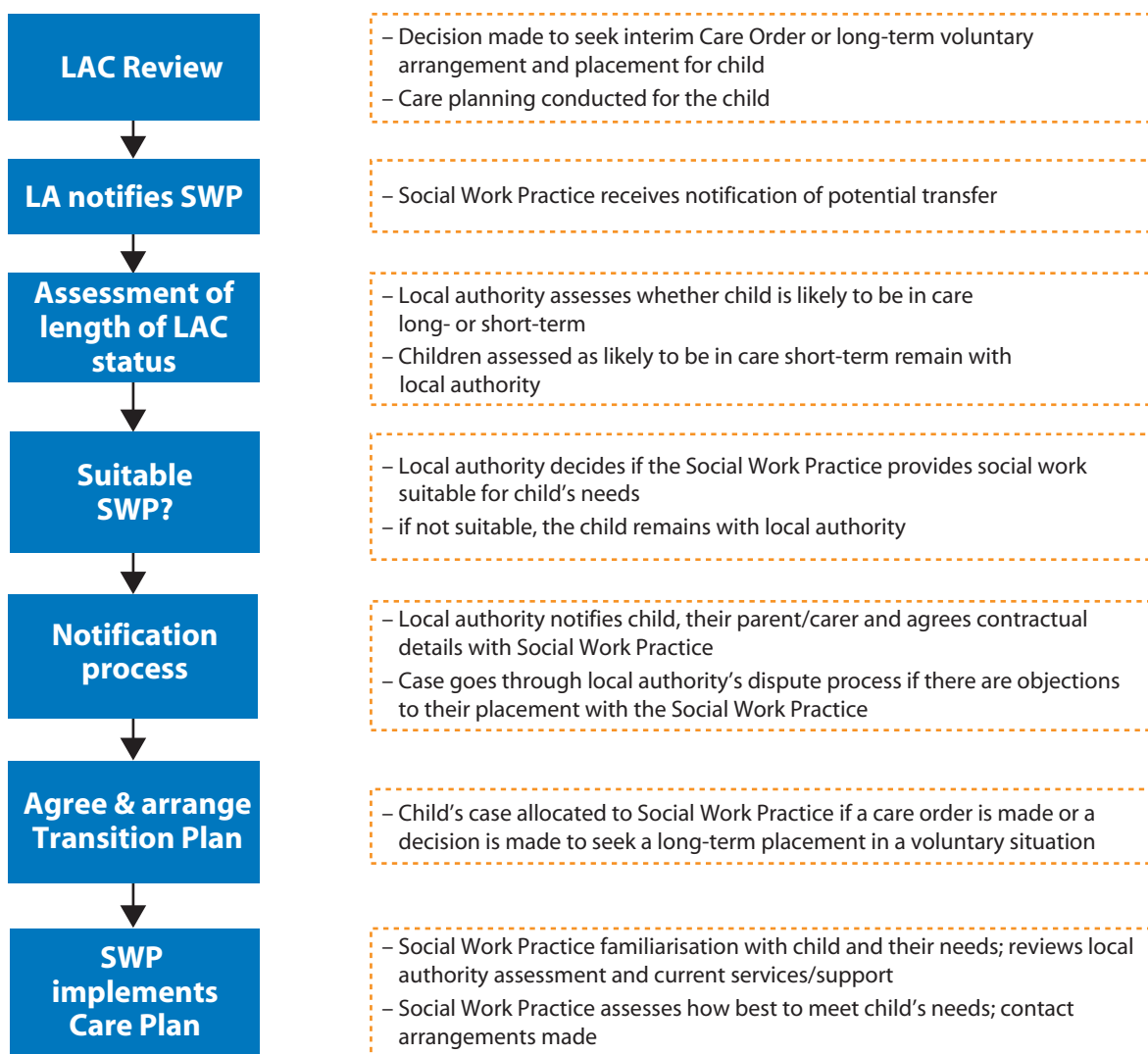
The key responsibilities for local authorities participating in the Social Work Practices pilots will be as follows:

- **Corporate parenting:** The local authority will exercise its corporate parent responsibility through its Lead Member, Director of Children's Services, and other councillors and officers.
- **Strategic development and leading the Children's Trust.**
- **Prevention and early intervention to support children to remain with their families.**
- **Child protection,** including enquiries made under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- **Undertaking court proceedings,** although the Social Work Practice may be involved in case management during this process.
- **All work with children who are in care short term (for example, less than six months).**
- **Statutory reporting.**
- **Ensuring IROs are in place** and are undertaking their functions effectively
- **Ensuring** the availability of (including managing the market for) specialist services.
- **Commissioning a Social Work Practice:** Drawing up a contract with the Social Work Practice; including specifying the services, standards, key performance indicators/outcomes (which will need to match the pilot evaluation criteria), costs and payment arrangements
- **Ensuring arrangements are clear for the allocation of children/young people to the Social Work Practice:** This will be based on the stipulations of the contract between the local authority and Social Work Practice. The local authority should agree the principles underpinning the allocation of children to the practice.
- **Monitoring the performance of the Social Work Practice:** This should be conducted as set in the terms and conditions of the contract
- **Conducting adoption-related functions:** unless the Social Work Practice is registered as a VAA and the contract includes adoption-related functions.
- **Assessing foster carers:** unless the Social Work Practice is also registered as a fostering agency and the contract extends to these functions.
- **Dealing with unresolved complaints made against the Social Work Practice that have not been resolved by the Social Work Practice.**
- **Participating in all requirements of the evaluation of Social Work Practices pilots.**

Initiating Social Work Practice involvement

Each Social Work Practice will begin a planned transition, organised during the set-up period, of an agreed number of children and young people from the local authority to the Social Work Practice. The flowchart below (Figure 3) sets out the process by which it is envisaged that a child will be allocated to a Social Work Practice.

Figure 3: Initiating Social Work Practice involvement



Comprehensive and thorough evaluation

The evaluation of the Social Work Practices pilots is crucial and will focus on the impact of Social Work Practices pilots on three levels:

- Impact on individual children/young people.
- Impact on social work professionals.
- Impact on the organisations within the children’s services system.

The pilots and evaluation will test the effectiveness of specific Social Work Practice models and practices and feed into the decision-making process about whether roll-out should be retained beyond the pilot phase and what should be rolled-out in the longer term. The evaluation will also be an opportunity for identifying and developing examples of best practice and innovation.

We will be seeking the evaluators' views on how to set up and run the pilots as well as how to evaluate them. There may, therefore, be some changes to the pilot model after publication of this document.

How will the Social Work Practice pilot sites be evaluated?

The Social Work Practice pilots will be subject to comprehensive and thorough evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation will be threefold:

- (a) to provide the information needed to enable decisions to be made about the future of the Social Work Practice model post pilots. This will encompass information about whether, and the conditions under which, outcomes for children supported by the Social Work Practice are improved, and any impact on services which continue to be provided by the local authority, particularly child protection services;
- (b) to gather information to inform the shape of the Social Work Practice model in the longer term if the model is made available post pilots; and
- (c) to tell us useful things about social work practice in relation to children in care, more generally. Taking a very different approach may throw up lessons for local authorities about different more effective ways of building relationships with and improving outcomes for looked after children.



The evaluation of the Social Work Practice pilots will need to compare what happens within the Social Work Practice and the host local authority with what happens in “control” local authorities. (Depending on the models adopted in each pilot, the performance of the Social Work Practice may be compared against the host local authority, i.e. if the host local authority continues to support some long term looked after children.) The focus will be on:

- (a) **What happens to children and families:** including outcomes currently measured as part of the National Indicator Set, e.g. stability of placement; quality of relationship with social worker; contact or “connection” time with social workers, access to services; contact with family members; satisfaction with placement, etc; and
- (b) **What happens to staff within the Practice and pilot local authority:** including staff turnover, recruitment and retention; sickness absence; staff satisfaction; how time is spent; decision-making processes, etc;
- (c) **What happens to the children’s services system:** how well does each organisation work with local partners, particularly health and education services?

Second, the evaluation will need to look at the intrinsic effectiveness of the Social Work Practice model, i.e. does it represent value for money? How well does the contract work? What works best in terms of funding Social Work Practices? What is the best way of organising the staffing complement of a Social Work Practice?

Thirdly, the evaluation will need to compare the effectiveness of different models of Social Work Practices, i.e. professional partnership, private sector and third sector. The evaluation should look at the impact, differences and similarities of these models. There is scope in the Bill to restrict the type of organisation which can operate as a Social Work Practice depending on the evidence gathered during the evaluation.

The precise methodology of the evaluation will be determined by the evaluators once selected. However, we expect that the methodology will include analysing the following:

- quantitative data on outcomes for children – probably from the National Indicator Set (NIS). This will be the case not only for children supported by the Social Work Practice but also for children receiving services from the host local authority (e.g. child protection services).
- quantitative data on management and organisational issues – e.g. staffing and finance.
- qualitative data about people’s experiences, e.g. in-depth interviews of staff, children, carers and professionals in partner agencies, such as schools, health services, etc.

How long will the evaluation of Social Work Practice pilots last?

Because the evaluators will have been chosen before Social Work Practices “go live” in Summer 2009, they will be able to contribute to the design of the pilots to ensure they can access the information and data they need. We anticipate that “baseline” data will be collected prior to the “go live” date and then regularly for a two year period till 2011. The evaluators will then have six months to prepare a report which will be made public to inform consultation on the future of the Social Work Practice model. The Bill provides for a piloting period of up to five years (see Figure 1) to allow time for decision-making and transition.



Part 3

Next steps – getting involved

Next steps

We expect Royal Assent for the Children and Young Persons Bill by the end of 2008. Local authorities interested in participating in the Social Work Practices pilots should state their intent by the end of **June 2008**, in order to access **central support for planning and decision-making**. We will select the local authorities to be approved as pilot sites to coincide with Royal Assent. Organisations or individuals interested in setting up a Social Work Practice will need to be ready to bid for invitations to tender from the local authorities from the end of 2008. Depending on the exact date of Royal Assent, the pilots will begin in **Summer or Autumn 2009**. The table below outlines the timescales for the Social Work Practices pilots:

Table 2: High-level timescales for the Social Work Practice pilots

Task	Due date
Local authorities express an interest to participate in the Social Work Practices pilots	By Summer 2008
Royal Assent for Children and Young Persons Bill	By end of 2008 (provisional)
Evaluators are commissioned	By end of 2008*
Potential Social Work Practice providers bid for invitations to tender from local authorities	By end of 2008*
Social Work Practices pilots begin	Summer or Autumn 2009*

* subject to Royal Assent date for Children and Young Persons Bill

What should local authorities do if they want to get involved?

Please complete the statement of interest form to notify us of your interest.

Local authority staff such as Directors of Children's Services and procurement staff who are interested in participating in the pilots will have to consider the following:

Getting the vision and values in place:

What are your local priorities and objectives for children in care and how could a Social Work Practice help you achieve these?

Which Social Work Practice model you would like to test?

Who do you need to talk to, within the authority and outside, to enable you to proceed?

Our support:

We will be providing central support, including workshops and a support team, to those local authorities who express an interest in the pilots, to help them think through these questions.

What should social workers and potential Social Work Practice providers do if they want to get involved?

Please complete the statement of interest form to notify us of your interest. However, it will be for the pilot local authorities to select an appropriate Social Work Practice, to whom they will award the contract.

There are a number of areas that potential Social Work Practices will have to consider. These are:

Getting the vision and values in place:

What you would want to achieve for and with children/young people in care?

What kind of organisation do you want to be?

Which local authority are you interested in? Think about staffing and the interface with other agencies and services in the area.

Who you would need to work with in order to get better outcomes, and how would you and your colleagues do this?

Practice development and working to excellence:

How would you develop social work practice, and forge links to training and development, research and links with universities?

Thinking about the business side of things:

How much is spent on looked after children by the local authority at the moment? Can you get a better deal for them?

What help would you need to construct a business plan?

Get support to sort out the business side of the Practice. You will need expertise to develop a business plan, make sure you can be financially viable, set up an organisation and see you safely through this process. Find out if there is support for business start up in your area.

Start thinking about the kind of organisation you might like to establish deciding in principle whether you want to be a social enterprise, co-operative or private concern. There are different forms of support to meet the different requirements for each.

Local authority support:

What support can you access from your local authority? Does your council have a regeneration or economic development team that supports social enterprise or small businesses?

Our support:

We will be organising central support for potential Social Work Practices.

Sources of further information

- For information on social work practice pilots, please visit:

Website	Address
Every Child Matters	http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/lookedafterchildren/swppilots/
Children and Young Persons Bill and Explanatory Notes for the Bill	http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2007-08/childrenandyoungpersonshl.html

- To be kept up to date with developments on the pilots, please contact:

Contact	Contact details
The Social Work Practice Project Team	Socialwork.practices@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

- For information on small and medium social enterprise and/or business start-up, please contact:

Organisation	Website address
Social Enterprise Unit (Department of Health)	http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Commissioning/Socialenterprise/index.htm
Business Link	http://www.businesslink.gov.uk
HM Revenue and Customs	http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup/index.htm
Health and Safety Executive	http://www.hse.gov.uk/business/
Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	http://www.berr.gov.uk/
National Federation of Enterprise Agencies	http://www.nfea.com/
British Library Business and IP Centre	http://www.bl.uk/bipc/
Co-operatives UK	http://www.cooperatives-uk.coop/Services

Statement of Interest Form

To:	Project Lead for Social Work Practice Pilots
	Email: Socialwork.practices@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk Address: Children and Families Directorate, Area 1F, 1st floor Caxton House, 6–12 Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA
RE:	Notification of interest in participating in the Social Work Practices pilot
My contact details:	
Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr (please delete as applicable)	
Surname:	
First name:	
Job title:	
Telephone number:	
Email:	
Organisation/ local authority:	

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