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Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

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Issue

1. To inform HELA of the position regarding the new round of LAAs and the issues they raise for health and safety services in local authorities (LAs)

Timing

2. Negotiation of new LAAs is ongoing. The details of the 198 National Indicators referred to below will be subject to further discussion until January. The new LAAs will be signed off by ministers next June and cover 2008-11.

Recommendations

3. HELA to be aware that LA and HSE Partnership Teams will need to work hard to include health and safety in local area agreements

Background

4. LAAs have been piloted with all 150 top tier LAs in England during 2005-7, but 2008-9 will be the first year when every LA has to have one, although for district councils this will mean being part of a county LAA. LACORS has produced a briefing on new LAAs which is at the appendix to this paper. The key points are:

- LAAs are to become THE key negotiation on funding and performance for LAs.
- Funding will not be linked to specific targets
- The new LAAs will be negotiated with Local Strategic Partnerships rather than just the Local Authority County and Unitary Authorities having to set up Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). LSPs have to develop Sustainable Community Strategies.
- If health and safety services miss out they will miss out for three years as LAAs can be adjusted during this period but not fundamentally changed.

5. LAAs have four themes: Safer and Stronger Communities; Healthier Communities and Old People; Children and Young People; Economic Development and the Environment. Although these are essentially the same as the four “blocks” used to form the previous LAAs, the themed approach is intended to be more flexible and less bureaucratic.

6. Below this thematic level, each LAA will contain:

- 18 statutory education/early years targets
- Up to 35 targets drawn from the new national indicator set of 198, negotiated with Regional Government Offices and agreed with central government
- Locally agreed targets which will have the same status as those above but which will not require reporting to central government.

7. This reduced number of national indicators will mean a smaller performance-monitoring burden is placed on LAs but will also mean that Health and Safety cannot depend on having a specific indicator for everything it does. The 35 targets tend to be quite broad. A number of projects can fit within them, but to achieve this they must have a timebound milestone in achieving outcome in relation to a specific indicator. (e.g. Reduce per cent of under 16s smoking by 10 per cent by 2010.

8. The set of indicators published last week (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/505713>), does not include the Rogers priority on improving health in the workplace, but does include some priorities which Health and Safety services may be able to use (given the timescale since publication this is a ‘quick and dirty’ survey):

9. Health and safety could contribute to a number of the national indicators such as:

- NI 70 hospital admission due to unintentional and deliberate injuries to young people.
- NI 119 Self-reported measure of overall health and wellbeing
- NI 120 Mortality rate
- NI 122 Cancer mortality rate at 75
- NI 140 Fair treatment by local services (this lies within tackling exclusion and promoting equality and may provide opportunities for health and safety dealing with businesses that tend to be confined to a minority group, e.g. Vietnamese nail bars).

- NI 173 People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits (the successful Kirklees bid for LAA funds used a similar target). 151 and 152 are similar but more general.
- NI 182 Satisfaction of businesses with local authority regulation services
- NI 183 Impact of LA regulatory services on the fair trading environment (more obviously a Trading Standards target but scope for Health and Safety involvement)
- NI 184 Food establishments compliant with Food Hygiene Law (relevant in as much as dermatitis in catering can be a hygiene issue)

10. In addition there are opportunities for health and safety to be involved in locally-agreed indicators.

11. There are a number of remaining uncertainties. These include how the influence of LAA targets in setting health and safety agendas will fit with the requirements of Fit3 and LAs' accountability to the HSC. LACORS anticipates that HSC's PSA targets will be replaced by a Departmental Service Objective (DSO) at some point during the life of the new LAAs and in theory at least this potential conflict will be examined in drawing up the DSO. What we do know is that the new indicator set will not affect statutory duties. However LAs' ability to perform these health and safety duties could be undermined if health and safety is not included in LAAs and that leads to a diversion of resources. What can we do about this?

How can H&S fit in to local area agreements?

12. There appear to have been relatively few examples of health and safety being written into Local Area Agreements. If this is to change, now is the time to start influencing the decision-makers and making links with potential partners. Two keys to a successful approach are: seek partners and be imaginative.

13. Even if health and safety services are not covered by specific targets in the eventual agreement it is important to convince councillors and others that health and safety contributes to the achievement of LAA targets.

14. Health and safety contributes to each of the LAA themes and the existing Fit3 programme clearly contributes to economic development. In order to get into an LAA, however, Health and Safety needs to provide a measurable outcome.

15. Isle of Wight Council successfully got health and safety into the Safer and Stronger Communities block under the aim of reducing injuries at home, work and on the road, using a target of reducing the number of

businesses in which they had little or no confidence in management. The support of their HSE Partnership Manager proved vital in achieving this.

16. Kirklees worked in partnership with a number of bodies - but notably jobcentre plus - to get funding under the Economic Development block as part of the aim to achieve 'a more prosperous community with lower levels of worklessness and higher income for all'. Two measurable outcomes were set: reducing the number of successful new incapacity benefit claims and reducing the working days lost through work-related ill health. However DWP (which is keen to promote the reducing benefit dependency agenda) rejected a more specific health and safety improvement target and health and safety inclusion in the LAA was an automatic consequence of its membership of the Local Public Service Agreement; which took a year's negotiation with DWP.

17. This is not a promising picture, for all the useful lessons that the two cases highlighted above can offer. We need to make connections in more imaginative ways if we are to succeed in getting health and safety into LAAs. Two suggestions of the sort of projects it may be worth looking at are included here:

18. HSL is in the process of producing a work-related violence (WRV) tool for dutyholders. WRV in the retail sector affords opportunities for health and safety to work with other regulatory services and the police to address issues relating to licensed premises, which might incorporate noise emissions as well as wider disorder and health issues, or to work with the police in addressing wider retail crime. Measurable outcomes might be prosecutions, reported incidents or public concern.

19. Public health offers opportunities for partnership work with PCTs and educators. For example, working with PCTs and education to reduce teenage sunbed use (outcomes might be measured through awareness surveys or the number of salons adopting good practice guidelines.), reducing work-related road traffic deaths, or linking smokefree activities to PCTs' work.

20. These are only suggestions, but the point is that LA Health and Safety managers and HSE Partnership Teams need to make contact with:

- **Other regulatory services**
- **Other H&S services in the county**
- **Other potential partners and those working on the LAA.** It may be that there are already proposals for LAA work that health and safety can contribute to.
- **Those involved in Local Strategic Partnership negotiations over Sustainable Community Strategies.** SCSs are expected to have a strong influence on the 35 targets selected from the national indicator set.
- **Regional Government Office:** It is the role of the regional government offices to balance central and local priorities in

negotiating LAAs. There are no HSE secondees to government offices so there may be a lack of awareness of what health and safety has to offer.

HSE's potential role

21. HSE needs to consider how its priorities can feed into LAAs and what support it can offer LAs in attempts to get Health and Safety included in agreements. Even where the Health and Safety target is one which does not contribute directly to Fit3 priorities HSE needs to consider the impact of inclusion on the status of health and safety services and the knock-on benefits for health and safety work that falls outside the LAA but within Fit3.

22. HSE is already assisting through the provision of statistics but experience so far has tended to suggest that once statistics are broken down to specific areas, industries and age groups they tend to be too unreliable to show any measurable change over three years. The Isle of Wight project was originally planning to use RIDDOR statistics but changed its plans because these were not good enough. Kirklees used the CLIK (Current Living in Kirklees) survey which has a question on days lost through work-related ill health.

23. The support of the HSE partnership manager was vital in the success of the Isle of Wight bid. Partnership Managers need to offer as much of this support as possible and to be supported in turn in doing so by HSE.

Appendix



Next Generation Local Area Agreements – Introductory Briefing for Regulatory Services

July 2007

Background

This briefing is designed to be an introduction for Heads of Environmental Health and Trading Standards to the key timescales and issues in relation to the introduction of next generation Local Area Agreements (LAAs). This is based on a series of presentations that LACORS has done at regional events. Further guidance will follow once the operational and statutory guidance is forthcoming from Communities and Local Government. The position as outlined here is our best understanding of the implementation plans to date. LACORS is working on an LAA project team which is led by LGA and IDEA to ensure that the needs of regulatory services in LAAs are recognised and that we can develop any bespoke guidance in parallel with the broader local government framework and advice.

Next Generation LAAs

The primary objective of LAAs is to deliver better outcomes for local people. By March 2007 all top tier councils had an LAA. The government undertook an evaluation which found that the main impact to date had been to stimulate stronger partnerships, more joined up working and better consideration of cross-cutting issues BUT, it also found that LAAs still peripheral to

mainstream business with reporting requirements still layered on top of existing ones. The purpose of the new generation is to maximise the benefits and mainstream LAAs.

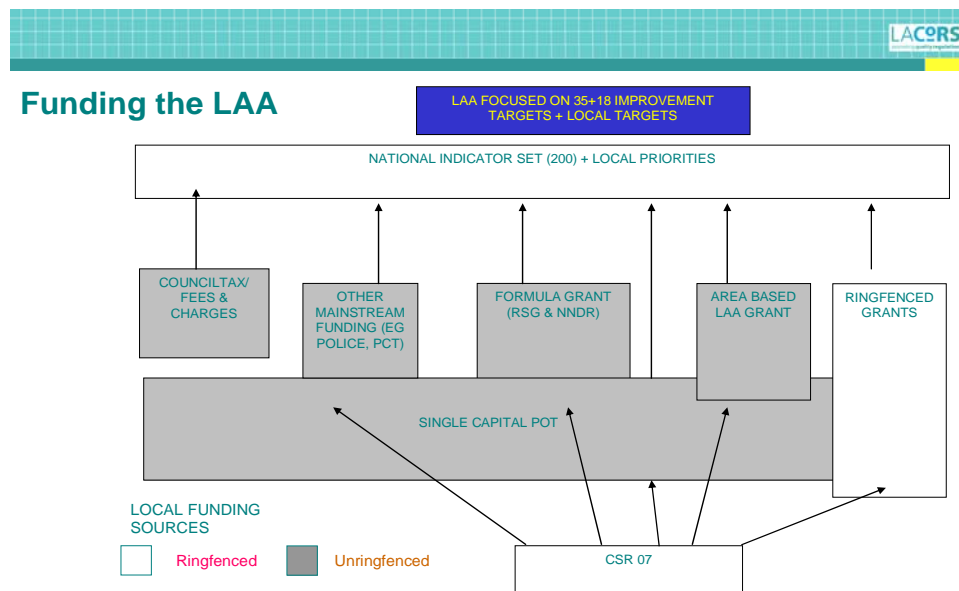
The local government white paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities” stated that LAAs offered “*a stronger role for local authorities to lead their communities, shape their areas, and innovate in response to local needs*” in exchange for “*more bottom-up accountability, better and more efficient services and tougher intervention when things go wrong*”.

In their response “A Very English Revolution” the LGA responded by stating that “*LAAs have the potential to transform public services. At their best they bring the whole of public services together around shared ambitions, and through better coordination, innovation and efficiency they drive up standards and ensure better value for money while creating higher public satisfaction and better public access*”

It is clear with such a high level of support from both the government and local government that the LAA agenda will be key over the next few years.

Next generation LAAs are designed to move LAAs from the margins to the mainstream of service delivery. They are no longer about specific funding for specific targets. It will cover all key delivery and be supported by all resources in the area

The diagram below was provided by the Government and shows how they anticipate the use of all types of local government resources to be used towards the delivery of LAA outcomes.

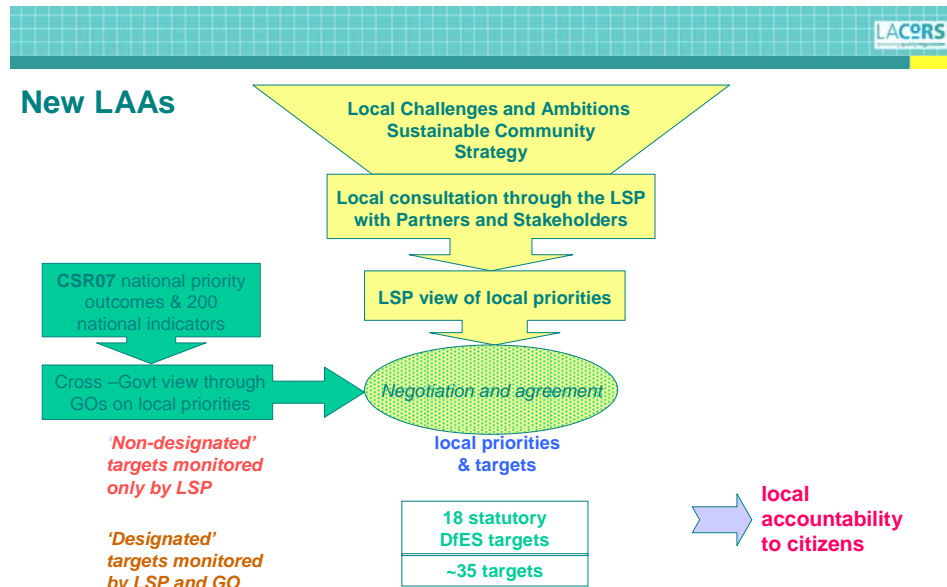


Who prepares the LAA?

There is a duty on county and unitary authorities in England to develop an LAA in partnership with other agencies and a duty on district councils & named partners to agree and have regard to meeting LAA targets .

How does the negotiation process work?

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) remains as the single over-arching partnership, setting strategy & priorities with delivery through individual partners and thematic partnerships. The Government office negotiates on behalf of central government. The process is outlined below.



How do the indicators fit in?

The LAA will be made up of a selection of government targets (selected from the final list of 200 local government indicators) plus a selection of local priorities that have been agreed as part of the negotiation process. Once agreed the national and local targets collectively form the LAA and should be considered as a whole, not as an A list and a B list.

Timescales

- April – June 2007: Feasibility testing in 17 areas of new LAAs
- October 2007: outcomes of the comprehensive Spending Review will be known which will then be followed by the Public service Agreements and the 200 local government performance indicators
- Autumn 2007: start CLG issues operational guidance and official negotiations
- Autumn 2007: Statutory arrangements agreed
- April 2008: New LAAs operational

June 2008: New LAAs signed
April 2009: Comprehensive Area Assessment implemented

Themes for new LAAs

Themes will remain similar to the old LAAs as follows:-

- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Economic Development and Environment

The key change is that the fourth block is now expanded to encompass environmental issues. LACORS feels this will be very helpful to environmental health and trading standards services. Our previous research "Local Area Agreements and Regulatory Services - Drivers, Barriers, Benefits and Lessons Learned from Rounds 1 and 2" contains some examples of how regulatory services and been able to input in all 4 themes.

What should you be doing now?

Although exact arrangements, and indicators etc are not yet now it is important that you make contact with the people negotiating the LAA on behalf of your council NOW. Let them know what regulatory services can offer across the themes to help support corporate objectives for the new LAAs. It is important that you are visible and active at this early stage as hopefully once negotiations and discussions start in earnest people will be ware of the contribution environmental health and trading standards services have to offer.

Next steps for LACORS

LACORS will continue to work on the LAA project team with LGA and IDeA to ensure regulatory services interests are known and understood.

During summer 2007, LACORS will be doing further research on some examples of detailed targets, and the data sets and management arrangements put in place to monitor to help local councils when choosing targets for their LAAs next year.

Once the Government's Public Service Agreement targets are know we plan to issue a series of joint documents with national policy departments and regulators that can offer some options for possible LAA objectives in specified policy areas that support both central government and local council's strategic objectives.

We will also be disseminating some work carried out by the South West Regulators Forum which shows how they are linking their work to the various objectives and themes for LAAs in their region.

Further information

Communities and Local Government has a dedicated area of its website on **Partnerships** and **Local Area Agreements**

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1161632>

The **Local Area Agreements** section has links to the IDeA Knowledge website, which contains a wealth of information and resources,

<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk>

LACORS Rough Guide to LAAs

<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/ViewDocument.aspx?docID=14951&docType=C>

LACORS “Local Area Agreements and Regulatory Services - Drivers, Barriers, Benefits and Lessons Learned from Rounds 1 and 2”

<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/ViewDocument.aspx?docID=15641&docType=C>