

## **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS WITH SCHOOLS**

**Report By: HEAD OF POLICY AND RESOURCES**

### **Wards Affected**

Countywide.

### **Purpose**

1. To consider the content of Service Level Agreements with schools for 2004/05.

### **Financial Implications**

2. As set out in the report.

### **Report**

3. Since April 2000, a high proportion of support services has been offered to schools under SLAs. Consultation prior to delegation of services showed that the majority of schools did not want their budgetary arrangements to be made more complicated by the change. It was agreed, therefore, that core services would be delegated to schools, usually on the simple basis of a flat rate plus an amount per pupil, with charges at the same level for schools wishing to join. Schools were also keen not to be bombarded with customer care surveys and questionnaires. For Best Value purposes, Facilities Management (SLA 1) have surveyed their users every year, but other services have relied on informal and targeted feedback (usually meetings and customer discussions) to guide their development.
4. Over the last 3 years, all services have been developed and improved as a result of a contribution of customer feedback, amended legislation and IT developments. In some cases, the price structure has been altered – for example where it was felt that the charge did not reflect the value of the service. Some services have also been asked to offer extra services, outside the original agreement, for an additional charge. The principle that the charge and allocation are the same, however, has been retained wherever possible and prices are shown separately within the budget allocation process. This means that, if a support team puts up its prices, additional funding is generally provided so that schools can afford the increase.
5. A short description, of the service is given in Appendix 1 below. The list does not cover IT support services through ESS because those services were delegated and established many years ago on a different charging basis.
6. In addition to the services offered to schools, each of the SLA teams performs central functions for the LEA such as health and safety, data collection, reports, statutory monitoring requirements and emergency intervention.

## **Changes to the Service Level Agreement for Staffing and Appointments**

7. The maintenance of the LEA's teacher supply register and vacancy list will be withdrawn from the delegated part of the SLA in the 2005. It will then be managed centrally, in future, to ensure that schools can be confident that necessary employment checks have been carried out.
8. The issuing of contracts of employment for all teaching and non-teaching staff will be transferred to the delegated part of the SLA.
9. The net effect of the two changes will be to increase the amount of funding delegated to schools. However, schools will still be able to join the service for the same charge as the delegated sum in their budget allocation.

## **Changes to the Service Level Agreement for Occupational Health**

10. Currently, the costs of pre-employment medical checks are borne centrally, but it has been agreed that they should now be included in the SLA. The effect will be a further delegation of funds to schools and a corresponding increase in the charge.
11. The range of optional services offered by Occupational Health continues to expand. Although some of those services will be of help to schools in certain circumstances, (for example "fast track Physiotherapy Service" and the back pain remedial service) take up is left to schools' discretion with separate charging then incorporated into the standard SLA.

## **Possible Further Changes**

12. Members of the Schools Forum considered and accepted these proposals at their meeting in October. A general survey of schools, taking place during the Spring Term, contains a short question about each service, and the responses will be used to guide consideration of possible further changes.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee are invited to note the report, and make comments about areas where improvements might be made in the proposed arrangements for 2004/05.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**