

Surrey Heath and Woking Community Legal Services

Our plans for the delivery of advice, information and legal services 2004-2007

Community Legal Service



Welcome to our proposals for Surrey Heath and Woking Community Legal Service Partnership.

The Community Legal Service Partnership has been working in Surrey Heath since September 2002 and Woking since March 2001 to ensure that local residents have the advice, information and legal services they need.

This strategy contains information about that work and provides a strategic plan for services for the next three years.

More details and the background to this work can be obtained from the address below.

What is the Community Legal Service?

The Community Legal Service was established in April 2000 with the twin aims of more effective targeting of public funds to meet local need for information, advice and legal services, and to ensure that all the funders and providers of these services work together. To deliver these aims, the CLS adopted three strands:

1. the establishment of local Community Legal Service Partnerships
2. the development and implementation of the Quality Mark
3. the launch of the JustAsk! Website—now relaunched as www.clsdirect.org.uk

This document contains the details of CLS partners in delivering the aims of the Community Legal Service in Surrey Heath and Woking.

CLSPs are made up of representatives of funders and providers of local information, advice and legal services, and representatives of groups who have particular needs in relation to the provision of services. The purpose of the CLSP is to carry out activities of mutual interest in promotion of the CLS. Their primary task is to identify local levels of need for services, and the extent to which these needs are met by current provision. This information enables local organisations, and the partnership itself, to form plans to improve services to match these needs.

This strategy, and a complementary approach to the funding and provision of services will enable resources to be used more effectively and to provide evidence to support bids for additional funding, where appropriate, to improve access to justice.

The Community Legal Service Partnership and the Legal Services Commission have produced this report. Further copies can be obtained from the Legal Services Commission, 3rd Floor, Invicta House, Trafalgar Place, Brighton BN1 4FR. Telephone 01273 878867. Email: stephen.hughes@legalservices.gov.uk

Surrey Heath and Woking Community Legal Services

What has the Partnership achieved so far?

Since the local partnership was set up, the Steering Group has been developing a strategy for the delivery of services. In order to do this, a careful study has been undertaken of the needs of the area and the current supply of services. From this work it has been possible to identify gaps in services and develop proposals for new services to meet this demand.

An assessment of need for legal and advice services looked at the Surrey Heath and Woking populations, and at particular client groups and categories of law. A range of information has been assessed, including the Legal Service Commission's predictive need models, the Indices of Deprivation, and local studies into social exclusion.

A detailed survey of current provision of services has been undertaken and is still underway. Many solicitors, agencies and organisations have been contacted and details of their services compiled. From this data it will be possible to determine where there are sufficient services to meet the needs of the local community, and where there is a lack of supply. Information has also been collected on access to interpreters for people whose first language is not English, sign language and Minicom for deaf people and physical access for people with mobility difficulties.

The CLSP has determined that, in the Surrey Heath and Woking areas, there are generally a sufficient number of providers offering specialist and general legal advice and help. However the CLSP is concerned that these services are provided by a relatively small number of agencies and could be vulnerable to any reductions in supply, there may also be a gap in the provision of specialist level welfare benefits help and in debt and so far only a small number of information points have been identified. The CLSP has also uncovered some additional gaps in provision through its detailed assessment of local needs. Over the next year the CLSP will be seeking to explore new ways to work in partnership with other agencies, such as the Legal Services Commission, Local Authorities, County Councils, etc, to provide these services.

Community Education

Developing a programme of community events that will best reach people experiencing difficulties in reaching the services they need.

Surrey Heath and Woking CLSP Steering Group Membership

Woking Community Legal Service Partnership Steering Group Members

Christine Holloway	Surrey County council
Helen Dickens	Age Concern Surrey
Chris Eele	CAB Woking
John Case	Woking Library
Monica Ford	RLSC
Ghislaine Watson-Hopkinson	Woking PCT
Alistair Ng	Alistair Ng, Solicitors
M. A. Ghafoor	Neighbourhood Advice Centre
Caren Henry	N W Surrey Association of Disabled People
Timothy Anstiss	Healthy Woking Project
John Thurgood	Social Services
Cathy Kane	Surrey Law Centre
Lesley Kitchen	Woking Association of Voluntary Services
Frank Jeffrey	Woking Borough Council
Catherine Butler	Woking Borough Housing Advice Service
Richard Nowacki	Trading Standards Service
Wendy Plues	WIDE
Sheila Deed	Woking Borough Council
Penny Hayson	Woking Borough Council
Ilham Abou-Rahme	Woking Comm. Relations Forum
Anne Taylor	Woking Crime Prevention Panel
Alistair Foster	Woking PCG
Vernon White	Woking Library

Surrey Heath Community Legal Service Partnership Steering Group Members

Jeff Lee	Lee & Company
Bee Bewsey/ Christine Pointer	Citizens Advice Bureau Camberley
Christine Furneaux	Voluntary Services Surrey Heath
Clive Jinman	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Maria Zealey	Surrey Welfare Rights Unit
Sarah Targett	UB40 Young People's Project
Pam Amos	Camberley Care Team
Christine Cooper	Surrey Heath Housing Association
Richard Nowacki	Surrey County Council Trading Standards
Mike Abbot	Surrey County Council
Anne Farthing	Surrey Heath Carers
Brenda Alexander	Surrey County Council
Sarah Carter	Citizens Advice Bureau Heathlands
Cathy Kane	Surrey Law Centre
Julie Summers	Constantine & Summers
Alex Hughes	Citizens Advice Bureau Rushmoor
Carol Brooke-Read	
Luthful Karim	Bengali Welfare Association
Ian Savill	Savill & Co
Tom Li	Brooks & Co
Jayne Boitout	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Richard Collins	Surrey Heath Borough Council

Current provision of services

For the Surrey Heath area a supply mapping exercise is currently underway provide data about local advice, information and legal services providers.

This data will be used to produce a comprehensive map of the advice services available in Surrey Heath

For the Woking area priority should be given to identifying specialist providers in the categories of Debt and also Consumer issues and Welfare Benefits. In the category of debt there would appear to be fewer suppliers than expected at any level of service provision.

Community Profiles

Woking Borough has a population of around 89,840. As with the rest of Surrey, Woking is characterised as having the affluent and relatively poor living in close proximity. The effect of this can be to mask the significant pockets of real social exclusion that do exist.

There are significant pockets of deprivation in Woking, such as in Sheerwater, Central & Maybury wards, which share problems of high unemployment, have the lowest mean household income of Woking wards, and tend to have poor housing conditions

From the 2001 census, Woking has the highest proportion of people from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities within Surrey.(8.7% of the Woking population compared with 5% of Surrey as a whole).

Surrey Heath has a population of 80309. As with Woking and the rest of Surrey, the Borough of Surrey Heath is characterised as having the affluent and relatively poor living in close proximity. The effect of this can be to mask the significant pockets of real social exclusion that does exist.

There are pockets of deprivation in Surrey Heath, such as in Old Dean, which is one of the most deprived wards in Surrey County. The Income Deprivation Index 2000 measures people who are on a low income, and Old Dean is listed as the fifth most income deprived ward in Surrey.

However, incomes in Surrey Heath are relatively high in comparison to national figures, and the standard of living in Surrey Heath is high. In the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2000 average of ward scores, Surrey Heath was ranked as one of the least deprived areas in England.

The Referral Network

There is a Referral Network CD-ROM and Handbook for the whole of the CLSP area that includes details of all agencies that have so far signed up to a common protocol. An assessment of membership of agencies obtaining the Quality Mark has been commenced. So far this has only been completed for the Woking area. The results for Surrey Heath will be completed in 2004 and results published in the next CLSP Annual Report

Surrey Heath and Woking Community Legal Services

Surrey Heath and Woking Referral Network

- A Referral Handbook for all advice and legal service workers with up-to-date information on local services
- A Referral Network protocol to promote good practice
- Standardised documentation to ensure consistency and compliance with the Quality Mark
- Regular Referral Network briefings to bring practitioners together to discuss good practice and make better links between local service providers

The Quality Mark

- There are 13 advice services holding the Specialist Quality Mark
- There are 3 advice agencies holding the General Help Quality Mark, with 2 of these offering Casework

The Community Legal Service Partnership aims to increase the numbers of quality mark holders included in the referral network year on year over the next three years.

Ensuring that local people get the right advice, from the right person at the right time has been an essential element of the work undertaken by the Community Legal Service Partnership. For the first time there is a comprehensive network of local providers, working together.

Clients can now be referred to appropriate sources of help efficiently and effectively, making sure that problems get resolved.

In addition, agencies can consult Surrey Law Centre, which holds the specialist QM in Housing, Community Care, Employment and Immigration. Representation may be provided.

The local Referral Network is supported by a handbook containing details of 35 agencies for the whole area.

Surrey Heath and Woking area residents deserve high quality services. The Community Legal Service Quality Mark is a badge they can trust. Independently audited by the Legal Services Commission, the Quality Mark assures clients that they will receive the best service available.

The Quality Mark is available at three levels of service – specialist, general help and information – further details are available from the Legal Service Commission.

The Community Legal Service Partnership is actively promoting the Quality Mark to all local providers.

See the CLS Direct web site for details of agencies holding the Quality Mark in your area – www.clsdirect.org.uk

The Quality Mark is structured to cover the full range of information, advice and legal services:

Complex cases including representation at court and tribunal

General advisers help diagnose problems and support so clients can help themselves

Information points have details about advice services and supply leaflets

The CLSP will facilitate and provide training and support to organisations thinking of applying for the Quality Mark between 2004 and 2007.

Community Education

Plans are also being developed to give the public improved access to information on their rights and responsibilities, and how to get the help they need, including access to the CLS www.clsdirect.org.uk website.

Ensuring access to justice for all

Surrey Heath and Woking Community Legal Services

The Community Legal Service Partnership has developed a strategy for the delivery of advice and legal services in the area, built on the research undertaken so far. We have identified a need for:

- *Improved access to information, advice and legal services for Black and Minority Ethnic communities*
- *Better understanding of and meeting the needs of young people*
- *Improved access to information on existing advice services across the area*
- *Developing the evidence base for defining future priorities*
- *Exploring health information pathways for people with complaints about health services*

We have also identified a need for improving the public's awareness of their civil rights and responsibilities, and on how and where to get help to resolve problems at an early stage is vital to the success of the aims of the Community Legal Service. The CLSP aims to improve access to information and to promote the Community Legal Service Quality Mark.

The Community Legal Service Partnership will continue to assess local needs for information, advice and legal services and monitor the provision of services in the area. Local practitioners will be encouraged to work together to ensure a "seamless service" for their clients.

The Referral Network will be developed and monitored for effectiveness on an annual basis and regular briefings held to promote joint working.

All local services will be encouraged and assisted to apply for, and acquire the CLS Quality Mark, where appropriate, or other relevant quality assurance standards.

Equal Opportunities Impact Assessment

Community Legal Service Partnerships have a general duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups and are required to undertake an assessment of the impact on equal opportunities of any policy developments. The proposals and initiatives described in this document have been assessed for equal opportunities and are considered to comply with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. Further information on the process is available from the Legal Services Commission.

Improvements planned and already underway:

As well as seeking to make sure that the identified needs and gaps in services are met, the CLSP has a number of other improvements already underway and planned.

- Comprehensive Referral Handbook/CD-ROM for advisers detailing services available within the CLSP to make it easier to refer people on to the best source of help.
- Improving the public's awareness of their civil rights and responsibilities, and on how and where to get help to resolve problems at an early stage is vital to the success of the aims of the Community Legal Service. The CLSP is developing plans to improve access to information and to promote the Community Legal Service to all.

- Developing a communications strategy to promote access to local services.
- Wide distribution of CLS information leaflets.
- Linking with Local Authority and County Council's community planning strategies.
- Focus on:
 - Health
 - Access to information
 - Young People

**Planned and co-ordinated services for the
21st Century**