



Association of Directors of Adult Social Services response to the Communities and Local Government consultation on “ Best Value: new draft statutory guidance.”

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) represents Directors of Adult Social Services in Local Authorities in England. As well as having statutory responsibilities for the commissioning and provision of social care, including the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, ADASS members often also share a number of responsibilities for housing, leisure, library, culture, arts, community services, and increasingly, Children’s Social Care within their Local Authority.

Response:

ADASS welcomes the light touch approach and the presumption of competence. This enables local authorities to take an approach that will work locally, further strengthening existing partnership arrangements with the voluntary and community sector and encouraging greater collaboration in delivering services, saving money and adding value.

We also welcome the fact that the draft extends consideration of value to include ‘social value’ that are relevant to the services being provided. We support the clarification that consultation should apply at all stages in the commissioning cycle. This includes in our opinion initial discussions about the possible need for a service and its design. If there is doubt about whether this element is within scope then this should be made clear in the final version of the Guidance.

ADASS support the need for local authorities to be sensitive to the benefits and needs of voluntary and community sector organisations. We also support the three specific requirements set out in paragraph 3 of the draft Guidance although many local authorities are meeting those requirements already. Furthermore, local authorities should have regular involvement and engagement locally with the voluntary and community sector so that relationships are strong and robust.

John Jackson- Joint Chair ADASS Resources Committee
June 2011

For Info:

Best Value Statutory Guidance (Draft)

1. Best value authorities are under a general duty of best value to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.” Under the duty of best value, therefore, authorities should consider overall value, including environmental and social value, when reviewing service provision.

2. To achieve the right balance – and before deciding how to fulfil their Best Value duty – authorities are required to consult a wide range of local persons, including local voluntary and community organisations and businesses. This should apply at all stages of the commissioning cycle, including when considering decommissioning services.

3. Authorities should be sensitive to the benefits and needs of voluntary and community sector organisations (honouring the commitments set out in local Compacts) and small businesses. Authorities should seek to avoid passing on disproportionate cuts and in particular:

- An authority intending to reduce or end funding or other support to a voluntary and community organisation that will materially threaten the viability of the organisation or the service it provides should give at least three months' notice to both the organisation involved and the public/service users.*
- An authority should actively engage the organisation as early as possible on: the future of the service; any knock-on effect on assets used to provide this service; and the wider impact both on service users and the local community.*
- Authorities should make provision for the organisation or wider community to put forward options on how to reshape the service or project. Local authorities should assist this by making available all appropriate information, in line with the Transparency Code of Practice.*