

**Health Service Circular
Local Authority Circular**



Series number: HSC(98)159 : LAC(98)22

Issue date: 30th September 1998

Review date: 30th September 1999

Category: Planning

Status: Action

sets out a specific action on the part of the recipient with a deadline where appropriate

**Modernising Health and Social Services:
National Priorities Guidance 1999/00 - 2001/02**

For action by: Health Authorities, (Chief Executives)
NHS Trusts (Chief Executives)
Primary Care Groups
Local Authorities with Social Services responsibilities
(Chief Executives, Social Services Directors)

For information to: NHS Regional Chairmen
Health Authorities Chairmen
NHS Trusts Chairmen
General Medical Practitioners
Local Medical Committees
Local Dental Committees
Local Optical Committees
Local Pharmaceutical Committees
Community Health Councils (Chairs)
Community Health Councils (Chief Executives)
Local Authority Leaders
District Councils (Chief Executives)
Local Authority Social Services Committees Chairmen

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Modernising Health and Social Services:
National Priorities Guidance 1999/00 - 2001/02

Summary

- 1 The Government recognises the interdependence of health and social care. Joint working between health and social services and with local government more generally is vital if plans to modernise services are to be achieved. For some time, Priorities and Planning Guidance has been issued annually to the NHS. The attached guidance *Modernising Health and Social Services: National Priorities 1999/00 - 2001/02* breaks new ground. For the first time it sets out a joint programme of modernisation, and the Government's national priorities for health and social services to be translated into local action in 1999/00 and beyond.
- 2 The Health Improvement Programme Guidance, to be issued shortly, will set out the practical steps for progressing these national priorities at local level.

Action

- 3 The attached guidance is for action by Health Authorities, NHS Trusts, and Primary Care Groups. It is also for action by Social Services Authorities, issued under section 7(1) of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. Local Authorities corporately also have a vital contribution to make, and this guidance, which has been agreed by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, is also addressed to them.
- 4 Health Authorities and Social Services Authorities will need to agree with the Regional Offices of the NHS Executive and of the Social Services Inspectorate, local targets representing the contribution they will make to the national objectives and targets set out for each of the priority areas.
- 5 The Health Improvement Programme Guidance will give further details of action required locally to implement this national guidance. Further details on how the social services' priorities are to be taken forward will be contained in the forthcoming Social Services White Paper.

Purpose of the Guidance

- 6 The guidance sets the national context in which local plans will be developed to achieve the Government's aim of modernising health and social services. It sets out the modernisation programme and identifies the national priorities for action over the next three years and the targets to be met that will help deliver the year-by-year improvements in services.

Content of the Guidance

- 7 *Chapter 1: A New Direction* sets out a clear set of aims and objectives, and the ways in which services will be modernised to meet these objectives: by addressing the root causes of ill-health, breaking down barriers between services, ensuring uniformly high quality standards and maximising value for money, and making services faster and more convenient.

Chapter 2: Modernising Health and Social Services describes the Government's policy programme of modernisation developed since May 1997 and the strategies on Finance, Staff, Information Technology, and Capital, that will support its achievement.

Chapter 3: National Priorities identifies the national priorities and objectives and targets for action that will bring about year-by-year improvement in this ten year programme of modernisation. The national priorities are:

Social Services Lead	Shared Lead	NHS Lead
Children's Welfare	Cutting Health Inequalities	Waiting Lists/Times
Inter-Agency Working	Mental Health	Primary Care
Regulation	Promoting Independence	Coronary Heart Disease
		Cancer

Chapter 4: Implementation outlines the management arrangements by which the priorities will be taken forward through local action and how performance will be assessed and improved.

This circular has been issued by:

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