

Local Area Agreements, National Indicators and Advice



Introduction

- 1.1 Local area agreements (LAAs) are three-year agreements setting out local priorities, as agreed between central government and the local area. They are based on the local Sustainable Community Strategy, which sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of a local area.
- 1.2 Understanding LAAs will enable advice agencies to identify potential local funding opportunities and threats. This briefing, published in November 2008, is intended to help advice agencies find the information they need.
- 1.3 For the purposes of negotiating and signing off LAAs, central government is represented by the regional Government Offices (GOs). The local area is represented by the local strategic partnership (LSP), made up of representatives from key service delivery partners such as the local authority, local public partners (e.g. police authorities, primary care trusts, children's trusts etc), business and commerce, third sector organisations (TSOs) and individuals.
- 1.4 Only 'responsible local authorities'¹ sign off the LAA. In areas that have two tiers of local government – county and district – the process of developing LAAs is more challenging than in unitary authority areas. County and district councils have to co-operate to produce an agreement that works for both tiers, and it is signed off by the county council.
- 1.5 LAAs are intended to devolve decision making from Whitehall to the local area and reduce bureaucracy. They also simplify central Government spending, aim to join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for the partners to develop local solutions and target funding towards local priorities.
- 1.6 LAAs are structured around four policy areas or 'indicative themes':
 - Children and young people
 - Safer and stronger communities
 - Healthier communities and older people
 - Economic development and environment
- 1.7 LAAs for the period 2008-11 have now been published and are available on the website of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)². They may also be on local authority websites. In some cases, LAAs may still be incomplete as targets and how outcomes are to be measured have yet to be agreed.

How is LAA delivery measured?

- 1.8 LAA delivery will be measured by a single national performance framework, which is intended to:
 - strengthen accountability to citizens and communities
 - give greater responsibility to local authorities and their partners for securing improvements in services
 - provide a better balance between national and local priorities

¹ 'responsible local authorities' include county councils, unitary district councils and London boroughs. Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Ch 1 Part 5. (District councils in two-tier areas are not included in Part 5).

² <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8399555>

- improve the arrangements for external assessment and inspection
 - streamline the process for providing improvement support and intervention for authorities struggling to deliver agreed outcomes for local people.
- 1.9 LAAs will be managed and measured by:
- Local government – responsible for delivering the best possible public services on behalf of their citizens
 - Government Offices in the regions – responsible for ensuring the highest quality and value public services across a region on behalf of central government
 - Audit Commission and Inspectorates – responsible for ensuring accurate and timely assessments of local services in order to improve standards. From April 2009, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will look at public services delivered by local authorities, together with partners in the public, private and third sectors
 - Central government – responsible for national policy that reflects the needs of local areas and improves the lives of citizens.

National Indicators

- 1.10 There are 198 National Indicators (NIs) which relate to areas of government policy and priorities for which local government is responsible or contributes towards achieving. All 198 national indicators (NIs) will be measured.
- 1.11 When developing the LAA, each LSP will have chosen up to 35 as ‘designated targets’ for improvement to help them meet local priorities over a three-year period. These priorities were agreed locally and by the Government Office.
- 1.12 The NIs are listed in an Appendix to this paper. Each indicator has a number (e.g. National Indicator 74 or NI 74) and a “title” or short description. Most NIs have detailed definitions which provide additional information about the rationale behind the indicator, a detailed description and information about how performance will be measured. These detailed definitions can be found in the *National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions*³.
- 1.13 LAAs must include 16 statutory Department of Children, Schools and Families National Indicators (DCSF NIs) which lay down educational targets, such as “achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2”. While they don't have a direct relevance to advice services, it could be argued that advice services can contribute to achieving these targets. Poor educational performance can be linked to family poverty (low incomes, non take-up of benefits, debt etc), poor housing or a failure to identify special educational needs and other factors. Agencies working in these areas may want to discuss with local authorities their potential contribution to achieving these targets.
- 1.14 Disappointingly, only one of the NIs refers explicitly to the provision of advice services (NI 135, which concerns carers' needs).
- 1.15 It is very important to take account of the full definition of each indicator and, in particular, how performance will be measured. Several NIs appear advice-friendly at first sight, but the detailed descriptions can be disappointing.
- 1.16 A good example of this is "NI 116 Proportion of children in poverty", an indicator found in 45 LAAs. At first sight, many in the advice sector would interpret this as

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/finalnationalindicators>

being about ensuring that families receive the benefits that they are entitled to. However, the full definition makes it clear that the intention behind the indicator is a *reduction* in the proportion of children who live in families receiving out of work benefits - defined as JSA, Incapacity Benefit, Income Support and Pension Credit.

- 1.17 Of course, it is possible that advice agencies might contribute to achieving this NI target. For example, an advice and information project might ensure that working women are aware of their employment rights on becoming pregnant. Similarly, an agency might seek to support people to manage the transition between benefits and work – often a time when debt problems emerge as a result of uncertain benefit entitlements.

Local indicators

- 5.1 Some, but not all, local areas have chosen to include their own local indicators. As far as central government is concerned, these are voluntary and do not form part of the agreement between government and the local authority. There are no specific sanctions for failure, although there is a possibility in certain circumstances that failure could influence the Comprehensive Area Assessment report produced by the Audit Commission.
- 5.2 Some local authorities have chosen advice-friendly local indicators – possibly as the result of effective lobbying by advice agencies. A good example of this can be found in the London Borough of Islington where, under the generic heading “reduce poverty”, the local authority has set a target to increase “the average annual value generated by take up of key benefits by people aged 60+”.

Advice and the allocation of funding

- 6.1 It is worth bearing in mind that advice services can influence how much grant funding a local authority receives from central government. Government grants to a local area are based on a number of factors including the number of residents over 65 years, people receiving attendance allowance, disability living allowance, income support and other benefits. Because of the complexities of local government finance, it is extremely difficult to place a value – in grant terms – on say 100 new people receiving a particular benefit.

Policy Issues

- 7.1 This briefing raises a number of policy issues
- there are no indicators which are specific to advice services. Advice networks need to work with the Ministry of Justice and other government departments to ensure that future NIs explicitly acknowledge the importance of advice. However, the good news is that several local authorities have acknowledged this and chosen to adopt their own advice-friendly local indicators
 - there has been low take up of many indicators which are of interest to advice services. Advice agencies and networks need to work together to prepare for the next round of LAAs
 - advice networks need to work with central government through government regional offices to emphasise importance of advice

- advice networks need to continue to work with agencies to demonstrate the value of advice and lobby for advice outcomes to be recognised more explicitly in the LAA framework.

What advice agencies need to do

- 1.18 In order to understand the potential impact of Local Area Agreements on individual advice agencies, managers need to:
- read their Local Area Agreement
 - check the full definition of each NI, including how they will be measured
 - think about how their organisation might contribute to achieving these targets
 - tell the local authority about their ideas.

We are grateful to Citizens Advice for their assistance in drafting this briefing.

APPENDIX 1

List of National Indicators

- The NIs shown in a white box are more likely to be of interest to the advice sector. The numbers in brackets [] indicate the numbers of LAAs (out of a total of 150) where this NI is a specific target for improvement.
- Where NIs are shaded grey they are less likely to be of interest to mainstream advice agencies.

Outcome: Stronger Communities	
NI 1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
NI 2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
NI 3	Civic participation in the local area
NI 4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
NI 5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area
NI 6	Participation in regular volunteering [43]
NI 7	Environment for a thriving third sector [61]
NI 8	Adult participation in sport and active recreation
NI 9	Use of public libraries
NI 10	Visits to museums or galleries
NI 11	Engagement in the arts
NI 12	Refused and deferred Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) license applications leading to immigration enforcement activity
NI 13	Migrants English language skills and knowledge
NI 14	Reducing avoidable contact: minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer [None]
Outcome: Safer communities	
NI 15	Serious violent crime
NI 16	Serious acquisitive crime
NI 17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
NI 18	Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision
NI 19	Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders
NI 20	Assault with injury crime rate
NI 21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police
NI 22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area
NI 23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity
NI 24	Satisfaction with the way the police and local council dealt with antisocial behaviour
NI 25	Satisfaction of different groups with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour
NI 26	Specialist support to victims of a serious sexual offence
NI 27	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police
NI 28	Serious knife crime rate
NI 29	Gun crime rate
NI 30	Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders
NI 31	This indicator has been deleted

NI 32	Repeat incidents of domestic violence
NI 33	Arson incidents
NI 34	Domestic violence – murder
NI 35	Building resilience to violent extremism
NI 36	Protection against terrorist attack
NI 37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area
NI 38	Drug-related (Class A) offending rate
NI 39	Rate of Hospital Admissions per 100,000 for Alcohol Related Harm
NI 40	Number of drug users recorded as being in effective treatment
NI 41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
NI 42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem
NI 43	Young people within the Youth Justice System receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody
NI 44	Ethnic composition of offenders on Youth Justice System disposals
NI 45	Young offenders engagement in suitable education, training or employment.
NI 46	Young offenders access to suitable accommodation [None]
NI 47	People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
NI 48	Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
NI 49	Number of primary fires and related fatalities and non-fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks)
Outcome: Children and Young People – Be Healthy	
NI 50	Emotional health of children
NI 51	Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health (CAMHs) services
NI 52	Take up of school lunches
NI 53	Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks from birth
NI 54	Services for disabled children [54]
NI 55	Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year
NI 56	Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6
NI 57	Children and young people’s participation in high-quality PE and sport
NI 58	Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children
Outcome: Children and Young People – Stay Safe	
NI 59	Percentage of initial assessments for children’s social care carried out within 7 working days of referral
NI 60	Percentage of core assessments for children’s social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement
NI 61	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption
NI 62	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements
NI 63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement
NI 64	Child protection plans lasting 2 years or more
NI 65	Percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time
NI 66	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales
NI 67	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales
NI 68	Percentage of referrals to children’s social care going on to initial assessment
NI 69	Children who have experienced bullying
NI 70	Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people
NI 71	Children who have run away from home/care overnight [1]
Outcome: Children and Young People – Enjoy and Achieve	
NI 72	Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development

	and Communication, Language and Literacy
NI 73	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2
NI 74	Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3
NI 75	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths
NI 76	Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 65% of pupils achieve level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS2
NI 77	Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 50% of pupils achieve level 5 or above in both English and Maths Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at KS3
NI 78	Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths
NI 79	Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age 19
NI 80	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age 19
NI 81	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age 19
NI 82	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age 19
NI 83	Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3
NI 84	Achievement of 2 or more A*-C grades in Science GCSEs or equivalent
NI 85	Post-16 participation in physical sciences (A Level Physics, Chemistry and Maths)
NI 86	Secondary schools judged as having good or outstanding standards of behaviour
NI 87	Secondary school persistent absence rate
NI 88	Percentage of schools providing access to extended services.
NI 89	Reduction in number of schools judged as requiring special measures and improvement in time taken to come out of the category
NI 90	Take up of 14-19 learning diplomas
NI 91	Participation of 17 year-olds in education or training
NI 92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest
NI 93	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
NI 94	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
NI 95	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
NI 96	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
NI 97	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
NI 98	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
NI 99	Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2
NI 100	Looked after children reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2
NI 101	Looked after children achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)
NI 102	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2 and 4
NI 103	Special Educational Needs – statements issued within 26 weeks [None]
NI 104	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths threshold
NI 105	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving 5 A*-C GCSE inc. English and Maths
NI 106	Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education
NI 107	Key Stage 2 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups
NI 108	Key Stage 4 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups
NI 109	Number of Sure Start Children Centres
Outcome: Children and Young People – Make a positive contribution	
NI 110	Young people's participation in positive activities
NI 111	First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 – 17

NI 112	Under 18 conception rate
NI 113	Prevalence of Chlamydia in under 25 year olds
NI 114	Rate of permanent exclusions from school [14]
NI 115	Substance misuse by young people
Outcome: Children and Young People – Economic Wellbeing	
NI 116	Proportion of children in poverty [45]
NI 117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) [115]
NI 118	Take up of formal childcare by low-income working families
Outcome: Adult health and wellbeing	
NI 119	Self-reported measure of people’s overall health and wellbeing [10]
NI 120	All-age all cause mortality rate
NI121	Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75
NI 122	Mortality from all cancers at ages under 75
NI 123	Stopping smoking
NI 124	People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition
NI 125	Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation/ intermediate care [41]
NI 126	Early access for women to maternity services
NI 127	Self reported experience of social care users
NI 128	User reported measure of respect and dignity in their treatment
NI 129	End of life care – access to appropriate care enabling people to be able to choose to die at home
NI 130	Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support per 100,000 population
NI 131	Delayed transfers of care from hospitals
NI 132	Timeliness of social care assessment (all adults) [12]
NI 133	Timeliness of social care packages following assessment [2]
NI 134	The number of emergency bed days per head of weighted population
NI 135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer’s service, or advice and information [80]
NI 136	People supported to live independently through social services (all adults) [46]
NI 137	Healthy life expectancy at age 65
NI 138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood
NI 139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home [21]
Outcome: Tackling exclusion and promoting equality	
NI 140	Fair treatment by local services [9]
NI 141	Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living
NI 142	Percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
NI 143	Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence
NI 144	Offenders under probation supervision in employment at the end of their order or licence
NI 145	Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
NI 146	Adults with learning disabilities in employment [29]
NI 147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation [1]
NI 148	Care leavers in employment, education or training
NI 149	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation
NI150	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment
Outcome: Local economy	
NI 151	Overall employment rate (working age)
NI 152	Working age people on out of work benefits [75]

NI 153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
NI 154	Net additional homes provided
NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
NI 156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation [36]
NI 157	Processing of planning applications
NI 158	% non-decent council homes [23]
NI 159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites
NI 160	Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services [1]
NI 161	Number of Level 1 qualifications in literacy (including ESOL) achieved
NI 162	Number of Entry level qualifications in numeracy achieved
NI 163	Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
NI 164	Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 3 or higher
NI 165	Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 4 or higher
NI 166	Median earnings of employees in the area
NI 167	Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak
NI 168	Principal roads where maintenance should be considered
NI 169	Non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered
NI 170	Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years
NI 171	New business registration rate
NI 172	Percentage of small businesses in an area showing employment
NI 173	Flows on to incapacity benefits from employment [7]
NI 174	Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers
NI 175	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
NI 176	Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specified modes)
NI 177	Local bus and light rail passenger journeys originating in the authority area
NI 178	Bus services running on time
NI 179	Value for money – total net value of on-going cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the 2008-9 financial year
NI 180	The number of changes of circumstances which affect customers' Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit entitlements within the year
NI 181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events [6]
NI 182	Satisfaction of businesses with local authority regulation services
NI 183	Impact of local authority regulatory services on the fair trading environment
NI 184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law
Outcome: Environmental sustainability	
NI 185	CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations
NI 186	Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area
NI 187	Tackling fuel poverty – % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating [40]
NI 188	Planning to adapt to climate change
NI 189	Flood and coastal erosion risk management
NI 190	Achievement in meeting standards for the control system for animal health
NI 191	Residual household waste per household
NI 192	Percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting
NI 193	Percentage of municipal waste land filled
NI 194	Air quality – reduction in NOx and primary PM emissions through local authority's

	estate and operations.
NI 195	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti, and fly posting)
NI 196	Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping
NI 197	Improved local biodiversity – proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented
NI 198	Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used