

Police and Justice Act 2006 (LGiU)

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This covers: England and Wales

Overview

The Police and Justice Act gained Royal Assent in November 2006. The Act contains a range of measures to further the police reform process. There are also specific areas that will have implications for local authorities.

- Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) in England or Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) in Wales.
- Developing the scope of crime and disorder reduction strategies.
- A new process - Community Call for Action - to respond to concerns about crime and disorder through.
- Developing parenting contracts to deal with anti-social behaviour.

Further guidance on these areas is expected throughout 2007. However, local authorities need to be considering how they will develop systems and partnerships to tackle these areas.

Briefing in full

The Police and Justice Act gained Royal Assent on 8 November 2006. The Act brings forward measures to continue the path of police reform and develop the role of local authorities to tackle crime and disorder.

The Act contains many of the proposals in the original Police and Justice Bill. The headline changes are outlined here.

- New powers for local authorities to scrutinise Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) in England or Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) in Wales.
- The scope of crime and disorder reduction strategies, developed by a CDRP or CSP, has been amended to emphasise the inclusion of anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment.
- Ward councillors have a new duty to respond to community concerns about crime and disorder through a Community Call for Action.
- Sets out the circumstances under which local authorities and registered social landlords can enter into a parenting contract to deal with anti-social behaviour.
- The powers of Trading Standard Officers have been extended to issue fixed penalty notices.
- Creation of the National Police Improvement Agency to develop and improve good policing practice in England and Wales.
- A requirement for police authorities to consult residents and engage them in preventing crime.
- Standardisation of the powers and duties of community support officers, with a specific role to deal with truants.

- The Secretary of State has the power to intervene in police authorities that are underperforming.
- There are also additional powers for the police regarding bail, travel, immigration and computer misuse.

For further detail and comment on these areas see related briefings.

There are two areas that have changed significantly from the Bill stage. Firstly the Secretary of State will not have the power to determine the size of police authorities. Secondly, the Act does not merge the responsibilities covered by five different inspectorates as suggested in the Bill. It does however, give additional powers and duties on the Chief Inspector of Prisons to assist and promote joint work with other public sector inspectorates.

Comment

There are specific areas where local authorities will need to take action and develop processes to meet the requirements of the Act.

In particular local authorities will now need to implement the new scrutiny powers and community call for action, which are outlined in the LGiU briefing *New Scrutiny Powers for Crime and Disorder* (see related briefings). The Home Office is currently developing guidance, which is unlikely to be available before late 2007. The implementation date is currently set for April 2008.

This is an opportunity for reviewing the focus of the CDRP (or CSP in Wales), while also ensuring it is meeting the wider scope of anti-social behaviour. These partnerships are also expected to create a more intelligence-led approach, sharing data and involving the community. Consulting and engaging the community in decision making has become an important tool for many local services. Partnerships should be looking wider than the community safety field to develop their consultation process, perhaps creating an integrated approach across organisations to maximise information and reduce consultation fatigue. See related briefing *Future role of police authorities in community engagement*.

CDRPs should also look at their role in supporting the new powers for local authorities and registered social landlords to enter into parenting contracts. Learning from the lessons of anti-social behaviour orders, they need to develop the capability of organisations to use this measure effectively (see link to *Review of the Uptake by Social Landlords of Legislative Powers to tackle anti-social behaviour*).

Additional Information

The LGiU will be holding a seminar related to this agenda on the topic 'Community involvement in scrutiny' on the 13th February 2007. For more information call 0207 554 2800.

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