



Every Child Matters in County Durham

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New Corporate Director for Children and Young People

Durham County Council has announced a top-level appointment as part of its drive to focus services on the needs of communities and work more closely with other public and voluntary service providers. David Williams, the current Corporate Director of Education and Children's



Services at Reading Council, will head the new Children and Young People's Service. This will bring together in County Durham the existing Education Service and the children's services from Social Care and Health along with the Youth Engagement Service and Connexions.

David took his teaching qualification at Durham University in 1978 and initially taught in schools in Hampshire and Berkshire. Moving into local authority administration in 1987, David gained experience of a range of different authorities, working for Wiltshire, Knowsley and Cumbria up

to Deputy Director level. These roles initially focused on introducing local management of schools and governor support. In his more senior roles, he took on responsibility for education strategic planning and resource and personnel management.

In 1999 he was appointed as Director of Education for Bath and North East Somerset Council and played a key role in improving the quality of joint working between Education and Social Services within that Council. At the end of 2002, he moved into the private sector to set up a company providing consultancy support to local education authorities and schools considered to be failing.

In 2004 he was asked to become interim Director of Education at Reading Borough Council before being invited to expand the role to include corporate responsibility for Children's Services. He has since taken the lead in establishing a new Children's Services Directorate for the Council.

Mark Lloyd, Durham County Council's Chief executive said "I am delighted that David is joining the Council as he has an impressive track record of achievement, not only in education but also in working with social services to create a fully integrated children's service".

Voluntary & community groups matter in the Every Child Matters programme

The Children and young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) recognises the importance of inviting key voluntary organisations to plan and work in partnership to meet the challenges of change required by the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda.

Membership of the Community of Interest for children and young people reflects the two tier authority and the Local Planning Groups in County Durham. In order to understand the position of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), it is important to engage in dialogue with them.

Voluntary Sector Feedback

The Children and Young People's Community of Interest held nine well-attended and interactive workshops for representatives of voluntary and community groups that help children in County Durham. They discussed the:

- benefits and risks of the ECM agenda;
- mechanisms for representation;
- needs and gaps within the voluntary & community sector; and
- added value provided by the sector.

Common themes in the feedback gathered in the workshops included the need for:

- Effective communications;
- An infrastructure to help groups engage;
- A support mechanism to help with monitoring, training, capacity and evidencing value;
- Recognising the voluntary & community sector as an equal professional partner; and
- Clear and transparent joint commissioning procedures.

Ideas about single integrated services managed by the statutory sector were seen as a serious threat to the future independence of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The

prospect of Children's Centres made groups anxious about possibilities of duplication and replacement. There was considerable concern that the level and scope of services offered by the VCS is not fully understood or appreciated.

A key task is to provide representative structures that enable VCS workers to give their views but do not involve them in taking too much valuable time away from frontline activities.

A report of the workshop feedback has been compiled and several proposals for assisting sector engagement with the ECM agenda are currently being developed. All of the workshop findings, proposals and plans for next steps will be shared at a one-day event open to all workshop participants and other VCS agencies.



The ECM Network in action.

Volunteers from many different statutory and voluntary agencies have become ECM Networkers.

They meet in a forum of opportunity for thought, debate and suggestions, which is an influence on the strategic direction of Every Child Matters in County Durham. The Networkers have engaged in the first sessions with commitment and purpose.

At each ECM Network session information outlining strategic plans and structural arrangements is shared allowing the participants to question, input and express concerns. This gives them an opportunity to identify where change needs to occur. On one hand the Networkers can consider developments and on the other hand they can discuss how change in service structure and provision will derive from practice based evidence and expertise.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) can hear and consider what the Network says in relation to:

- managing change;
- areas for improvement;
- voluntary and community engagement within integration;
- transition challenges;
- school involvement;
- a need for transparency within services;
- access criteria; and
- future service delivery.

All ECM Networkers dedicate time and energy to share the information they access with their colleagues and staff. Participants have committed to the task, of collating feedback, thus ensuring involvement from practitioners and front line staff. The Network has proved to be a learning process for both the facilitators and the participants. CYPSP values this effort highly and will turn to the Network for consultation on the specifics of service design and structure of the Children's Service Authority.

Eva Alexandratou, Partnership Development Officer

Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)

As an Excellent authority under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), Durham County Council is not required to produce a Children and Young People's Plan. Nevertheless, we have decided that a single overarching, strategic plan will help us improve outcomes for children and young people. The plan will build on work completed over the last 2 years in consultation with young people, on the Audit of Needs and on the Durham 5 Framework for Outcomes, as well as messages from inspections and performance monitoring. From this work, a number of high level priorities can be identified.

A consultation event was held in December at the Leadership Centre in Spennymoor, at which proposals for priorities were shared. Feedback from this session is now being used to refine the plan. Wider consultation will be held over the next 3 months.

Draft priorities identified are:

Being Healthy

- All children and young people choose a healthier lifestyle
- All children and young people can access services to support and promote emotional well being

Staying Safe

- Parents and carers have skills and support needed to be effective
- Children and young people protected from homelessness and failing tenancies
- Children and young people are safe from bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour
- Support to families
- Children as victims of crime and anti-social behaviour

Enjoying and Achieving

- Attainment and achievement levels for all



children are improved, with gaps between groups reduced

- There is access to safe play, leisure, learning and recreation that provides opportunities for personal development and enjoyment

Making a positive contribution

- Children, young people and parents' engaged in shaping and improving communities and are listened to
- A positive image of children and young people is promoted

Economic well being

- Number of children and young people living in poverty is reduced
- Participation in employment, education and training post 16 is increased



The latest draft of the CYPP will be posted on the www.everychildmattersincountydurham.org website from early February for a 6 week period of consultation. This is your opportunity to comment on the plan. Any comments should be made via the website to Anita Spence.

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

County Durham is entering into a Local Area Agreement (LAA) with the government. LAAs are intended to improve outcomes for local people by promoting better joint working and reducing bureaucracy. The agreement will run for 3 years from April 2006.

Proposals for the LAA are still subject to consultation, but once finalised will represent the shared priorities of Durham County Council and all District and Borough Councils.

One block of the agreement concerns Children and Young People. This block will be taken forward under the Every Child Matters banner in parallel with the CYPP. The LAA priorities will be those through which improved outcomes can most effectively be demonstrated.

More information on the LAA can be found on the Durham County Council website.

Children missing from education

A new information sharing initiative has been launched under the Every Child Matters in County Durham programme. Since the beginning of January 2006, the Department for Education and Skills has required all local authorities to ensure that robust multi-agency systems are in place to identify and track children missing from education or at risk of so being.

This requirement was developed because of two key concerns. First, in June 2003, Ofsted published the report 'Key Stage 4: towards a more flexible curriculum', which recommended that better systems for tracking pupils missing from school rolls should be put in place and maintained.

Second, in September 2003, the Green Paper Every Child Matters set out the Government's aim to ensure that every child and young person should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, and that no child should slip through the net.

Durham County Council has now implemented its system for tracking children missing from

education. The aim of this system is to help children to move back into school or alternative provision and maintain contact to prevent them slipping through the net again. This will help ensure all children and young people receive the education they are entitled to.

If you suspect a child is missing or may be at risk of going missing from education, you should contact:

Ian Shanks, Operations Manager,
Attendance and Exclusion,
Education, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UJ

Tel:0191 383 3302

Email: ian.shanks@durham.gov.uk

Ian will take responsibility for ensuring that arrangements are made for the child to access appropriate education. In the case of a child who can't be found, local and national procedures to locate the child will be followed.

Full details are available in Durham County Council's " Ensuring Access to Appropriate Education for Children who are Missing or at Risk of Going Missing from Education-April 2005 "

Online Resource Directory

A new resource directory for County Durham was launched in December on the www.everychildmattersincountydurham.org website. You can find information on hundreds of topics including services, activity and support groups which provide for children and young people.

The online resource directory has already in its first weeks of operation received over 400 "hits" or individual visits. It will also allow organisations the option to submit their own contact information via a website link.

The resource, sometimes referred to as the ISA (Information Sharing and Assessment) directory, aims to provide contact information on child-related services across County Durham and beyond. The ISA directory uses information from Community Information Online and aims to

target those who work with or have responsibility for children.

Are you involved in providing services for children? Then go to www.everychildmattersincountydurham.org/directory. You can select information by category, search the directory, or use the A - Z list of subjects. You can also submit information about a new organisation or individual offering services or simply use the form to update an existing record. This auto update has clear advantages for information sharing

If you have a query about the website please use the "contact us" facility or send an e-mail to ecmincountydurham@durham.gov.uk

Alternatively you can ring the Every Child Matters line on 0191 383 3655 or contact Matthew Bell, ISA Project Worker, on 0191 383 3035.