

Joint Commissioning Strategy
County Durham Children's Trust
January 2009

1.Vision

The County Durham Children's Trust has a clear purpose:

“Improving the quality of life for all children and young people in County Durham by making it better, safer, happier and easier for everyone to believe, achieve and succeed”

Achieving our vision will require the coordinated effort of all agencies working with and for children and their families. Through our Children's Trust, we will work together to develop and deliver the best possible services and opportunities for all children and young people. Commissioning is the means by which we will transform outcomes and services for children and young people and change cultures within separate organisations.

Commissioning is defined as:

“- a process for specifying and securing services in line with the needs of children, young people and their families and arrangements for monitoring the progress of planned change.”

Audit Commission 2003

The vision for children's services across County Durham requires an integrated approach to both commissioning and service delivery and relies upon co-operative working in determining commissioning strategy and intentions. The overall direction of travel is to promote the development of integrated services and teams at universal, targeted and specialist levels. Additionally, progress towards jointly agreed pathways of care offering a holistic approach to the needs of young people and their families is also seen as paramount to effective delivery. Integral to this approach is the roll out of the Lead Professional and the use of the Common Assessment Framework.

Both statutory and non statutory services will work together to tackle the key priorities within County Durham.

This document will set out the position of the County Durham Children's trust in relation to joint commissioning: why we commission, what we will commission, how we will commission and who and when we will commission. The structure of this document reflects these questions.

Section 1: Why we commission

This section sets out why we commission outlining the purpose and scope of this strategy.

Purpose of this Joint Commissioning Strategy

'A Children's Trust is, in part, a commissioning partnership, commissioning services for children young people and their families. Strategic commissioning is a key means by which the Children's Trust partners come together to make a reality of the duty to co-operate and drive cultural change.'

Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families 2008

The policies '**Every Child Matters**' and '**The Children's Plan**' and the Children's Trust Statutory Guidance 2008 emphasis that effective joint planning and commissioning is at the very heart of improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. It has also been acknowledged that no single agency can deliver the requirements of the '**Every Child Matters**' agenda and improve outcomes for children and young people. Collaboration and integrated working between agencies is essential to achieve this

The Children and Young People's Plan identifies those priorities against which the County Durham Children's Trust intends to deliver improved outcomes. This strategy provides the framework and mechanism by which those priorities will be translated into improved outcomes through joint commissioning activity.

Through this commissioning framework we will seek to establish a shared vision and approach. By improving our approach to commissioning, we seek to develop a more open, transparent process, which actively involves and is responsive to stakeholders and ensures that our resources are used more creatively and to greater affect. This Strategy will provide a clear remit for service commissioning processes, and a baseline for reviewing future effectiveness and improvement.

Aims and objectives of this strategy

The aim of this strategy is to provide a clear framework for all joint commissioning activity across County Durham Children's Trust. This will be achieved by basing our commissioning activity on sound principles and rooting our activity in transparent processes.

Commissioning activity will put the needs of children and young people and their families first through effective engagement and participation and in doing so we aim to ensure our joint commissioning activity is at the heart of improving outcomes for children and young people.

In adopting a strategic and co-ordinated approach to our commissioning activity we will achieve:

- Improved outcomes for children and young people
- More efficient and effective use of planning, resourcing and commissioning services

- Stakeholders engagement and involvement in the planning and commissioning of services
- Value for money through more efficient and effective use of resources
- Develop a menu of service provision that supports our integrated services framework.

Context

National

The requirement to develop an integrated approach to commissioning activity has been endorsed at National level both through statute and related guidance. Expectations for Children's Trusts to become the vehicle for integrated commissioning activity is clearly laid out.

Early foundations and legislative drivers for joint commissioning are contained in The Health Act 1999 which under s31 creates flexibilities for the pooling of budgets, introduction of lead commissioning and the development of integrated provision. Similarly, from April 2005, there has been a statutory duty on agencies and bodies delivering children's services to co-operate in arrangements to improve the well being of children and young people. Local authorities with children's services responsibilities have a duty under the Children Act 2004 to:

Section 10 – *to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies in order to improve children's well being, defined by reference to the five outcomes and a duty on key partners to take part in those arrangements. It also provides a new power to allow pooling of resources in support of these arrangements.*

Section 12 – *creates a duty for the key agencies who work with children to put in place arrangements to make sure that they take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when doing their jobs*

"Every Child Matters Next Steps 2004" defines Children's Trust primary responsibility as "to secure integrated commissioning leading to more integrated service delivery and better outcomes for children and young people". This expectation is similarly endorsed within **"The National Services Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services"**

'Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families' states a central function for the Trust is to act as 'a planning body which informs commissioning decisions and ensures, ...that front line services work together to improve outcomes.'

Further emphasis nationally has been placed upon the need to direct commissioning activity to early intervention and prevention services.

'The Children's Plan' focuses on services working together to intervene early to prevent problems turning into a crisis, and providing more support for parents to do the best for their child. It joins services up so that they are shaped around the needs of children and their families, reflecting the lives they lead rather than professional boundaries. This ethos is further developed in subsequent strategies and guidance such as **"Think Family"** which emphasises the need for joint working to cross traditional boundaries to focus on the strengths and difficulties of the whole family rather than those of the parents or child in isolation. This necessitates much closer working with adult services, including the joint commissioning of services.

The process and expectations for commissioning has been set out within the **'Joint Planning and Commissioning Framework for Children , Young People and Maternity Services (March 2006)'** . The development of our Joint Commissioning Framework has had due regard to this national framework.

The development of integrated services will require the transformation of the work force. **The 20/20 Workforce strategy** sets out the government's vision for this. It also makes clear the need to match commissioning intentions with competences for the workforce and sets out plans to deliver this

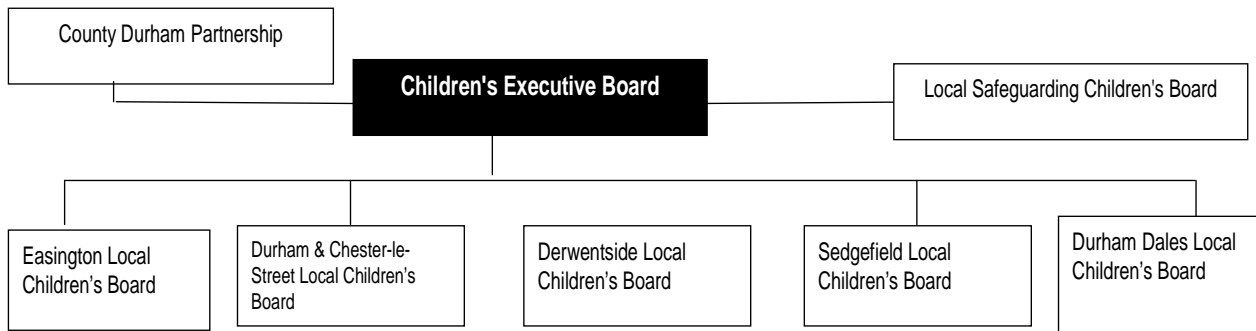
Local Context

The County Durham Children's Trust is responsible for delivering improved outcomes for children, young people and their families and as such is responsible for strategically commissioning children's services. The Children Act 2004 and subsequent statutory guidance on Children's Trust in 2008 specifically identify a number of partners who are legally bound to co-operate and work together with the Children's Services Authority (CSA) in making this happen.

The governance and membership arrangements for County Durham Children's Trust are set out in the document: "County Durham Children's Trust Governance arrangements".

The Children's Trust comprises an Executive Board and 5 Local Children's Boards with representatives from all relevant partners.

County Durham Children's Trust



The views held by children, young people and their families are vital in developing future services for children and improving outcomes, and this is reflected throughout the activity of the Children's Trust.

Our partnership arrangements and commitment to joint working to improve outcomes for children young people and families are well established. A consistent and joined up approach to all commissioning within County Durham is required to support County Durham Children's Trust in delivering improved outcomes for all. It is important therefore that Commissioning decisions by Children's Trust partners are taken within an accountable framework that is responsive to the needs of children young people and families, transparent and secure maximum value for money.

This strategy is intended to provide that consistent framework.

Section 2: What we will commission

This section details what will be commissioned. Our commissioning activity will be rooted within a clear planning framework and will focus on translating “talk into action” through effective service delivery.

Planning for Improved Outcomes - the Children and Young People's Plan and other plans

Joint commissioning must respond to the direction of the priorities of the Children's Trust and reflect need identified by the Local Authority, the PCT and all relevant partners. Overarching priorities for County Durham are set through Durham's Sustainable Community Strategy which sets the general direction of travel.

The Children's Trust is the children and young people's thematic group of the County Durham Partnership and is responsible for ensuring that actions impacting positively on children and young people are taken.

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is the single, overarching strategic plan for the all partners of the Children's Trust. The CYPP sets out the agenda to improve outcomes for children and young people and identifies priorities on which all partners will work together to achieve.

These priorities and plans must also be reflected in other partnership plans, including:

- Economic Strategy
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- Community Safety Strategy
- 14 - 19 Strategy
- Building Schools For the Future and Primary Strategy for Change
- Environmental and Neighbourhood Strategy

Partner agencies own plans must demonstrate their service's contribution to achieving CYPP priorities. These include:

- Primary Care Trust (PCT) Annual Operating Plan
- Local Police Authority's 3 Year Strategy Plan and local policing plan
- Youth Justice Plan
- Probation Area Annual Plan
- DAAT Strategy
- BSF Strategy and Primary Strategy for Change
- Children and Young People's Services Plan

The above lists are not exhaustive but give a picture of the climate of change in which we work.

Commissioning Plans and Priorities: the Annual Commissioning Plan.

The Children's and Young People's Plan has been developed in partnership with children, young people and families and is based on detailed locality and countywide analysis. Our key improvement priorities have been identified accordingly and will form the basis for all Trust commissioning activity.

Based on the Key Improvement Priorities, we will develop an Annual Commissioning Plan (ACP). The ACP will set out commissioning intentions for all our key improvement priorities to tackle inequality and gaps in service to address unmet need. This will be the basis for our strategic commissioning activity.

All commissioning plans must be firmly based on an accurate assessment of need and aspiration. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a key document to inform and be informed by the Children and Young People's Plan. This evidence based document helps identify priority areas for commissioning across many agencies and supports joint commissioning.

We are committed to meeting the needs of children, young people and families at a local level as possible. The role and responsibilities of the Local Children's Board will provide the vehicle for understanding locality needs, shaping commissioning intentions and monitoring delivery performance locally.

We will build up our evidence base of unmet need and gaps in service at a local level through our analysis of CAF activity. This will help identify priority areas and will be the foundation for wider strategic commissioning intentions.

By aligning vision, needs assessment, priorities and plans across the County Durham Partnership, commissioning strategies and actions will be better coordinated and more effective in meeting the need of the community of County Durham.

Commissioning Principles

All of our commissioning will be governed by clear principles:

1. All decisions are based on a clear rationale for improving outcomes for children and young people.
2. The meaningful engagement and participation of children and young people and families will be central to all commissioning activity.
3. Commissioning priorities for the Children's Trust will be determined and drawn from the Children and Young People's Plan.

4. Planners and commissioners will have a strategy and focus on moving resources to preventative and early intervention services.
5. The planning and commissioning functions will be discharged in an open and transparent manner and thus support the development of the market.
6. Commissioning activity will be undertaken in a timely and focused fashion in accordance with Lean Principles.
7. Commissioning activity must translate planning into effective service delivery.
8. Commissioners must ensure that approaches are compatible with EU and UK law, regulations and guidance.
9. Joint commissioning will have regard for World Class Commissioning Principles.
10. Joint Commissioning actions should demonstrate value for money and long term sustainability

Involvement of Children, Young People and Families

“The meaningful engagement and participation of children, young people and families will be central to all commissioning activity”

Children, young people, parents are not passive recipients of services. We are committed to working with them to better understand their needs and jointly develop appropriate, valued and effective services. Reference groups will continuously gather views and involve children, young people and their parents and work to shape service developments at both CEB and LCB level.

Through the active engagement and participation of children, young and families we will ensure our commissioning activity is needs led. In this way we will be able to make a real difference to the lives of children, young people and families in County Durham.

We are committed to the genuine participation and engagement throughout **all** our commissioning processes.

World Class Commissioning

World Class Commissioning is the principle by which Commissioning arrangements within the NHS are now governed. Whilst specifically aimed at the development of commissioning within the Health arena these principles can provide an effective basis and a strong driver on which to commission a broad range of services. All joint commissioning should have regard for the principles contained within World Class Commissioning.

Key principles contained within the World Class Commissioning competencies are useful enablers and need to be included in the wider commissioning process. In particular commissioning development should be based upon:

- Clear leadership within the commissioning arrangements.
- Strong involvement of key partners in commissioning development.
- Involvement of clinicians/ key providers in the development of service outcomes.
- Involvement of service users/ carers in commissioning services.
- Service development based on clear need and sound information.
- Effective stimulation of the market to achieve best value.
- Effective financial systems to ensure appropriate use of resources and accountability.
- An effective monitoring and review system.

Practice Based Commissioning

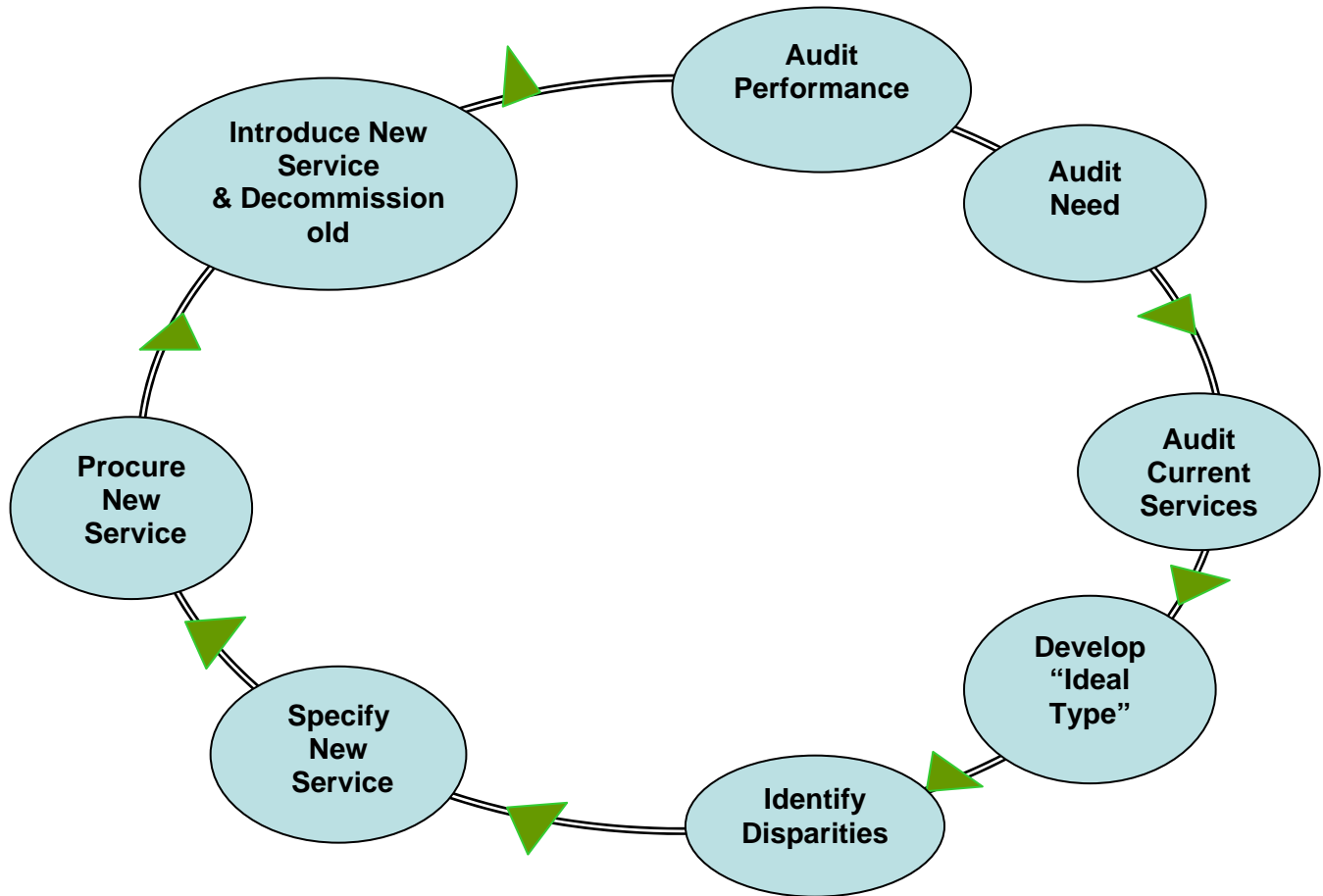
Within Health, Practice Based Commissioning (PBC) plays a key role in helping to identify need and set Countywide and local commissioning priorities. PBC is about engaging practices and other primary care professionals in the commissioning of services. Through PBC, front line clinicians are being provided with the resources and support to become more involved in commissioning decisions

It is therefore important that there is strong link between Practice Based Commissioning and Joint Children's Commissioning; with involvement at both Joint Commissioning Unit and Local Children's Board level. Practice Based Commissioning's role will be to ensure that this link is vigorous and that commissioning intentions are linked and converge wherever possible. Issues identified by Practice Based Commissioning Clusters should help to support and inform the progression of the wider Children's Commissioning agenda.

Section 3: How and who will commission

This section outlines the Commissioning Framework, different levels of commissioning and specifically how the framework can be applied to support consistent commissioning practice across the Trust. It will detail the roles and responsibilities of the relevant commissioning bodies.

Joint Commissioning Cycle



This framework is based on effective and inclusive strategic planning, community engagement as well as performance management, contracting and procurement processes.

It provides a systematic approach to deciding **what** service is needed, **which** organisation should deliver the service and **how** it should be delivered, with the aim of delivering a **value-for-money** service, in accordance with agreed **outcomes**.

Commissioning is not a mechanism for organisations to continue with their existing activities, but provides an effective quality assurance process for the provision of specific services or activities.

The Joint Commissioning cycle is an 8 step process that supports the implementation and delivery of services in accordance with assessed need.

By understanding what services we have currently, how well services are performing, where duplication exists and relating this to assessed need we can determine whether existing services are the right services to impact on specified outcomes. This is the audit stage of the commissioning cycle.

Where gaps in services or the effectiveness of services are identified, by using research and models of best practice we can develop the ideal type of service that is required to make a difference. (Develop the ideal type)
 By comparing the ideal type with existing services we can determine the changes that are required to deliver of an improved service and begin to specify the service in accordance with agreed outcomes. This may involve the reshaping the existing workforce and de-commissioning of existing services
 Identifying the resource that is available for the specified service will enable us to move to the stage of securing the new service and implementation.

The precise activities and tools to support commissioning activity at each stage of the commissioning cycle will be detailed in the supporting tool kit that accompanies this strategy.

Levels of Commissioning

It can be helpful to understand commissioning fewer than 3 levels:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual commissioning 	Specifying and obtaining services to meet the needs of an individual and or young person.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic / local commissioning 	Specifying and obtaining a range of services to meet needs of a population of children and young people and describing how services will be organised at county and local levels to meet those needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic commissioning 	Programme of commissioning activity designed to achieve the priority outcomes of the Children's Trust, including needs analysis, consultation, strategy development, resource allocation, procurement, monitoring and review.

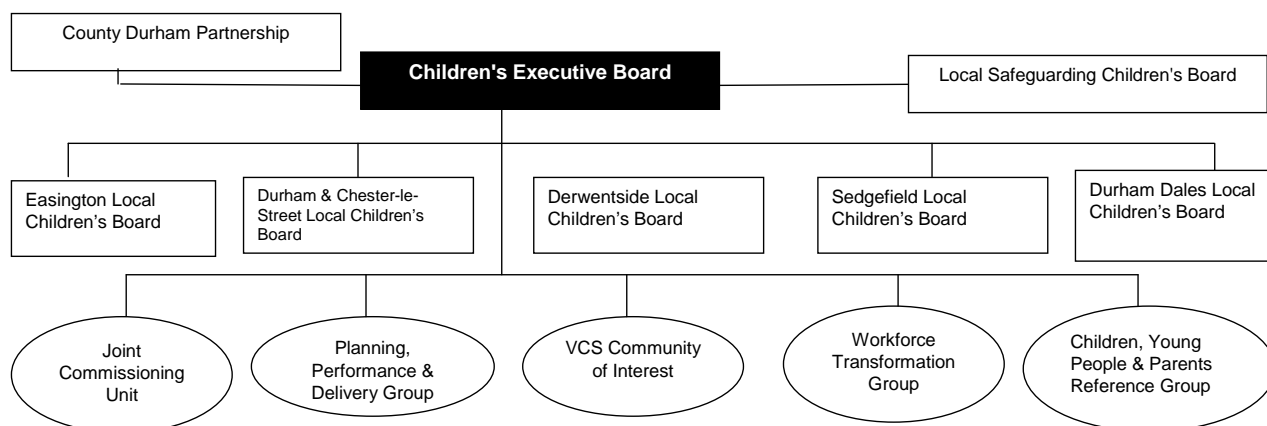
Structures and Processes for Joint Commissioning

The Children's Trust is responsible for all commissioning activity. In practice this responsibility will be discharged through a set of joint commissioning arrangements.

The Trust is supported by 5 primary work groups:

- The Joint Commissioning Unit
- The Planning, Performance and Delivery Group
- The Workforce Transformation Group
- Voluntary and Community Sector Community of Interest
- Young People and Parents' Reference Groups

Children's Trust Support Structures



The Children's Executive Board

In relation to joint commissioning, the Children's Executive Board's responsibilities are to:

1. Agree joint priorities and targets
2. Develop a commissioning framework
3. Undertake strategic joint commissioning
4. Determine funding arrangements
5. Resource priorities
6. Establish a framework for delivery that recognises both quality and quantity
7. Intervene where services commissioned by the Trust fail to meet requirements
8. Establish new ways of working to deliver services more effectively
9. Exercise a power of veto in relation to the commissioning of a service where a service consistently falls short of requirements, or is ineffective.

The Children's Executive Board will be responsible for ensuring that all joint commissioning activity is effective, both at local and county-wide levels and for commissioning those services that can most efficiently be delivered on a county-wide basis. These will be usually low-incidence, high need or specialist services.

Local Children's Boards

The LCBs have a key role and responsibility within all commissioning activity, in order to turn agreed priorities as defined within the Children's and Young People's plan into effective service delivery at a local level.

At the heart of our locality commissioning activity we will focus on:

- Understanding what the needs of our children, young people and their families are through effective participation and engagement at a local level;
- Understanding which services are in place to meet those needs and how well they currently meet needs;
- Developing a clear view of what best practice/best service should be;
- Working together with children, young people and families to deliver the right services that will make a difference;
- Changing services and the way in which people work in order to make them 'best in class';
- Achieving value for money.

In this regard the Local Children's Boards will be central to all commissioning activity. Local intelligence and understanding will provide the platform upon which priorities and commissioning intentions are formulated and ultimately which services are delivered.

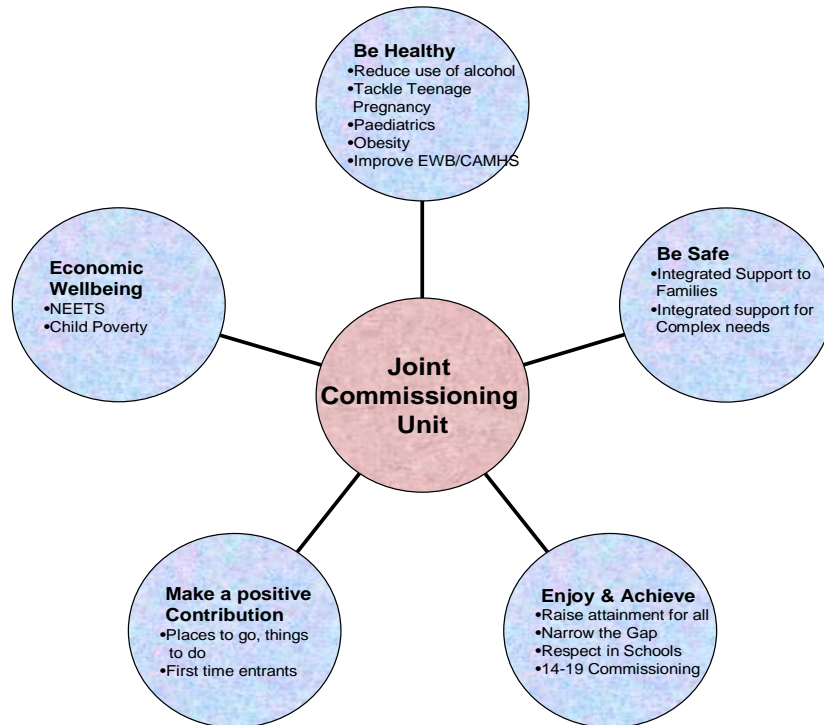
Key responsibilities for the Local Children's Board will include:

1. Providing local intelligence and data with regard to need and service
2. Provide local analysis of CAF activity to inform commissioning intentions and priorities
3. Work in partnership with Commissioning Officers to develop the "ideal type" in accordance with locality need
4. Work in partnership with Commissioning Officers to specify the service required in accordance with agreed outcomes and locality needs;
5. Participation in procurement processes
6. Support implementation of new services locally
7. Manage and monitor service delivery , working closely with local providers, through an agreed contract monitoring process
8. Support market development through the management and monitoring of select lists of preferred providers in respect of the key improvement priorities.
9. Reporting on performance to the Planning, Performance and Delivery Group.

Local Children's Boards will work with Lead Commissioners and Commissioning Officers to shape commissioning plans and subsequently to implement commissioning decisions at a local level. This role will apply to commissioning for all children and young people, whether they receive universal, targeted or specialist services. (please see pages 22/23)

The Joint Commissioning Unit

Joint Commissioning in County Durham will be managed through a Joint Commissioning Unit and 5 thematic Every Child Matters Outcomes Groups as follows:



(Note: the diagram reflects 2008/09 priorities and would change to reflect the CYPP 2009/12)

The Joint Commissioning Unit is the operational development group of the County Durham Children's Executive Board (CEB), and as such is a high level strategic group.

The role of the Joint Commissioning Unit is to deliver robust commissioning plans, based upon the strategic priorities agreed by the CEB and identified within the Children and Young People's Plan and related single organisational strategy responsibilities

The JCU will lead the development of robust commissioning processes, practice and procedures and ensure that commissioning plans deliver sound operational services, access, equity of provision and value for money.

The JCU will deliver commissioning priorities based upon strong needs assessment and local information, including evidence provided through the Practice Based Commissioners and the Local Children's Boards.

The JCU will report to the CEB on all aspects of commissioning, but in particular progress against the Annual Commissioning Plan.

The JCU's responsibilities are to:

1. Retain an overarching view of the priority outcomes, needs and strategic development of children's services in County Durham.
2. Respond to the priorities set by the CDCTEB and outlined in the CYPP.
3. Responsible for agreeing the approach to all relevant issues arising from the provision and procurement of jointly commissioned services.
4. Monitor and address gaps or duplication in service provision and developing plans to address these issues.
5. Commit through delegated responsibilities agreed levels of funding from partner organisations to integrated services.
6. Coordinate the delivery of commissioning strategies and plans of single agencies with the CEB strategy.
7. Assure the quality of all Children and Young People's related commissioning activity across all partner agencies, by ensuring adherence to agreed Children's Trust joint commissioning framework and processes.
8. Develop effective and embracing commissioning practice that is implemented across the whole of County Durham.
9. Develop strong and explicit priorities for the five Outcome Groups and identify responsible key commissioning leads and commissioning managers for each area.
10. Develop robust budgets and financial plans to reflect the priorities identified within the overall commissioning strategy.
11. Stimulate market development across children and young people's services.
12. Ensure and demonstrate that best value is achieved through the commissioning process.
13. Demonstrate the delivery of improved outcomes through the implementation of effective commissioning.
14. Develop and disseminate good practice in the commissioning of services for children and young people.
15. Respond to any overview and scrutiny findings as they relate to commissioning activity.

16. Demonstrate involvement of users/carers in the commissioning process in both an appropriate manner and at an appropriate level.

Membership

Membership of the JCU would be as follows:

Chair
Commissioning Lead Being Healthy
Commissioning Lead Stay Safe
Commissioning Lead Enjoy and Achieve
Commissioning Lead Make a Positive Contribution
Commissioning Lead – Economic Wellbeing
Schools Forum Representative
VCS Community of Interest Representative
Practice Based Commissioning County Lead
Manager CYPS Commissioner
PCT Children’s Commissioner
Planning and Performance Manager
Children’s Trust Development Manager

The JCU will lead, drive, co-ordinate and quality assure all commissioning activities linked to the development of children and young people’s services, through five themed outcome groups. The themed outcome groups will replace existing individual commissioning groups wherever possible, and streamline existing development processes to produce a more co-ordinated and rationalised approach to service commissioning.

Outcome Groups

The five outcome groups will lead and co-ordinate all work under the identified areas and will develop commissioning specifications for each identified JCU priority area. The specifications will identify the target group for the delivery and the expected service outcomes and timescales.

Each outcome group will have an identified Lead Commissioner, responsible for the overall outcome theme. The Lead Commissioner will be supported by a Commissioning Officer, who will work with appropriate stakeholders to develop commissioning specifications for each priority area.

This will ensure that there is an overarching and local element to the development of commissioning plans

Our Lead Commissioners are:

Being Healthy	Anthony Prudhoe	Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning (NHS County Durham)
Staying Safe	Gail Hopper	Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services, CYPS
Enjoying and Achieving	Dave Ford / Maureen Clare	Head of Achievement Services, CYPS Head of Access and Inclusion, CYPS
Make a Positive Contribution	Amanda Johnson	Head of Extended Services, CYPS
Achieving Economic Wellbeing	To be determined	

Lead Commissioner

Each Lead Commissioner will be responsible for:

1. Leading commissioning of all key improvement priorities under that outcome area
2. Ensuring that commissioning activities are planned and executed in line with the agreed joint commissioning framework and processes
3. Production of joint commissioning intentions for all KIPs within their responsibility with the input of relevant stakeholders including children, young people and parents, providers and voluntary sector.
4. Regularly reporting performance to the Joint Commissioning Steering Group.

Commissioning Officer

Each Lead Commissioner will be supported in the development of joint commissioning intentions by a Commissioning Officer.

Commissioning Officers will be drawn from Local Authority and PCT Commissioners. Commissioning Officers will be responsible for executing the joint commissioning framework and processes for individual Key Improvement priorities by:

1. Co-ordinating all activity to establish need, including engagement of service users' and the community, service providers and analysis of data on need and service performance
2. Developing a clear understanding of what resource is currently deployed in meeting needs and the quality of existing service provision
3. Developing a vision of 'best in class' service
4. Setting out clear commissioning intentions for that KIP
5. Work with Local Children's Boards to understand local need and delivery options
6. Establish clear outcome based measures by which implementation of these intentions will be monitored

Commissioning Officers will draw on expertise, as relevant and required from service experts, research best practice nationally and internationally in completing this work. This will include engaging with children, young people and families.

The inter-relationship between the Lead Commissioner, Commissioning Officer and the L.C.B activity is summarised in the table below:

STAGE	JCU / LEAD COMMISSIONER	COMMISSIONING OFFICER	LOCAL CHILDREN'S BOARD
Audit Performance	Receive and consider audit information	Develop and gather central data by locality.	Provide local intelligence, soft data,
Audit Need	Agree commissioning activity & timescales	Analyse existing data	participation outputs
Audit current services	Identify Commissioning Officer to lead on	Present analysis to JCU	Complete local mapping exercise
			Provide PM info from contract

	the work		reviews
Develop ideal type	JCU approve model	Facilitate stakeholder event Use RBA	Participate in stakeholder event Provide examples of best practice based on locality knowledge and expertise
Identify what needs to change Specify new service	Resources for new services agreed	Produce specification (s) including desired outcomes Ensure specification reflects locality needs	Shape specification in accordance with locality need Contribute and inform service specification
Procure new service	JCU award for specialist services	Organise and complete procurement process	Participate in selection panels for local service
Introduce new service		Manage planned process of change	Support implementation locally
Decommission old service		Manage planned process of change	Support implementation locally
Monitor contract	Receive performance & contracting monitoring information	Receive provider reports and contribute to contract review process	Work closely with providers to monitor delivery, agreeing amendments as required. Receive detailed activity reports and outcome reports from providers. Identify rep to act as Lead Contract Officer.

Planning, Performance and Delivery Group

The Children and Young People's Plan action plan contains targets for outcomes, against which performance can be monitored. It is essential that the effectiveness of commissioned services are monitored and evaluated. Service redesign or commissioning is not an end in itself. These can be judged positively only insofar as they produce improved outcomes and are valued by those who use them.

The management of performance of the Children's Trust is undertaken by the Planning, Performance and Delivery group on behalf of the Children's Executive Board. This group will coordinate collation and analysis of performance data at county and local levels and will provide the Joint Commissioning Unit with data on which to base their work in supporting local and county-wide commissioning.

The Planning, Performance and Delivery group will play a crucial role in the effective monitoring of agreed contracts and agreements. This work will be supported by the LCB's who will be charged with the responsibility of monitoring and reviewing locally agreed contracts, and will require effective engagement of service providers at a local level. This function will provide link LCBs activity with the PPDG to ensure that local, as well as wider outcomes, are being met.

Membership of the Planning, Performance and Delivery Group comprises of:

Carole Payne	Head of Strategic Commissioning, CYPS
Suzanne Carty	Quality, Planning and Performance Manager
Julie Scurfield	Children's Trust Development Manager
	Locality Development Managers
	County Durham Delivery Champions

The Planning, Performance and Delivery Group will develop a rolling programme of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that:

- There is regular information gathered relating to commissioned services.
- That delivery against outcomes is achieved and maintained.
- Services comply with all aspects of the agreed contract.
- That Commissioning managers and/or the JCU are alerted to any problems with service delivery or fulfilling the contract.
- That deficits in service are highlighted and plans agreed and put in place to either operationally or strategically address the issue.

- The JCU is furnished with robust, concise and well analysed data to support its commissioning role and ensure that effective services are maintained.
- An annual performance report is produced for the CEB.
- Accurate and timely, cross agency data collection systems are developed in line with commissioning strategies, to provide information at both a local and Countywide level.

Delivery Champion and KIP Lead role

Delivery champions and KIP Leads are charged with driving performance and delivery at a County wide and local level – ‘turning talk into action’.

Turning well developed commissioning intentions into effective services that improve the lives of children and young people is the responsibility of the Delivery Champion, working with KIP Leads in each LCB. The Commissioning Officer must work closely with the Delivery Champion throughout the development of commissioning intentions as they are the service experts.

Integrated Data Function

Commissioning activity must be founded on a clear evidence base. This requires an effective integrated data function.

To manage performance effectively, the Children’s Trust needs accurate and timely information at both local and County-wide level. To support this, an integrated data function has been established to bring together information from all partners. Much of this data already exists, so this function involves the coordination of existing activity to focus on outcomes and impact on children and young people.

Data will be available from super output area to County-wide area, to identify need, to measure performance and to monitor trends.

The relative performance of LCB s and levels of need will be monitored.

Procurement and Contracting Function

The JCU is supported by a Contracting and Procurement Function

Expert advice and support in contracting and procurement will be provided through teams in Children and Young People’s Services and the Primary Care Trust in the first instance.

Our approach to the securing and procurement of services is rooted in our commitment to have transparency and open processes.

Wherever possible and practicable this will be achieved through the procurement of services via an open tender process.

Procurement of services will in every case include a specification of outcomes to be delivered and targets to be attained. Key to this approach will be the development of outcome based contracts. This will enable value for money judgements and comparisons to be made. In the case of locally commissioned services, it is clear that outcomes are not the same in all areas.

Targets for improvement must therefore be negotiated locally between commissioners, providers and children young people and their families if they are to be meaningful. However, a county-wide perspective should be developed which sets out how outcomes deficits will be reduced over time between localities, by effective targeting of resourced and services. The balance between this local and county-wide perspective will be negotiated through the JCU.

Procurement and contracting will follow Durham County Council's policy and the County Durham Compact.; in doing so we will proactively develop our contracting and procurement approaches with all sectors including the voluntary, community and private sectors.

In practice the commissioning of thematic/local services under £50,000 at a local level will be achieved through the development and the use of a select list / preferred providers in respect of our key improvement priorities. The development, monitoring and maintenance of which will be a key responsibility for the Local Children's Boards supported by the contracting and procurement service.

In respect of services to be commissioned over the value of £50,000 we are committed to an open tender process.

All contracting and procurement activity will be monitored and review through the LCBs, JCU and ultimately the CEB.

Section 4: When we will commission

Our commissioning activity will be aligned with financial and planning cycles. In doing so we will ensure that our commissioning activity is undertaken in a timely fashion linking priorities to resources.

Aligning the commissioning cycle with other strategic cycles

So that resources can be aligned with commissioning priorities, a calendar of activity will be put into place. This ensures that strategic plans, budget allocation and commissioning activity relate to improve efficiency, focus and outcomes. The diagram at appendix 3 shows how this annual cycle will operate.

Resourcing

The Joint Commissioning Unit (JCU) will create and sustain an overview of strategic resource deployment across the Children's Trust. This will involve understanding how budgets are aligned with priorities. This strategic perspective will allow the JCU to monitor the effectiveness of strategies to increase earlier intervention and will ensure that improvement priorities are adequately resourced.

Consideration will be given by the JCU to the creation of pooled budgets. Experience of Children's Trusts in other areas is that much progress can be made short of pooling of budgets and that pursuit of pooling as an end in itself can be time-consuming and unnecessary. Where pooled budgets are seen as bringing specific advantages, then these should be promoted. However, absence of pooled budget arrangements should not be used as an excuse not to improve outcomes or to work together.

All budgets for children and young people will channel through the JCU, so that the Children's Trust can gather a strategic view and be assured that resources are being used appropriately and efficiently in pursuit of improved outcomes.

Monitoring this Joint Commissioning Strategy

This joint commissioning strategy will be monitored at a number of levels.

The effectiveness of the Annual Commissioning Plan will be monitored by the Children's Executive Board and will be reported bi-annually.

The effectiveness of the joint commissioning arrangements set out in this strategy will be subject to annual review by the CEB

In addition to this internal oversight, the County Durham Children's Trust will be subject to agreed scrutiny processes and to external inspection via the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Locality Procurement Process for Services under £50,000

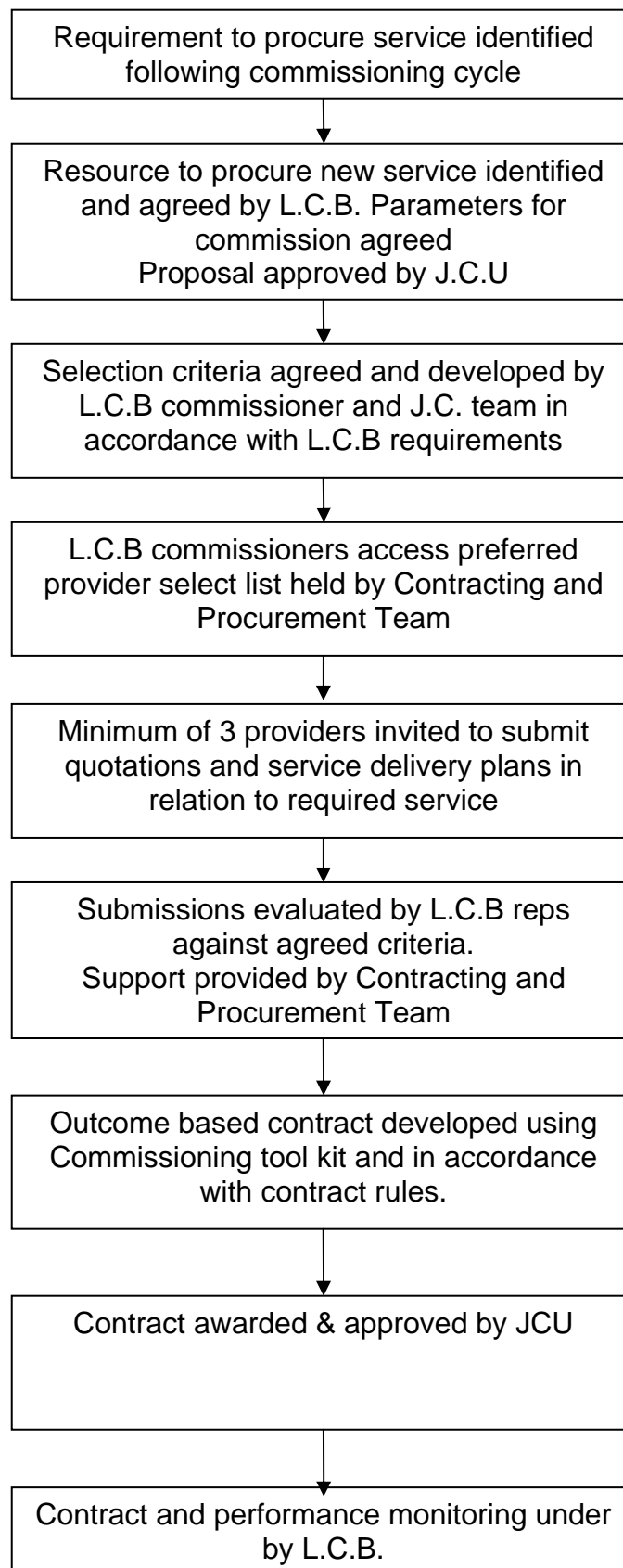
Appendix 2:

Locality Procurement Process for services over £50,000

Appendix 3:

Annual Improvement Cycle

Locality Procurement Process for Services under £50k



Locality Procurement – Tender Process for services over £50k