



Every Child Matters in County Durham

Edition 10 June 2006



Leading the new service

A message from David Williams, Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services for Durham County Council

"This edition of the Newsletter was held up to allow me to reflect on my first month in my new role...

First impressions are of a Children's Services Authority made up of very talented and committed staff and elected members determined to improve outcomes for children and young people, but rather cautious about moving too fast and being too radical in approach. This is understandable. Plans for significant change can come unstuck if the people and partners, who have to deliver, in a large, diverse area such as County Durham, are not taken along. I believe that much careful groundwork has now been done. There is a real desire, especially amongst front line staff to "get on with it" and start implementing changes in terms of service delivery, general approach and culture.

My first priority is to ensure that plans for the Children's Trust are agreed and implemented. It is through the Trust that we can stop considering which organisation is responsible for each service and concentrate more on which services are needed, and then to agree jointly how these will be delivered.

My other key priority is to plan and implement structural change within the County Council to improve front line delivery. Structural change should not, in theory, be seen as an initial goal, but staff, who are vital to successful delivery, need a degree of certainty and stability if they are not to be distracted from their main tasks. These structural changes will ultimately involve more development of multi-agency services, based on locally agreed service needs and influenced by the direct views of children, young people and their families.

These personal priorities are geared to helping the service to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people. Our first Children and Young People's Plan sets out targets against the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes. Language such as "improved outcomes" sounds like a management-speak buzz phrase. What I really want to see is all children having the best possible start to life, having a happy, safe and healthy childhood, and being helped to achieve at school so that they have the skills, qualifications and self-esteem necessary for a successful transition to adult life. That is really all that the ECM Agenda is about."

Meet the Director

David Williams invites non-school based staff, (i.e. former Education and Children's Social Care staff, those in Finance and Support Services who work across Children and Young People's functions and Youth Engagement Service staff) to one of the following meetings lasting about one hour. David will talk about the new service in Durham and invite questions. Attendance is voluntary.

6th June 11.00 a.m. Council Chamber

6th June 2.00 p.m. Council Chamber

21st June 10.30 a.m. Aycliffe Young People's Centre

28th June 10.00 a.m. Stanley Education Centre

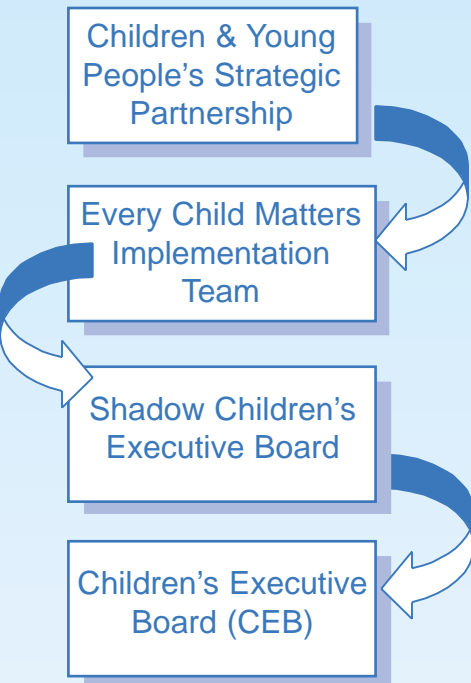
Tel: 0191 383 3319 to ensure a place;
or e-mail: joan.teasdale@durham.gov.uk

New forms of service and the Children's Services Authority (CSA)

The Children Act 2004 and the ECM agenda bring together partners legally bound to co-operate with the CSA to meet the needs of children, young people and their families. Schools, colleges, communities, GPs and the voluntary sector also all have a significant contribution to make in developing future services for children and

improving the Durham 5 outcomes.

The Shadow Children's Executive Board (CEB) recently held its inaugural meeting to discuss ways for partners to review progress. The model for Children's Services is based on wide consultation



with children and young people, partners and others during 2005.

The CEB must ensure that collectively, organisations deliver effective, efficient and appropriately integrated services. Accountable to Durham County Council as the Children's Services Authority, all members will also remain accountable to their own organisations. Local Children's Boards (LCB) are also proposed, accountable to the CSA for the delivery and performance of services within their areas.

Durham County Council will need to change and adapt its services and internal infrastructure in order to deliver an efficient and effective integrated, single service for children and young people. All partners are committed to an approach based on:

- Prevention;
- Early intervention;
- Supporting parents and carers;
- Workforce reform;
- Accountability and Integration.

The design of the CSA requires much more than a re-alignment of management structures and budgets formerly within Education and Social Care and Health. A matrix may promote a structure that aligns the delivery of universal, targeted and specialised services within management responsibilities rather than the traditional focus of attainment and safeguarding. Management of information and data will remain a key task within the CSA to assure quality and performance of all services.

Critical to the success of the (CEB) will be its ability to respond strategically to changing needs of children, young people and their families as well as to engage with communities. Emergence of the Board does not reduce the accountability of the Lead Councillor or the Director for Children's Services and ultimately that of the Children's Services Authority. The Director for Children's Services remains personally accountable for performance within children's services.

The next 12 month period presents an exciting opportunity to reach a number of key milestones in the ECM programme.

KEY MILESTONE ACTIVITIES DATES	
Director for Children and Young People's Services	March 2006
Inaugural meeting of Shadow Children's Executive Board	May 2006
Publication of single Children and Young People's Plan	May 2006
Workshops and forums focusing on early preparation for emerging Local Children's Boards	July 2006
Commissioning framework and functionality agreed	August 2006
Emerging design of the CSA	Sep 2006
Determination of CEB status	Sep 2006
Governance arrangements for CEB and LCB	June - Sep 2006
Shadow arrangements for LCB	Oct 2006
Work to establish financial budget of CEB	Sep 2006 - March 2007
Establishment of Children's Executive Board	April 2007
Establishment of Local Children's Boards	April - Sep 2007
Joint Commissioning	April 2007

Youth Matters:

Next Steps

19,000 young people responded to the consultation document 'Youth Matters'.

In Next Steps the Government proposes:

1. Supporting Choices of Young People

- More accredited volunteering opportunities
- Quality, impartial standards for the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance e.g. careers and health education. Challenge stereotypes, raise aspirations and outcomes
- Target support for some young people and identify a Lead Professional role



2. Things to do and Places to go

- Require local authorities to offer positive activities with partners. New national standards, setting out the range of opportunities, tailored to demand.
- Pilot of Youth Opportunity Cards including Durham to test if young people engage in activities, test sanctions for poor and persistent misbehaviours.
- An opportunity fund in each local authority to be spent at young people's discretion
- New capital fund and approaches to engaging young people in decisions about facilities

3. Making a Contribution

- Implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission on volunteering
- Further develop Peer Mentoring in 180 secondary schools and support the transition from primary to secondary

- Trial the Framework for Achievement in relation to volunteering

4. Supporting Choices: Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

- Integrate IAG in learning and the community, via Connexions Centres, youth services and voluntary organisations
- Bring together various help lines and websites to be 'fronted' by the directgov website.
- Publish Progression measures post 16 for individual schools
- Children's Trust to collaborate with schools, colleges, Connexions, voluntary sector and young people to commissioning high quality IAG for young people aged 11-19, (to 25 for those with learning disabilities.)
- Duty on local authorities to make available information on services, facilities and publications.
- Promoting physical and emotional health.

5. Reforming Targeted Support

- Reduce further the proportion of young people known not to be in education, employment or training post 16, and improve engagement in key stage 4
- Introduce a new strategy for school age offenders and their education.

Implementation

- Statutory remits for securing positive activities
- Provision of a careers service.
- Targets for vulnerable teenagers e.g. Young Mothers, Care Leavers, Young people with learning disabilities, young offenders, black and minority ethnic groups, young people known not to be in education, employment or training.



The Children's Fund in Durham

The Children's Fund vision is to develop a range of universally accessible services for children and young people aged 5 - 13. It was agreed "Not a penny of the Children's Fund in Durham will be spent without the active endorsement of children and young people"

In April 2004 each Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was allocated funds according to the numbers of children and young people aged 5-13 living in the district. The focus of the Children's Fund has been:

- Partnership - promoting and supporting delivery of universal services to children 5-13, training LSP participation workers;
- Participation - enhancing the capacity of Local Planning Groups to involve children and young people in the decision-making process; and
- Prevention - ensuring that when agencies

collaborate to plan for the safeguarding and promotion of children's welfare, their key orientation is towards prevention.

The Children's Fund aims to change the way services are designed, delivered and reviewed. Community based projects range from Saturday morning gardening clubs to fully inclusive summer play schemes. Over twenty thousand children and young people have accessed a service, project or event supported by the Fund.

From 2006 to 2008 the Children's Fund will focus on Local Children's Planning Group priorities (ECM Outcomes based) and support mainstream good practice within Children's Services to:

- explore and trial integrated provision;
- evidence effectiveness of such provision on outcomes; and
- commission services that meet local need.

The Education and Inspections Bill 2006: Main Messages

Foundation and Trust schools:

All schools can become 'Foundation' schools if Governors decide to do so – probably via a simple majority vote. Foundation schools will own their own assets and become the employer of their staff. Schools can become 'Trust' schools, 'not for profit' organisations, such as a business charity or a university – and will be able to appoint the majority of governors.

School admissions:

All foundation and trust schools will become their own admissions authority – but must act within a national 'Code of Practice'. Local Authorities must promote 'choice, diversity and fair access'. The Admissions Code has not yet been published and there are concerns nationally about varying selection criteria, possibly to the detriment of some groups of pupils.

Improved choice and access/travel to schools:

Providing a place can be secured, free transport for disadvantaged pupils to any of the nearest 3 secondary schools – over 2 miles but within 6 miles.

Parents can propose the establishment of new schools but Local Authorities will retain the strategic duty to plan the overall provision and pattern of school places.

Schools causing concern/'good' schools:

'Underperforming' schools can be required to work in partnership with other schools. 'Good' schools can expand – regardless of the level of surplus places in the area - but there is no definition of what constitutes a good school.

School discipline/parental responsibilities

Teachers will be able to use 'reasonable' force to restrain pupils but there is no definition of 'reasonable'. Schools will have power to search pupils for weapons. Parents could be fined if excluded pupils are not supervised during the first 5 days. New parental right of complaint to OfSTED.

Curriculum proposals

A new duty on Local Authorities to ensure all children fulfil their educational potential – through an extension of personalised learning, stretching lessons for most able and catch-up lessons for those performing below average. Extension of vocational education and specialised diplomas for 14-19 year olds.

School food

Minimum nutritional standards for school food introduced and drinking water made available free of charge.