

EVERY CHILD MATTERS NETWORK

Change is here.... however, it will not be real without the support of front line staff!

Change is a long process whereby we are being asked to improve outcomes for children and their families. It is an opportunity and a challenge, to provide quality services contributing to a healthier, safer and happier society. To take a positive step forward, we all need a good understanding of the current agenda, true engagement and changes in practice.

So far, engagement with Every Child Matters (ECM) has been restricted to a relatively small group of staff and managers, often at senior levels within organisations, who have ample opportunity to consider the emerging concepts and issues of the ECM agenda. Communication with other staff has depended on the newsletter, the website and road shows.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has agreed to the establishment of an ECM Network to encourage dissemination of information and direct engagement of staff in all organisations involved in services to children.

The main aims of the ECM Network are to:

- Communicate with staff within organisations;
- Engage staff in ECM developments;

- Link operational and strategic thinking (2 way communication); and
- Prepare for, lead and drive change within organisations

All agencies (statutory and voluntary) have nominated appropriate volunteers to become ECM Networkers. They will increasingly be charged with translating strategy into practice and in turn, shaping strategy through experience. Network meetings will be highly participative and will give members the chance to contribute and shape the future agenda.

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ALL TOGETHER BETTER - NEXT STEPS

The second phase of the SEN and Disability Strategic Plan, 2005 – 2010 has been launched. In 2003, OFSTED recognised that Durham's SEN Strategy was highly satisfactory and that local circumstances justified an incremental approach toward inclusion. In 2004, the Government's Ten Year Strategy for SEN, "Removing Barriers to Achievement" endorsed the Durham approach, and building upon our foundations new developments include:

- the establishment of fourteen Communities of Learning, funded to promote innovative solutions to meeting special educational needs through collaboration,
- planning with special schools to strategically develop their role,
- working with nurseries to establish and deliver outreach services for young children with complex special educational needs; and
- working with partner agencies to support the systemic changes to children's services as outlined

in "Every Child Matters : Change for Children" (DFES 2005).

We have improved our services to support children and young people with SEN by establishing new ones such as the Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Communication Support Team and the new resource for Conductive Education at Villa Real. We have two new special schools in the west of the County from September 2005, and we have delegated funding for pupils with Statements at Band E/F to primary schools. We have achieved a great deal.

Our priorities for action have been significantly updated to take account of national strategies such as the "5 Year Strategy for Children and Learners", "Building Schools for the Future" and the recent OFSTED findings in "Towards Inclusive Schools" (OFSTED 2004).

If you have any comments or queries about this updated plan please contact

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Every Child Matters in County Durham

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Shaping the Future

Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services

The County Council has advertised the post of Corporate Director with a closing date of 7th October 2005.

The Director will have responsibility for Children and Young People's Services, overseeing the education and children's social care and health services, managing the relationship with Connexions and the County Durham Youth Engagement Service.

The post is substantial in terms of management, as there are over 13,000 employees in this area, and Durham County Council has over 300 schools.

The strategic agenda is possibly even greater. A committed and creative person is sought to create the Children's Services Authority and to lead the integration and coordination of services. Key challenges will be to build on the ambition of "Every Child Matters", and to fulfil the potential of the "Youth Matters" Green Paper.

With the Corporate Directors of Adult and Community Services and of Environment, the new Director will work closely with the Chief Executive, Mark Lloyd, to provide strategic direction for the whole Authority.

This will be a challenging and exciting role for the successful applicant. The ideal candidate will be ambitious and dedicated, someone who has the ability to think strategically, develop a revolutionary approach and put visions into practice. An individual whose style is enabling, rather than "command and control" is sought.

All being well, the identity of the new Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services should be known early in December. *Watch this space!*

FUNCTIONAL MODEL CONSULTATION

The consultation period on the functional model has now ended and the many responses received are now being analysed.

Thanks to all the agencies and individuals, who have taken the time to submit responses. It is hoped that the full outcome of the consultation will be published during December.

Audit of Needs and Services 2005 (ANS 2005)

ANS 2005 is an essential foundation for developments supporting Every Child Matters (ECM) in Durham. Whilst timescales have slipped from those originally set, ANS 2005 is nearing completion!

Check it out on

www.everychildmattersincountydurham.org
 Go to the Audit of Needs and Services Report on the site for a huge amount of information on how well children and young people in Durham are doing in terms of the five outcome areas. This part of the site will be completed during October, and a special edition of the Every Child Matters newsletter has been commissioned to provide a summary.

The special edition will be published in November.

Making a difference where you live



Maintaining a focus on improving outcomes for children & young people.

Version 2 (June 2005) of the Durham 5 – Outcomes for Children & Young People in County Durham – is now available on our website.
www.everychildmattersincountydurham.org

The original document set out national and countywide priorities including priorities identified by our children & young people. In Version 2, the five Children & Young People's Local Planning Groups have added priorities, reflecting identified needs in their localities but which also contribute to the overall achievement of the 5 key outcomes.

Along with information provided by the Annual Performance Assessment, the Audit of Needs and Services and a number of specific inspections, the



Durham 5 Outcomes document will inform new planning systems, which Local Authorities must have in place from April 2006. This includes the single Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP).

Local Area Agreements (LAAs), voluntary 3 year agreements between Central Government and Local Authorities and their partners, will deliver national outcomes in a way that reflects local priorities and targets.

LAAs will be organised around 4 blocks:

- Children & Young People;
- Safer and Stronger Communities;
- Healthier Communities and Older People; and
- Economic Development and Enterprise.

The Durham 5 Outcomes document is at the core of the LAA and will underpin the Children & Young People's block.

The single CYPP will replace a range of existing but separate agency plans and will set the strategic context for the Authority's targets. The CYPP will include baselines and milestones against which progress can be measured. The LAA will inform the CYPP and vice versa.

CHANGES IN INSPECTION

Change is approaching from all directions. There is no escape! The way services are inspected is also changing.

By 2008, all local authorities will have experienced a Joint Area Review (JAR). In this, service-specific inspectors, such as schools inspectors, health inspectors and social care inspectors, will combine to ask how well services as a whole meet the needs of children and young people. They will be looking specifically to see how well services work together to achieve the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes.

Already, the way Social Care and Health and Education is assessed has changed. This year for the first time we completed an Annual Performance Assessment process. Evidence against the 5 outcomes was submitted and inspectors made judgements as to how effective our activity was in achieving them. Consideration was also given to the contributions of Connexions, Youth Engagement Service and others. In future years, this will carry even more weight, as inspectors expect to see joined-up working across all services.

The framework for the inspection of schools has also changed, with the contribution of schools to the 5 outcomes being assessed alongside the more traditional aspects of school performance.

Overall, there is an increasing emphasis on outcomes: what matters is not what you do, but what difference it makes. This is entirely consistent with the Every Child Matters in County Durham approach, which has been based on outcomes from the outset.



The Youth Green Paper

After a year in preparation, "Youth Matters" was published on 18th July 2005. Consultation on it closes on 4th November 2005.

The Green Paper sets out to address "four key challenges":

- How to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive;
- How to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities;
- How to provide better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives; and
- How to provide better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble

The Green Paper proposes:

- To legislate to clarify the Local Authority's duty to secure positive activities for all young people; and
- To provide statutory guidance for Local Authorities setting out a new set of national standards for the activities that all young people would benefit from accessing in their free time, such as recreational and sporting activities, volunteering and constructive activities in youth clubs.

A key proposal of the Green Paper is the establishment of a youth support service. This has implications notably for the LEA's Youth Service, Connexions and those parts of the Youth Engagement Service in County Durham concerned with providing diversionary activities for young people at risk of offending. Responsibility and funding for the Connexions service will now be devolved to local authorities working through Children's Trusts, schools and colleges.

The Green Paper leaves decisions regarding future configuration and branding of services to local discretion but suggests that the Connexions brand may be retained, since it is well recognised by young people. The direction is set, however, towards existing policy developments and initiatives: Every Child Matters; 14-19 Education; Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership; Building Schools for the Future and others.

Some of the proposals set out in Youth Matters are radical and will need to be considered carefully. For example it is proposed to put spending power in young people's hands directly. Local Authorities are encouraged to fund Opportunity Cards, rather than service providers. The voluntary and community sector already find commissioning practices leave them vulnerable and may find this arrangement even worse by introducing a high degree of instability into the system. The implications of this proposal on commissioning and planning and service innovation will need to be carefully considered.

There is a concern, too, that the Opportunity Cards would introduce an identity card scheme for young people, by the back door. Longer-term implications of this should be carefully weighed with civil liberties considerations. The proposal to withdraw cards from young people who 'get into trouble' is also problematic, because it is so counter-productive to any preventative strategy.

The role of schools is crucial to the proposals set out, in offering information, advice and guidance, extended use of facilities, provision of activities and a single point of access for those young people who need additional targeted or specialist services. However schools and colleges are able to opt out of commissioning arrangements for Information, Advice and Guidance.

Many people feel that the Green Paper lacks the detailed guidance that local authorities need to move forward, and fear that prescriptive 'entitlements' to activity will be impossible to implement without significant additional investment. A great deal is left for local decision making.

In spite of this, Youth Matters represents an important and supportive step in the development of the Every Child Matters agenda, in that it proposes taking a coherent approach to meeting the needs of all teenagers. This offers the potential to co-ordinate disparate activity, funding, commissioning and outcomes for young people. In this it is entirely consistent with the previous Green Paper Every Child Matters, the subsequent Children Act 2004 and the Every Child Matters implementation plan.

This approach is intended to enable a Children's Services Authority to provide a more strategic response to the needs of all young people, but the issues of duties, powers and resources remain to be explored in County Durham.

Have your say: respond to the Youth Matters green paper at DfES.gov.uk/consultations