

Action Plan in response to the Inspection of Children's Services ESCC 2005				
Recommendation	Action	Outcome	Timescale for Action	Key Responsibility
1. National Priorities and Strategic Objectives				
1.1 The Council should review the engagement of the voluntary sector and parent members of the Disabled Children's Development Group in planning and key decision-making processes (paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11).	a) To review with CYPSP partners the voluntary sector's input to planning and key decision-making processes.	a) All planning groups within the CYPSP to include voluntary sector representation.	December 2005	Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit
	b) To review with the parent members of the Disabled Children's Development group their input to planning & decision-making processes.	b) Parents to be effectively involved in decision-making and planning for Disabled children.	July 2005	Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit
	c) To contribute to the corporate work being undertaken by the Chief Executive's Department to develop a compact between the County Council and voluntary sector partners.	c) Voluntary sector partners more effectively involved in decision-making and planning	Ongoing	Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit
2. Effectiveness of Service delivery and Outcomes				
2.1 The Council should set demanding but achievable targets for regularly asking service users about the quality and effectiveness of services (paragraphs 5.3 and 5.27).	a) Every part of the Children & Families Division to establish user feedback processes.	a) User feedback systems in place that provide more detailed information about service user experiences – improved information for commissioning and	December 2005	Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance in conjunction with all other Heads of Service

		developing services.		
2.2 The Council should review its Kinship Care Policy to ensure that levels of allowances are appropriate and that guidance on flexibility and discretion is clear (paragraph 5.14).	a) A review of the Kinship Care Policy will be completed that will make specific recommendations regarding levels of support, including maintenance allowances, and guidance regarding discretionary payments.	a) New policies and procedures regarding kinship care in place that will ensure more stable placements for children within kinship networks.	September 2005	Head of Locality
2.3 The Council and Health partners should involve parents and children in reviewing the need to expand the range and choice of respite care options (para 5.18).	a) As part of the review of involvement in decision-making (see 1.1 (b) above) parents will be consulted as how to best involve them in reviewing the range and choice of respite care options. b) To ensure that parents are able to contribute fully to the development of local provision for children with autistic spectrum disorder as part of the SEN Review recommendations.	a) Increased parental involvement in planning services and services that better meet the needs of disabled children and their parents or carers. b) Increased parental involvement in planning services and services that better meet the needs of disabled children and their parents or carers.	September 2005 and ongoing March 2006	Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit and Head of Disabled Children's Services. Head of Disabled Children's Services.
2.4 In relation to services to support care leavers, the Council should ensure that targets are set and met for: -Improving accommodation options; and	a) The OMs for Fostering and Leaving Care Services will review current arrangements and put in place specific targets to increase choice. b) Young people ceasing to	a) Greater choice of accommodation options for care leavers. b) Increased options for	September 2005 January	Head of Locality Head of Locality

<p>-Encouraging statutory agencies to provide employment opportunities (paragraph 5.22).</p>	<p>be looked after will be actively supported to be in training, education or employment when they are 19 and have established positive links with Connexions, notably the joint development of a pre-employability scheme. c) In consultation with key partner agencies a plan will be agreed to set specific employment targets for all statutory agencies. d) Ensure that the work with Connexions and other partners to improve education, employment and training opportunities for all young people addresses the needs of care-leavers.</p>	<p>care leavers in employment. c) Increased options for care leavers in employment. d) Improved opportunities for employment, education and training for care leavers.</p>	<p>2006 March 2006 Ongoing</p>	<p> Head of Locality Head of Locality</p>
<p>2.5 The corporate parenting group should be provided with information on an annual basis that tracks the outcomes for individual care leavers (paragraph 5.22).</p>	<p>a) Reports to be provided to Corporate Parenting Group.</p>	<p>a) Improvements in members' knowledge and understanding about outcomes for care leavers.</p>	<p>July 2005</p>	<p>Assistant Director Children & Families</p>
<p>3. Quality of services for Users and Carers</p>				
<p>3.1 The Council should ensure that leaflets publicising the</p>	<p>a) Leaflets regarding advocacy services to be</p>	<p>a) Improved knowledge of the advocacy service.</p>	<p>June 2005</p>	<p>Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality</p>

advocacy service are routinely available alongside other leaflets in public places (paragraph 6.2).	provided in public places.			Assurance
3.2 The Council should ensure that documentation clearly indicates the status of assessment work, particularly in circumstances where cases move from Section 17 to Section 47 status (paragraph 6.4).	a) Locality and Disability OMs will carry out a review of the recording of the systems for recording the status and nature of assessments.	a) Improved clarity of the status of assessment work will be subject to a focused audit.	June 2005	Head of Locality
3.3 The Council should set targets supported by robust monitoring arrangements to ensure that referrals from other professionals are always acknowledged and that referrers are appropriately informed about action taken (paragraph 6.5).	a) DAT PMs will ensure that systems are in place to ensure referrals are acknowledged and referrers are informed of outcomes. Monitoring systems will be built into the ESCR process	a) Targets established and monitoring reports from Carefirst data available.	June 2005 and ongoing	Head of Locality
3.4 The Council should ensure that the planned review of young carers is undertaken as a matter of urgency and that the subsequent improvement plan sets targets for identifying and responding to the needs of young carers (paragraph 6.6).	a) A review of services for young carers will be undertaken that will develop an improvement plan with specific targets for improving the services for young carers.	a) Improvements in service provision for young carers.	September 2005	Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit and Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance
4. Fair Access				
4.1 The Council should build on the work already undertaken to	a) Improved mechanisms for consulting more fully with	a) Improved understanding of the needs, wishes and	March 2006	Joint Head of Children's

<p>prevent exclusion from services by: - identifying, consulting and fully engaging black and minority ethnic children and families across the county;</p> <p>-assessing the impact of transferring case responsibility for unaccompanied asylum seeking children under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act;</p> <p>-conducting an analysis of the disproportionate numbers of children from black and minority ethnic communities who were looked after, in need, and on the child protection register and developing a strategy to address this; and</p> <p>-ensuring that mechanisms are developed which improve access to local services in rural areas (paragraphs 7.4 to 7.18).</p>	<p>black and minority ethnic groups will be developed as part of implementing the Equalities Action Plan.</p> <p>b) A risk impact assessment will be undertaken regarding the transfer of case responsibility for services for asylum-seeking children.</p> <p>c) A Matching Needs and Services exercise will be commissioned to identify reasons for disproportionate numbers of children from black and minority ethnic communities looked after, in need, and on the child protection register. This exercise will agree areas for service development to meet identified needs.</p> <p>d) To engage fully with Local Partnerships for Children and Area Planning Groups to ensure that they have specific plans to improve access to local services in rural areas.</p>	<p>feelings of black and minority ethnic children and their families.</p> <p>b) Safe and effective services for asylum-seeking children.</p> <p>c) Increased understanding of the needs of children from black and minority ethnic communities and improved evidence base on which to commission and develop services.</p> <p>d) Increased access to services for children and families in rural areas.</p>	<p>July 2005</p> <p>December 2005</p> <p>March 2006</p>	<p>Commissioning Unit & Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance</p> <p>Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance</p> <p>Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit & Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance & Head of Locality</p> <p>Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit in conjunction with all Heads of Services</p>
<p>4.2 The Council should develop a children's services information</p>	<p>a) A children's services Information pack will be</p>	<p>a) Improved knowledge of services by children and</p>	<p>September 2005</p>	<p>Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality</p>

pack to include key public information to be given to all service users at the point of assessment (paragraph 7.24).	developed and distributed.	young people.		Assurance
5. Cost and Efficiency				
5.1 The Council should discuss with the voluntary sector the request for longer-term contracts and should explore the perception that the processes for awarding grants and contracts could be more transparent (para 8.10).	a) This will be included as part of the review with CYPSP partners of the voluntary sector's input to planning and key decision-making processes undertaken by March 2006 (see 1.1 (a) for more detail)	a) More effective contractual arrangements with the voluntary sector.	March 2006	Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit
5.2 The council should ensure that the four local area planning groups develop purchasing plans that spell out the required service shifts and resource implications, reflecting jointly agreed commissioning priorities (paragraph 8.11).	a) This will be included in the development of the Children's Trust – the Area Children's Service Planning Groups will take decisions and/or make recommendations in relation to service provision within the area including the development of pooled budgets and joint commissioning of services.	a) Commissioning, planning and development of services to fully involve all local partners including the voluntary sector and service users.	March 2006	Joint Head of Children's Commissioning Unit
6. Management and resources				
6.1 The Council should make arrangements for senior managers and Councillors to regularly visit intake teams in the	a) A programme of visits to teams will be developed following the Council elections in May.	a) Improved understanding and awareness of services by Members and senior managers.	July 2005	Assistant Director Children & Families

Children's Services Department, and to report their findings to the Chief Executive and to a relevant forum of Councillors (para 9.2).				
6.2 Following the Council elections in May 2005, the Council should ensure that all Councillors are provided with training around their responsibilities as corporate parents (para 9.2).	a) A programme of training will be provided following the Council elections in May.	a) Improved understanding and awareness of their responsibilities as corporate parents by Members.	October 2005	Assistant Director Children & Families
6.3 The Council should ensure that human resource management expertise is engaged from the outset in relation to all activities to establish an integrated children's department and then Children's Trust (paragraph 9.7).	a) Via the ECMPG process contribute when appropriate to the development of the multi-agency workforce strategy.	a) The multi-agency workforce development programme clearly addresses the needs and priorities of social care staff.	March 2006	Senior Project Officer, Commissioning Unit
6.4 The Council should develop a workforce plan across all sectors. This should particularly address the training, recruitment and retention of staff in line with commissioning and purchasing plans.	a) To develop a workforce strategy as a part of the overall project planning for the Children's Trust that addresses the training, recruitment and retention of staff as part of developing commissioning and purchasing plans.	a) Improved and better co-ordinated training, recruitment and retention of staff across all sectors.	March 2006	Senior Project Officer, Commissioning Unit

