

CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS IN EAST SUSSEX: GOVERNANCE

Background

1. Proposed statutory guidance on arrangements for cooperation under Section 10 of the Children Act, expected to be confirmed shortly, establishes an expectation that there will be “a powerful integrated governing board or structure through which senior representatives of all key partner organisations can give strategic leadership and direction and drive through change”. The draft states that “the creation of strong governance arrangements must be central to the trajectory of change”.
2. The precise scope of the authority of any new arrangements – the extent to which they can commit organisations – is to be negotiated locally. There is a recognition nationally that the arrangements are likely to evolve over time. At the same time there is an expectation that partners can and should move quite swiftly to develop key policies, in particular on the joint commissioning of services.
3. Given the diversity of East Sussex, and the variety of different stakeholders who need to be engaged, it is important to establish an effective governance, and planning, *structure*. On its own, the establishment of a single overarching board or committee is not enough. A coherent structure is needed which ensures that the right stakeholders are engaged at the right levels before collective decisions are taken, and that once those decisions are taken their implementation can be effectively managed.

Proposals

4. Following consultation with partners and stakeholders a structure is proposed as follows. A diagram showing key components is also attached:
 - (i) a new overarching group of senior representatives of the Children's Services Authority and other statutory and non –statutory partners entitled the Children's Trust Executive Group. This Executive Group will meet four times over the first 12 months of its operation, with this frequency reviewed at the end of that period, along with other aspects of its operation. The proposed terms of reference and membership of the Group are set out below. This Group will essentially determine key directions, priorities and processes, including deciding whether issues should be remitted to other groups for decision or recommendation.
 - (ii) A Children and Young People's Stakeholder Forum. This Forum will replace the current Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board but with much expanded attendance (around 100 people as opposed to the 30 members of the CYPSP). In the first year the Forum will meet twice, in Autumn 2005 and early Summer 2006. It will bring together a wide range of stakeholders

with geographical and specialist interests to enable structured county level debate of key issues around the assessment of needs, priorities and key strategies.

- (iii) Age-related strategic groups which will advise the Executive Group – and other parts of the structure - on needs, priorities and strategies affecting children and young people of particular ages. We propose three groups covering the following age ranges: 0-5 years, 5-11 years and 11-19 years. These groups will focus on work which needs to be done at county rather than area level, in relation to particular age ranges.
- (iv) A set of specialist groups, building on existing partnerships, to provide advice on highly specialist areas, such as disabled children and children with mental health problems. The number of these groups will be kept under careful review with the need for them justified in terms of the need for particular integrated service development at particular times.
- (v) Area Children’s Services Planning Groups looking at service needs and the deployment of resources across geographical areas. These will be based on the groups which have already been developed using the boundaries of the Primary Care Trusts, but will need to recognise the full breadth of the planning agenda encompassed by the CYPP, and make appropriate links, for example to the 14-19 Travel to Learn groups of secondary schools, colleges and work based learning providers, which together plan local education and training provision for that age range. The terms of reference of these groups will include core components set out below, subject to further discussion with group members. The boundaries of these groups may need to be reviewed in light of any future reorganisation of PCT boundaries.
- (vi) Local Partnership for Children (LPC) groups for smaller geographical areas, focusing on day to day coordination of services, and a localised assessment of needs, optimal service configurations and local service development.
- (vii) Subject to further discussion, it may be appropriate to establish an Elected Members’ Consultation Forum, comprising Members of both the County Council and the five District and Borough Councils in East Sussex. Decisions of the Children’s Trust Executive Group and matters such as the Children and Young People’s Plan will be subject to political oversight via the normal Cabinet and County Council procedures. In addition, Members will be involved in the Stakeholder Forum. The scrutiny function will also be exercised across the whole of the Trust activities. Nevertheless, it may be felt that in view of the significance of the Children’s Trust developments it would be appropriate to establish a cross county Member forum to share information and help shape the agenda.

Participation by Children and Young People, and Parents and Carers

5. Proposals are currently being drawn up for ensuring the participation of children and young people, and parents and carers in the Children's Trust governance structure.

Authority of the new structure

6. The precise scope of the authority of new arrangements is expected to evolve over time. The proposal at this stage is that only the overarching Children's Trust Executive Group should be empowered on its own to take decisions which commit member agencies. Even in relation to this group, we would initially expect recommendations to be made to separate agencies before decisions are taken, for example about budget allocations. The Group will also not have the power to commit an individual member organisation to a course of action with which it does not agree (in other words, it will not operate a majority voting system).
7. The Children's Trust Executive Group may delegate a particular decision to another group within the Children's Trust governance structure, setting parameters for that decision as appropriate, and/or invite another group to draw up recommendations for consideration by the CTEG.

Timetable

8. The new structure will be established from October 2005.

Components of the governance structure: detailed terms of reference/membership

Children's Trust Executive Group

Terms of reference

- (i) To secure comprehensive and effective data collection arrangements for children's services consistent with the national "outcomes framework" for children and young people and with national inspection requirements
- (ii) To review, on at least an annual basis, a detailed analysis of outcomes for children and young people in East Sussex (using the national outcomes framework), including outcomes:
 - (a) by geographical area and by age
 - (b) for specific groups of children and young people, to include:
 - children and young people who are in public care
 - children and young people who have special educational needs or who are disabled
 - young women under the age of 18 who are pregnant or who are mothers
 - children and young people with significant long term health problems
 - children with poor school attendance
 - other groups as appropriate

- (iii) To review the broad allocation of resources across universal and targeted children's services at county and local levels as between service areas and against the analysis at (i) above
- (iv) To agree on an annual basis a set of priorities for county and/or local service development in the light of the analysis at (i) above, including any changes required in the pattern of investment; and to make recommendations appropriately to relevant agencies
- (v) To develop joint plans for commissioning services, including plans based on pooled budget arrangements where appropriate
- (vi) To agree/review/update a Children and Young People's Plan setting out key actions across children's services, reflecting the priorities agreed at (iii) above; and to ensure that this Plan reflects appropriate consultation and participation of young people, families and carers in its development and key features
- (vii) To review on an annual basis the arrangements made to obtain the views of service users on the appropriateness and quality of services, and on perceived service gaps, including the views of families and carers, and the extent to which they have informed the development of services. The Group may select particular service areas or issues for particular focus in any one year
- (viii) To oversee the progressive development in East Sussex of effective Children's Trust arrangements including:
 - integrated front line delivery
 - integrated processes
 - integrated strategy
 - effective inter-agency governance
 taking into account in each case statutory guidance issued under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004
- (ix) To ensure that all agencies work in accordance with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; protecting children from maltreatment and preventing the impairment of their health or development whilst at the same time ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and have opportunities for optimum life chances in order that they can enter adulthood successfully. (Draft Section 11 Guidance on Making Arrangements to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children)
- (x) To oversee the implementation of effective approaches to workforce development within services for children and young people, including appropriate links with higher education and skills training providers
- (xi) To consider and take into account, in relation to all its functions, any advice provided by the East Sussex Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
- (xii) To ensure appropriate links between the work of the Group and other key partnerships including Local Strategic Partnerships, Crime and Disorder Partnerships and others as appropriate

Membership

- ESCC Lead Member for Children's Services

- Director of Children's Services
- The Chief Executive of each of the Primary Care Trusts
- The Chief Executive of the East Sussex Hospitals Trust
- The Chief Executive of the East Sussex County Healthcare Trust
- Either the Chief Executive or Director of housing/leisure/community services of one of the five District and Boroughs in the county, taken in rotation.
- Chief Constable or his/her representative
- Headteacher representing the East Sussex Joint Strategic Education Management Board
- GP Chair or member of one of the Professional Executive Committees for the PCTs, taken on rotation
- Chief Executive, Sussex Connexions Partnership
- Chair or appropriate member or officer of the Sussex Learning and Skills Council
- A representative of the voluntary sector organisations working with children and young people
- Member of the East Sussex Strategic Partnership

Children and Young People's Stakeholder Forum

9. The role of the Forum will be to provide a vehicle for discussion among a wide group of stakeholders of key issues around the needs of children and young people in the county, priorities for development and key strategic directions. The Forum will have two meetings in the first year linked to the development and implementation of the Children and Young People's Plan:

Autumn: to review priorities for the next Children and Young People's Plan (or annual update), and key actions

Early Summer: to monitor progress in implementing the Plan and share thinking about emerging issues which may need to be addressed in the next Plan.

Age-related Groups

10. There will be three age-related groups:

- (i) A 0-5 Strategy Group, as proposed in the CYPSP 0-5 Strategy
- (ii) A 5-11 Strategy Group
- (iii) A Young People's Strategy Group (11-19 years) – a continuation of the Group established a year ago from the East Sussex Connexions Local Management Group

11. The terms of reference of groups (i) and (iii) have already been the subject of consultation and development (through the consultation on the draft CYPSP 0-5 Strategy and the work of the existing Young People's Strategy Group. Core elements for all the groups will be:

- (i) To review information about outcomes, and any trends, for children/young people in the relevant age range, across the county and in relation to different groups or areas of the county
- (ii) To identify priorities for strategic and service development which particularly affect the age range and which need to be addressed at a county level rather than an area or local Partnership level
- (iii) To recommend accordingly a programme of priority strategic or service development at county level as part of the annual review of the Children and Young People's Plan
- (iv) To contribute to the development of the overarching Children and Young People's Plan as it affects the age range
- (v) Where there are issues which affect particular areas of the county, to draw these to the attention of the area Children's Services Planning Groups
- (vi) To take decisions and/or make recommendations in relation to services for the age range, as required by the Children's Trust Executive Group
- (vii) To review the way in which users are involved in the development of services for the age range and make recommendations to service managers as appropriate

12. The membership of the groups will need to reflect the range of stakeholders with a key interest in the age range. The aim should be to bring together people with a real expertise in the needs of the age range.

Specialist Groups

13. The terms of reference and membership of specialist groups need to be considered on a case by case basis, taking into account the particular development needs in each case.

Area Children's Services Planning Groups

14. The existing area Children's Services Planning Groups have slightly varying terms of reference, which are quite broad. The members of the groups have indicated that they would welcome clarification of their role in the context of the development of Children's Trust arrangements. The following proposals will be discussed further with the members of the groups.

Terms of reference: possible core elements

- (i) To review information about outcomes for children and young people across the area, identify any significant patterns/trends, and take these into account in recommendations to the Children's Trust Executive Group, age-related or specialist groups, and in drawing up local action plans (see below)
- (ii) To identify priorities for strategic and service development which would benefit from action on an area rather than a county or partnership for children area basis, including action needed to implement county level strategies
- (iii) To agree an area based action plan accordingly, involving other relevant area based organisations/groups as appropriate (for example the 14-19 Travel to Learn groups)
- (iv) To contribute to the development of the overarching Children and Young People's Plan as it affects children and young people in the area
- (v) To review other plans for children and young people affecting the area, and contribute to their development as appropriate
- (vi) To take decisions and/or make recommendations in relation to service provision within the area, as required by the Children's Trust Executive Group. Where it supports agreed service development, this would include the development of pooled budgets and joint commissioning of services as appropriate. Early examples of recommendations which we plan to ask area CSPGs to make are recommendations in relation to the Children's Fund and the budgets and plans of integrated Children's Centres in the area
- (vii) To review the effectiveness of user involvement in strategic and service development across the area, and evidence about both user feedback about services, and the "reach" of services to different groups of users
- (viii) To ensure good communication about children's services developments with stakeholders across the area
- (ix) To make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children ensuring that all service developments consider how to protect children from harm and impairment of development whilst promoting safe and effective care with optimum life chances
- (x) To oversee development, and monitor implementation, of key action plans at Local Partnership for Children level

Core Membership

- ◆ Primary Care Trust Children's Lead
- ◆ Primary, secondary and special school representative
- ◆ Representative from the post 16 learning sector/LSC
- ◆ Operations Manager, children's social care
- ◆ Children's Services Department (CSD) Head of Service (representing the CSD Every Child Matters Priorities Group)
- ◆ Connexions Manager
- ◆ Representative of the relevant District and Borough housing and leisure departments, and community planning co-ordinators

- ◆ Children’s Centre Manager, representing 0-5 services for the area
- ◆ Voluntary sector representation

Local Partnerships for Children

Terms of reference: core elements

- (i) To review the needs of children and young people living or attending schools in the Partnership area
- (ii) To review and progressively reshape local provision and policies as appropriate in the light of those needs, taking into account strategic priorities for the children’s services planning area as a whole, including the need to enhance preventative services wherever possible
- (iii) To plan the development of extended school provision within the Partnership area
- (iv) To plan Children’s Centre provision within the Partnership area and ensure good links with services for older children
- (v) Subject to the outcome of the county pilot project, to oversee the operation of new ways of working in relation to the planning and coordination of support for individual children and young people (common assessment and lead professional roles)
- (vi) To contribute to area level strategic development by providing a perspective from the Partnership area about needs and priorities

Core members of Local Partnerships for Children

- ◆ Key school managers including staff in schools with responsibility for inclusion
- ◆ Manager(s) of Children’s Centres in the area
- ◆ Manager of the family support team (social care)
- ◆ SEN case worker
- ◆ Education Welfare Officer
- ◆ Educational Psychologist
- ◆ School nurse
- ◆ Local Health Visiting Manager
- ◆ The School Improvement Service contact adviser
- ◆ Others: voluntary sector, police, Youth Service

Elected Members’ Consultation Forum

15. The need for, and nature of, this Forum will be subject to further consideration, as noted above.

Illustration of the operation of the governance structure

16. It is difficult to communicate the different roles and responsibilities of groups within a governance structure, purely by setting out terms of reference. The following illustration is designed to show how the structure above might work, taking a specific issue as a “case study”.

Take up of nursery education places

17. High quality nursery education can make a real difference to the life chances of a child. It can help children arrive at school with:
 - Good confidence, sound self-esteem and some understanding of themselves
 - key communication skills
 - a readiness to take on responsibility for themselves
 - an understanding of the needs of others and the ability to relate reasonably to other children and adults
 - key building blocks of early learning which will help them make progress at school

18. A place in a nursery education setting is now available free to all children aged 3 and above. Many families take up this place; but in some areas, particularly some of the more deprived areas in the county, the take up of places is relatively low – as low as 60%. This means 40% of children could be arriving at school, therefore, without some or all of the above. The potentially long lasting impact on their development is significant.

19. Within the structure above we might see the following:
 - (i) Recommendation by the 0-5 strategy group of a county wide strategy for 0-5 year-olds which highlights the importance of promoting take up of nursery education places
 - (ii) Advice by the 0-5 strategy group on ways in which take up can be promoted effectively, looking at best practice here and elsewhere in the country
 - (iii) Analysis by the 0-5 strategy group of data on take up of places by area, and identification of an area which is doing less well relative to others
 - (iv) A recommendation by the 0-5 strategy group to the Children's Services Planning Group for that area that it addresses this issue, explores possible causes and develops an appropriate action plan
 - (v) Further analysis by the area planning group identifies two Local Partnership for Schools areas where the problem is particularly acute. Action is agreed both at an area level (for example the health visiting teams for the area agree actively to promote take up of nursery education places as part of their regular and targeted work with families across the whole area), and at LPC level (primary schools within the Partnership work together and with the Children's Centre in the area to develop user friendly advice materials which encourage families to take the issue seriously, and make it easy for them to find out about options and decide what is best for their child).
 - (vi) The area group monitors data on a regular basis, to establish the impact of measures taken

Responsibility of partner organisations to ensure appropriate understanding of the roles of different parts of the Children's Trust governance structure

20. It will be important that people who are members of groups within the Children's Trust governance structure understand their roles and the extent of their authority in relation to making commitments on behalf of their organisation. The County Council proposes to develop training for its staff in this respect and is keen to work with partners to develop and deliver this training on a multi-agency basis where appropriate.

Annex 2: CHILDREN'S SERVICES INTER-AGENCY GOVERNANCE: KEY FEATURES



