

Annex A

East Sussex

Early Success: A strategy for supporting young children aged 0-5 and their families

April 2005 – March 2007

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## Foreword by the Chair of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

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Ensuring that the very youngest children are cared for effectively, and supported in their development, has been a priority for children's services for a long time. Midwives and health visitors have a long tradition of supporting mothers, and increasingly fathers and other carers, in the earliest years of their children's lives, joined over the years by a range of specialist professionals. Over the last 10 years there has also been a very significant expansion in early years education provision for 3 and 4 year-olds so that now, in East Sussex, nursery education places are available for every three and four year-old whose parents would like them to attend. This expansion, and substantial investment in training for childcare workers and staff in Foundation Stage settings, has been overseen by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Recent years have also seen investment in "Sure Start" programmes providing integrated support programmes for children aged 0-3 and their families in targeted areas. For four and five year-olds, the development of the Foundation Stage has brought a new coherence to expectations around early education across pre school and school settings.

This strategy for the next two years builds on the longstanding commitment of many services to the well being of young children. It sets out our key outcomes for children aged 0-5 which we are seeking to achieve, based on the outcome targets in the Children Act 2004 and the specific headline actions we will take over the next two years and our milestone targets for this period. This includes a new framework for integrating the planning and delivery of high quality local services, which places the needs of young children and their families at their heart.

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# 1. Our aims for all young children in East Sussex

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Our aims for young children reflect the target outcomes for all children set out in the Children Act 2004: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, economic well being and making a positive contribution. On the basis of these target outcomes, our particular aims for children aged 0-5 are set out in the box below.

## Young children in East Sussex should:

- be protected at all times from harm, both accidental and deliberate
- from the moment of birth have the opportunity to develop to their full potential, physically, emotionally and mentally
- have happy and creative early education experiences which give them opportunities to:
  - enjoy and succeed in their learning journey, experiencing a curriculum which is broad, balanced and well resourced
  - communicate verbally and interact with other children and adults
  - develop the skills and understanding they will need to contribute well to their local communities (including moral awareness and a sense of responsibility for their actions)
- be free from poverty, with their families or carers able to meet their material needs and, wherever possible, be economically self-sufficient
- develop confidence and high self-esteem from their earliest days, through secure attachment to, and effective, stable care from, the key adults in their lives, including their fathers
- have any special needs, educational or otherwise, identified as early as possible, and receive effective, coordinated support provided from the earliest possible date in a way which empowers and supports their families and carers

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## 2. Strategy priorities for April 2005 – March 2007

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### A headline list of the priorities for April 2005 – March 2006:

- Provide tools for staff working in all services and settings to help them with early identification and coordination of support for young children experiencing difficulties
  - Ensure that a robust Child Health Promotion Programme is in place that is personalised and works in partnership with parents and other agencies
  - Evaluate and develop the care coordination scheme for young disabled children and those with long term conditions or life threatening illness
  - Increase the take up of early years education in our most deprived wards
  - 'Knowing our settings well' – Establish a supported system of self-review of early years settings to ensure continuous improvements
  - Create more childcare places for 0-5 year-olds particularly in more deprived wards
  - Draw up and implement an integrated workforce development strategy for staff working with 0-5 year-olds
  - Provide accessible information and advice to all parents and carers about how to support their children's development through attachment, communication, play and in other ways
  - Improve information about what support for parents and carers is available locally, for example parenting programmes (linked to the implementation of our separate Family Support Strategy)
  - Establish 10 integrated Children's Centres by March 2006 and draw up plans for a further 18 Centres to be developed by March 2008
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### 3. Principles for the way services and support are provided to young children and their families

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The way in which services are provided is as important as what services are provided. The box below sets out some principles which we aim to follow in all the services we provide. These are adopted from national guidance.

#### 1. Working with parents and children

Every family should get access to a range of services that will deliver better outcomes for both children and parents, meeting their needs and stretching their aspirations.

#### 2. Services for everyone

Access to a universal but not uniform service that is adaptable to meet the needs of individual children and their families. Families have distinctly different needs, both between different families, in different locations and across time in the same family. Services should recognise and respond to these varying needs and empower parents to make healthy lifestyle choices for themselves and their families.

#### 3. Flexible at point of delivery

All services should be designed to encourage access. For example, opening hours, location, transport issues and care for other children in the family need to be considered. Where possible we must enable families to get the health and family support services they need through a single point of contact and within the community in which they live.

#### 4. Starting very early

Services for young children and parents should start at the first antenatal visit. This means not only advice on health in pregnancy, but preparation for parenthood, decisions about returning to work (or indeed, starting to work) after the birth, advice on childcare options and on support services available.

#### 5. Respectful and transparent

Services should be customer/parental driven. We aim to empower parents, encouraging them to recognise their many strengths and be actively involved in ensuring that services are delivered in a user friendly way.

#### 6. Community driven and professionally coordinated

All professionals with an interest in children and families should be sharing expertise and listening to local people on service priorities. This should be done through consultation and by day to day listening to parents.

#### 7. Outcome driven

All services for children and parents need to have as their core purpose better outcomes for children.

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## 4. Implementing the strategy headline actions

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### **(a) Provide tools for all staff working with 0-5 year-olds to help early identification of problems and coordination of support**

Identifying any difficulties a child has early, and intervening effectively so that problems are resolved and do not get worse, is essential. Identification of particular needs a young child may have is currently done through a combination of processes, some universal and some specialist. Self-referral or identification by families is also very important. Key assessment processes include:

- Assessment at time of birth
- Assessment by midwives and health visitors through regular health reviews that could include other disciplines, for example therapists
- Assessment by the Early Years SEN team and the Sensory Impaired Support Service
- Identification of needs by pre-school Foundation Stage settings, supported by the Area Inclusion Coordinator

East Sussex is one of 10 national “trail blazer” areas for Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA). Through this project we have developed a number of new tools for all staff working with children and young people including:

- an age-related “development profile” indicating the key characteristics of a thriving child at different ages, including 0-5
- user friendly guidance on when and how information about a child should be shared between professionals and requirements in relation to consent from families for information sharing
- a secure electronic Children Index, holding information about which staff are working with individual children, to help ensure effective coordination

Many people working with children aged 0-5 have already been trained in the use of these tools. Over the next two years we will roll out this training to as many people as possible. We will establish protocols for information sharing with the private, voluntary and independent sector which will enable key staff from

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these Pre-school Foundation Stage settings to access the Children Index. Staff working with young children will be involved in the development of new arrangements for assessment and action planning. This is known as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and includes the definition of a “lead professional” role to improve coordination and communication.

By March 2007 our aim is that all teams and settings working with children aged 0-5 will have at least one member of staff trained in the use of early identification, information sharing and coordination tools, including CAF, so that our expected model of practice for helping children who need targeted support is understood across all services and settings.

**(b) Ensure that a robust Child Health Promotion Programme is in place that is personalised and works in partnership with parents and other agencies.**

Breastfed infants are five times less likely to be admitted to hospital with common infections such as gastro-enteritis during their first year of life and in later childhood are at a reduced risk of childhood obesity and developing insulin-dependent diabetes. We want to encourage the up take of breastfeeding by ensuring parents have information about how to breastfeed and the benefits of breast-milk. Evidence shows that increasing support to mothers in the early stages through peer support programmes, para-professionals and health professionals has a positive impact on breastfeeding duration.

Nutrition is a key component of a healthy start in life. Poor diet and inactivity in childhood are associated with an increased risk of overweight and obesity in later life. We want to encourage children from an early age to sample a broad range of healthy foods, for example within crèches or nurseries in order to influence their healthy development. We want all parents to have access to clear and consistent information about nutrition and healthy eating with a range of locally accessible initiatives that will make having access to this information easier. For example local food co-ops and fruit and vegetable stalls, cooking groups,

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community cafes all offer parents the opportunity to discuss diet and nutrition and to learn additional skills.

Life has become increasingly sedentary. The health benefits of exercise are widely documented yet the majority of people in England remain inactive. We want to encourage parents and children – in particularly our youngest children – to become involved in regular ‘fun’ activities to improve their lifestyle for the future. We want to encourage affordable activities within the community in which parents live, to explore the use of group play activities and to provide activities solely for the parents themselves in order to address not only their physical activity but their mental and social well-being.

We want to be sure that from the moment of birth all children have the opportunity to develop to their full potential physically, emotionally and mentally. The Child Health Promotion Programme should be flexible in its approach and targeted to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our society including those from excluded and disadvantaged groups and teenage parents.

The Child Health Promotion Programme includes:

- the assessment of the child’s and family’s needs
- health promotion
- childhood screening
- immunisation
- early interventions to address identified needs
- safeguarding children from harm

Midwives and health visiting teams are in a prime position to support the delivery of such a programme but, by working with other partner agencies in a more integrated way, will be able to deliver a programme based on what people need and the skills and resources required.

Parents value individual contact with a health professional when they feel the need to express and clarify concerns about their child and/or access the most effective expertise. We want to be able to offer all parents health information about their child’s health and development from preconception onwards and to provide access to services that will strengthen early intervention,

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enabling children to receive help at the onset of problems thus reducing the prevalence of, for example, language delay, sleep, eating and behavioural issues.

We want to enable parents with concerns about their child to locate the help they need promptly and efficiently.

The health of parents is an important factor in being able to support the child. Support for the mother, who may be suffering from postnatal depression, is an important consideration. We will ensure that there is adequate support to meet their needs.

### **(c) Develop and evaluate the care co-ordination scheme for young disabled children**

Research on the needs of families of disabled children finds that they report a consistent set of problems. They describe a constant struggle to find out what services are available and about the roles of different agencies and different professionals. One of the consistent recommendations is that families would value a key worker to provide a single point of contact to guide

them through their relationships with services. The provision of such a service for families has been recommended in a number of policy statements and guidance, including 'Together from the Start' (DfES 2002), the National Service Framework for Children (2004) and the report of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 'Improving the Life Chances of the Disabled People' (January 2005).

Following a successful bid to the DfES Early Support Programme, East Sussex is now a pathfinder in Phase 3 (2004-2006). A Key Working Project Co-ordinator has been appointed supported by two Disabled Children's Care Co-ordinators from Health Visiting/Paediatric nursing backgrounds. The aim of the project is to enhance the provision of early support services to families of severely disabled children from birth to third birthday through better co-ordination of services. At an early stage, parents of a disabled child are given the opportunity of a key worker to help co-ordinate hospital appointments and support their involvement in the assessment process. The key worker will provide a main point of contact, passing on information to the family about local services and introducing the Early Support materials. It is hoped that better co-ordination across services will reduce the number of

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parallel assessments families have to undergo, avoid duplication of activity, reduce parental stress and help establish positive relationships between families and agencies.

Alongside the project steering group, East and West implementation groups have been set up to oversee the scheme. A formal launch took place for managers in October 2004 and a further event for parents, carers and front line professionals in March 2005. Training in the use of the Early Support materials has been provided across the county facilitated by the Early Support Director of Training. As of 31 March 2005, 31 children and families were being supported by a key worker and 16 professionals from a mix of health, education and social care backgrounds were undertaking key working alongside their normal duties. Feedback from families so far has been very positive. A national evaluation of the programme led by the University of Manchester has begun.

Our target is that by March 2006 families of at least 45 children with severe and complex disabilities aged between birth and third birthday will be provided with an Early Support Family Pack and will also be offered the support of a trained key worker to help co-ordinate their assessment and Family Service Plan.

In 2006 the Early Support Scheme will be extended to 0-5 year olds in line with Government guidance. This will be achieved across East Sussex by March 2007.

**(d) Increase the take up of Foundation Stage education in our most deprived wards**

In 2003 the County Council carried out a Best Value review of levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (7 year-olds) across the county. This demonstrated clearly the beneficial impact that high quality Pre-school Foundation Stage education has on the progress children make by the age of seven. If we are to improve life chances for children in our most deprived areas we

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must ensure that parents and carers recognise the benefits of early years education and understand how to take up the free places which are now available for all 3 and 4 year-olds across the county.

To encourage greater take up in areas where take up is relatively low we will:

- Provide information sessions to parents in all Children's Centres, with a particularly proactive approach to marketing opportunities in areas where take up is low.
- Provide annually to all households across East Sussex core information on childcare and Nursery Education Grant opportunities.
- Continue to monitor take up and support the creation of new provision to meet demand.
- Provide support to childminding networks to provide choice for parents on alternative nursery education experience.
- Provide specific support to children in need to access Pre-school Foundation Stage educational opportunities.

Our target is that by March 2007 the take up by eligible 3 year olds of Nursery Education Grant in each ward in East Sussex should be at least 85%.

**(e) 'Knowing our settings well' – Establish a supported system of self-review of early years settings to ensure continuous improvements**

East Sussex is currently involved in a major piece of research, undertaken by the Institute of Education, designed to promote improvements within our pre-school Foundation Stage setting - London University's Effective Provision in Pre-school Education (EPPE) project. This East Sussex work is recognised nationally and internationally as an exciting and innovative way of attempting to improve quality in pre-school Foundation Stage settings.

East Sussex support services have already delivered the Foundation Stage across the county. The findings will be used to inform the support and training offered to settings in order to improve quality. Although the research is not finished it has

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already given enriched information about our setting and the kind and level of support we need to offer.

It has led to the development of a task group who will be devising a quality assurance scheme designed specifically for East Sussex. In addition, new inseting training is being piloted together with self-assessment procedures in order to determine whether this approach will serve to help practitioners to make developments and improvements for themselves.

More in-depth information will be available early next year and all of the findings will be disseminated to colleagues at that time. In relation to our Children's Centres, the research will inform developments and improvements so that these Centres can offer the very best of provision. Each of the Centres will have the benefit of a qualified teacher as part of the in-house team and will also benefit from working closely with East Sussex's existing early years support services.

The research study will provide us with the evidence we need in order to establish a baseline for quality across East Sussex and allow us to measure any improvements.

All primary school leaders in East Sussex schools use the East Sussex moderated school self-review (MSSR) to demonstrate how well they know their school and to demonstrate areas for school improvement. Judgements are moderated by the School Improvement Service (SIS) and lead to monitoring, challenge, intervention and support in inverse proportion to success. This quality assurance measure includes judgement of reception classes and maintained nursery classes.

From January 2005 all school leadership teams will complete the OfSTED school evidence form (SEF) to record judgements and demonstrate the clarity of their self-evaluation. The School Improvement Service will make the appropriate links between the MSSR and SEF processes consistent with the DfES KEEP scheme. The School Improvement Service will make the appropriate links between the MSSR and SEF processes to

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ensure the system is accessible to all Pre School and Foundation Stage school settings.

By March 2006 our target is that all early years settings will use agreed self-evaluation methods and these will form the basis for intervention and support; as a result of which all early years settings will be judged to be good or better in the same proportions as national comparative data.

**(f) Create more childcare places for 0-5 year-olds**

Between 2001 – 2004 we have successfully narrowed the ‘gap’ between the number of places available in more affluent areas and the number in deprived areas from 6.71 in April 2001 to 2.39 in March 2004, but there is more work to do. The Childcare Places Plan describes the current aim to reduce the ‘gap’ to 0 by March 2006.

The supply of childcare is important because the chance to enter employment or training may make a significant difference to the economic well being of a family and child. The highest demand for childcare across the county is in Eastbourne and Wealden where there is the highest economic activity.

To increase the supply of places for children aged 0-5 we will:

- By March 2006 create 1079 new childcare places with group care providers for children aged 0-5 years including 214 places within Children’s Centres.
- By March 2006 create 272 new childcare places with childminders for children aged 0-5 years.
- implement the childminding sustainability scheme of mentor support
- provide business advice and training to support the sustainability of childcare provision

Our target is that by March 2007 we will have increased the supply of childcare places for 0-5 year-olds by a further 4%.

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### **(g) Developing a workforce strategy for staff working with young children**

Training has been an important part of the work of the Early Years Development and Childcare Team for a number of years, and there are targets for the county to meet in relation, for example, to the qualification of childcare workers to meet the qualification requirements of the National Day Care Standards and as part of expectations associated with the General Sure Start Grant. In April 2005 the childcare workforce for children 0-5 years was 3872, of whom 3212 were within Foundation Stage settings.

In addition, we need to ensure that staff working with 0-5 year-olds are fully included in the developments associated with the "Every Child Matters" agenda. The Early Years workforce is integral to the new DfES Workforce Strategy and common core prospectus for developing skills and knowledge. This includes, for example, a focus on supporting parents and carers, transition and communication with children and families.

As part of its strategic plan for 2005-2006 the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is developing an East Sussex workforce development strategy linked to the common core skills. In 2005/6 we will develop an integrated workforce development strategy for services for 0-5 year-olds. This will link training in common core skills with training related to the "Birth to three matters" programme and qualification training for practitioners in early years and childcare settings.

By March 2007 our target is to have developed a comprehensive strategy. This strategy will include targets to:

- ensure 50% of all staff working with children 0-5 years should hold a minimum of a Level 2 qualification
  - all those 'leading' a setting should have a minimum Level 3 qualification and steps towards the new Level 4 qualifications.
  - During 2005-06 and 2006-07 each practitioner will receive a minimum of 4 days' training and development.
  - Each year six sessions of training will be offered per term to the 'Birth to Three matters' framework. This will reach a total of 720 practitioners.
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**(h) Provide accessible information and advice to all parents and carers about how to support their children's development through play and in other ways**

Opportunity for play is essential for all young children. It is through play that children develop an understanding of themselves and others, and a range of vitally important skills. Parents and carers can make a huge difference to the way children learn through play by providing appropriate experiences, and by prompting and stimulating their children.

The Playlink Service currently provides a range of support for parents and carers in developing their children's play, from advice and information packs to group work to intensive one-to-one support. Evaluation evidence suggests that support from the Playlink Service makes a significant difference to children's progress at school and their general well being. The service is currently funded from the Council's budget for discretionary services on which there is severe pressure; a Forum has been

established to consider options for continuing the service beyond the current funding period, which ends in March 2006.

Play support is expected to be part of the programme of services which the Children's Centres will provide. We will explore ways of making the support and advice which the Playlink Service has put together accessible to a wider number of parents, using a range of media. We will ensure that consistent messages about play and how they can help are given to parents and carers by all staff working with 0-5 year-olds.

Bookstart is a national scheme offering free books to children and advice to their parents on sharing books with children from a very early age.

Bookstart initially focussed on Books for Babies. At their baby's 7-9 month assessment, parents in East Sussex are given a Bookstart pack. This includes free books, information about local library activities and services, advice on sharing books and a Nursery Rhymes Place Mat.

The scheme has recently been expanded to include Bookstart Plus (18 - 30 months) and Treasure Box (36-48 months). From

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April 2005 the Library Service will promote sharing books with all young children in East Sussex through the extended Bookstart scheme.

Play is important to all children, and toys are a major element in helping to play and learn. A toy library provides a local community resource for play which may include equipment, toys for loan, dedicated space and skilled staff. Toy libraries welcome children, their families and caregivers to come and to borrow well-designed toys, games, puzzles and equipment, which are made available at minimal cost.

Through 2005/2006 a review of East Sussex toy libraries will take place and plans put in place to ensure that toy libraries reach all children living in deprived communities as part of the expansion of Children's Centres.

By March 2007 our target is that accessible information and advice on play and child development will be available to all parents and carers in East Sussex, with a range of information and training available to all staff.

Throughout 2006 to 2008 Library Services will deliver Bookstart (0-8 months); Bookstart Plus (18-30 months) and Treasure Box (36-48 months) programmes to all children across East Sussex.

By March 2007 the use of Toy Libraries to support families and carers with suitable resources will be reviewed to promote greater access in areas of disadvantage.

**(i) Improve information about what parent and carer support is available locally**

Parenthood presents parents with challenges that they are often unprepared for, yet parental behaviour is the most powerful and

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potentially alterable influence on child health during pregnancy and the early years of a child's life, and has a crucial impact on the life chances of each individual and on adult life. The role of fathers in parenting their children is frequently overlooked but we know that fathers' involvement in their child's life can significantly promote their child's development.

Experience in early life – and before birth – has a crucial impact on the life chances of each individual and on adult life. Good parenting provides children with the best possible start in life, improves their health, schooling, prospects in later life and reduces the risk of serious social problems. For all children, but especially the youngest, effective support for families can be essential to give them the best start in life. This can take different forms, from a “drop in” group focusing on children's play, parenting or carers' own emotional well being, to intensive individual or group support, including specialist support.

The CYPSP Family Support Strategy aims to develop increasingly integrated, coordinated local programmes of family support for families of children and young people of all ages. The

support for families with young children provided by Children's Centres and other early years settings will be key features.

As part of this Early Years strategy, all Foundation Stage education settings will be required to signpost local family support programmes. As an additional condition of receiving Nursery Education Grant, Foundation Stage providers as well as schools will be expected to collaborate in the provision of parent information sessions on general parenting issues.

Accessible, up to date information is vital for parents. As part of this strategy, the children's and families information service for East Sussex, KITES, will have a presence in each Children's Centre and lead work on accessible local information. In addition the KITES quarterly parental survey will be expanded and through early years settings we will carry out sample surveys of parents and carers on an annual basis to establish the level of awareness of what support is available, how useful it is, how to access it, and how to contribute to local programmes as a volunteer.

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By March 2007 we aim to see a steady increase in levels of awareness of how to access, and contribute to, local support among parents and carers.

By March 2006 KITES will provide an information outlet and outreach activity from the 10 first phases Children's Centres.

### **(j) Establish 10 integrated Children's Centres**

#### **Children's Centres**

The Government intends that the provision of good quality integrated services should have a broad and lasting impact on children, their parents and the wider community. Children's Centres are an important component in making this a reality in East Sussex, ensuring the best start in life for every child, better opportunities for parents, affordable, good quality childcare, and stronger, safer communities.

Building on previous initiatives such as Sure Start Local Programmes, the Children's Centre programme is based on the concept that providing integrated education, care, family support and health services is a key factor in determining good outcomes for children and their parents. Children's Centres are about developing existing good practice, rather than starting afresh.

#### **Roll-Out of Children's Centres**

The Children's Centre programme is being rolled out in three phases, the Government's long-term aspiration being that all children will have access to Children's Centre services by 2010. The Government's target for East Sussex in phase one (2004-2006) is to reach 3,205 children, (of whom 1,329 children will be in areas of rural deprivation) with a childcare target of 214. The second phase of Children's Centres will take place between 2006-2008 with a target 'reach' of an additional 14,789 children.

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The third phase will reach all the remaining children living in East Sussex.

As the programme extends to areas of lower social deprivation and relative affluence, the Government expects that Children's Centres should develop a "graduated model" for the delivery of services. Further guidance is expected on what this means, but the diagram in Annex 2 gives some indication of what a graduated model might look like.

### **East Sussex's Vision for Children's Centres**

Children's Centres provide an opportunity to integrate the broader early years agenda on a multi-agency basis across East Sussex. Whilst Children's Centre programmes are required to meet the DfES targets (Annex 2) they provide a framework for integrating the planning and delivery of services for children aged 0-5 years and their families.

Children's Centres will become the planning framework and hub of services for families with children aged 0-5 in their programme areas. Where appropriate, these programme areas will be coterminous with the Local Partnerships for Children areas. A range of services will be provided to meet these needs both in the main centre, in families' homes and other locations within the community as appropriate. Strong links with other services within the community will be developed. As families may have children of a range of ages, and as the young children grow up, it is essential that there are good links with local schools, general practice, voluntary and community sector services.

### **Progress to Date Phase One 2004-2006**

The target reach for the first phase of the programme is 3,205 children, of whom 1,329 children live in rural communities. There was an additional target to create 214 full day care places. In

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order to achieve these targets there will be ten designated<sup>1</sup> Children's Centres by March 2006. Sure Start Local Programmes are developing into eight of the ten Children's Centres in this phase. Two other Children's Centre programmes have been developed within the first phase, one reaching children living in rural communities and a mainstreaming pilot based in Hollington, Hastings. Table 1 in Annex 2 summarises the progress to date.

### **What do we plan to do next?**

The targets for the second phase of Children's Centres is eighteen new Centre hubs by March 2008, with an additional 14,789 children. There is no target for the creation of childcare places within the second phase of Children's Centres, childcare needs will be assessed and plans drawn up to meet the particular needs of the local community. This work will be led by the ESCC Early Years Team.

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<sup>1</sup> To be 'designated' the full core offer must be available, including the provision of childcare facilities led by a QTS.

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### **Challenges**

There are several issues which will form some of the key development work in the move towards universal Children's Centres. The key themes of work include:

- a) Identifying the programme areas;
- b) Financial modelling for the revenue budget;
- c) Capital strategy;
- d) Developing an East Sussex model for the graduated core offer; and
- e) Involving Partners.

### **Governance of Children's Centres**

The Children's Centres will need new governance arrangements which reflect both the accountability resting with the County Council, expectations around partnership working with other agencies, and the vital role of local families in shaping the support which the Centres provide. The proposed arrangements are set out in the following section.

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By March 2006 our target is that all ten Children's Centre bases in the initial phase will achieve designation status delivering integrated services to a high standard, with positive evaluation by users and other stakeholders

By March 2006 the second phase strategy for Children's Centres in East Sussex will be in place. This will include:

- The identified programme areas;
- Agreement on the 18 new Children's Centre bases;
- A 'graduated model' for each aspect of the core offer; and
- The equitable allocation of resources.

By March 2007 the second wave implementation will be underway with a clear strategy for 2008 – 2010.

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## 5. Developing a new framework for services for 0-5 year-olds

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### **The East Sussex Context: Future planning arrangements for 0-5 year-olds: Children's Trust arrangements**

Over the next year and beyond the County Council proposes to work with partners to create effective Children's Trust arrangements in order to discharge its duty to establish arrangements for promoting cooperation in relation to children's services. (For more information about the proposed approach to creating Trust arrangements consultation see document 'Every Child Matters in East Sussex' published in May 2005 and available at [www.escc.gov.uk](http://www.escc.gov.uk)). The diversity of the county means that integrated planning needs to operate at three levels:

- At a strategic, countywide level – [Children's Trust Executive Group \(CTEG\) and age-related strategy groups](#)
- At area level (using the PCT boundaries) – [Area Children's Services Planning Groups](#)
- At a local level – [Local Partnerships for Children](#)

### **County wide level:**

The proposals for Children's Trust arrangements include the establishment of a new Children's Trust Executive Group, supported by three age-related strategy groups for the 0-5, 5-13 and 13-19 age range. The current Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board will become a large stakeholder forum, meeting twice a year. The CTEG will have a broad remit, driving integration and effective joint planning and commissioning across all children's services in the county. The role of the proposed 0-5 Strategy Group is considered below.

### **Area level: Children's Services Planning Groups**

In 2003 Children's Services Planning Groups were established covering the areas of each of the four NHS Primary Care Trusts in East Sussex. These areas were chosen because they were the operational units for both health services and social services, following a refocusing of children and families social work teams by the County Council. The role of the groups is to coordinate the planning of services across their areas, with the aim of integrating service delivery where appropriate and ensuring the optimum use of resources. They operate within the framework of the strategic

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plan agreed for county-wide children’s services through the East Sussex children’s services planning mechanisms, but also ensure effective links with the development and implementation of local Community Strategies reflecting the particular needs of local areas. Specific tasks currently being undertaken by the planning groups include the development of integrated family support programmes and, recently, the development of Local Partnerships for Children. The area groups both implement and contribute actively to the development of strategy for children’s services in East Sussex, and are at the heart of the local implementation of the Government’s “Change for Children Programme”.

**Planning at local level: Local Partnerships for Children**

Local Partnerships for Children (LPCs) consist of groups of schools – typically one or two secondary schools and their feeder schools – key professionals from health and East Sussex County Council children’s services (education and social care) and other partners such as the Police and the voluntary sector, working together to develop services for children. Following extensive consultation, 22 Local Partnerships for Children have been

agreed across the county. Where a Children’s Centre exists in an LPC area, the Centre manager will be part of the core LPC strategy group. The LPC will plan the delivery of services to meet identified needs in the LPC area. This may involve pooling resources to make the best use of what is available, and avoid gaps and overlap.

**Integrated Planning for 0-5s across East Sussex**

**How 0-5 year-olds’ services are planned now**

It is vital that we give our young children the very best chances to be happy and well cared for within loving, successful families. In order to do this all the services for pre-school need to work together to support children and their families. There are already many good examples of integrated service planning and delivery for young children and families. Overall, however, there are no mechanisms which ensure systematic joint planning of services for 0-5 year-olds at county and local level. This section sets out proposals for new planning arrangements and the context for the wider proposal for Children’s Trust arrangements.

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## **Current arrangements**

Presently the strategic planning mechanisms for early years are varied:

1. The Sure Start Partnership Boards are responsible for the development and delivery of services within the Sure Start local programme areas.
2. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership is currently responsible for overall early years and childcare planning (for children aged 0-13 years) excluding the Sure Start and Children's Centres.
3. The Children's Centre Planning Group was set up to identify the first round of the Children's Centre programmes in East Sussex.
4. The ESCC Education Early Years Strategy Group has been a forum to join up ESCC services.

The arrangements set out in the section below are designed to unify the planning and accountability arrangements within a Children's Trust structure. They are also designed to recognise

the new accountability which the Children's Services Authority has for all Children's Centres.

## **Future planning and governance arrangements for 0-5 year-olds**

The proposed arrangements for planning services for 0-5 year-olds within the Children's Trust will operate at three levels:

- At a strategic, county-wide level in the 0-5 Strategy Group
- At an area level (using PCT boundaries) in the four local 0-5 Reference Groups attached to the CSPGs
- At a programme level (in the long term, at LPC area) through Local Advisory Groups

These planning mechanisms are intended to facilitate inter-agency working, partnership with parents and other stakeholders, while ensuring that the County Council is able to fulfil its responsibility as the accountable body for the Children's Centres.

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### **Countywide 0-5 Strategy Group**

As part of the proposed Children's Trust arrangements for East Sussex, a 0-5 Strategy Group will be established under the overall direction of the CTEG. The timing of this will depend on the outcome of consultation on the overarching Children's Trust arrangements. However, 'shadow' group meetings will take place in July 2005.

The 0-5 Strategy Group will be responsible for advising the CTEG on all issues affecting children aged 0-5 and their families including childcare, early education, health services, family support and economic well being (including workforce development, training and employment advice provided through Children's Centres). The membership of the new group will reflect the full range of its responsibilities.

### **Area level Early Years Reference Groups**

We propose that each area CSPG should identify a reference group specifically for services for children aged 0-5, which should advise the planning group on planning for this age range. These area level 0-5 sub-groups will replace the current local EYDCP

Community Partnerships and the Sure Start Partnership Boards, with membership being reviewed in each case. Ways of strengthening the voice of service users will be considered as part of this.

This will allow each planning group to take a strategic view of the relative needs of different communities within their areas, including those served by Children's Centres. It will also locate plans for Children's Centres clearly within broader plans for developing integrated support for children and families in their areas.

### **Planning at local level – Local Advisory Groups**

The Sure Start local programmes have shown the benefits of planning integrated services with the close involvement of local communities. After consultation with the Programme Boards and parents groups, we are proposing to set up Local Advisory Groups to support Children's Centres in place of the current Sure Start Partnership Boards.

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The Local Advisory Groups will play a key role in providing a regular forum within which parents, service providers and other relevant community stakeholders can meet and share views about the way services are provided by the Children's Centre programmes. Through the Programme Manager, they will provide regular feedback to the Area Children's Services Planning Group about the delivery of the Children's Centre core offer and, where appropriate, provide recommendations about providing additional local provision which would reflect particular local needs. The Local Advisory Group would champion local community needs particularly in relation to under 5s services but also in ensuring the Children's Centre becomes the focal point for local services being delivered within the community it serves.

The manager of the Children's Centre programme will have a responsibility to facilitate the integration of services, not just within the plans and budget of the Children's Centre but across the programme area as a whole, so that the benefits of coordinated delivery are extended to the whole area. As and when further Children's Centres are established, we hope through the coordination capacity they provide to extend this closer

integration to other partnership areas. Each programme will update its Delivery Plan annually to reflect the wider integrated planning within the area.

The roll-out of Children's Centres provides the opportunity to reconfigure the programme areas in line with the Local Partnerships for Children. In the longer term, therefore, Local Advisory Groups could constitute the forum for 0-5 issues within each LPC, led by the Children's Centres Programme Manager.

# Summary of 0-5 support services Governance Arrangements

