Integrated working

Children's Workforce Development Council

Setting up multi-agency services

Toolkit for managers

Supported by

department for children, schools and families

Multi-agency services: A toolkit for managers

Contents list

Introduction

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is for professionals who have had experience as managers and leaders in their home agencies, and who are now taking on the development and delivery of integrated working. This could be as the manager of a multi-agency panel, a multi-agency team, an integrated service or as the lead professional coordinating a Team Around the Child (TAC).[1]

Heading a multi-agency panel, team or service is a complex task that goes beyond traditional notions of leadership and management.

The manager is responsible for bringing together practitioners from a range of different backgrounds to achieve results for children and young people that could not have been achieved by any one of the agencies acting alone.

In the terminology of management, this outcome is known as '**collaborative advantage**'. The pitfall to watch out for is 'collaborative inertia', in which the process of integration actually gets in the way of effective service delivery, leading to negligible outputs and slow progress.

There are many things that managers can do, and skills they can draw on to achieve 'collaborative advantage'. These are described in the document Championing Children, which provides detailed information about the shared set of skills, knowledge and behaviours for people leading and managing integrated children's services.

What does it contain?

This toolkit has information on some of the key activities you are likely to undertake when setting up and managing a multi-agency team. Click on the topics below to find out more.

Leading and managing change: theory and practice to help people adapt to new multi-agency settings.

Getting strategic partners on board: gaining strategic commitment, putting governance arrangements and partnership agreements in place.

Building the work group: finding the right people, bringing them on board, sorting out workforce issues and developing a sense of team identity.

Systems and processes: workplace policies, performance monitoring and evaluation, information governance.

[1] Also known as a Team Around the Young Person (TAYP).

Introduction

Where multi-agency approaches are already working

1. CWDC Share! is an emerging practice project from the Children's Workforce Development Council which has been developed to discover real life integrated working stories which can be accessed by the wider children's workforce.

Each Share! project demonstrates how integrated working can really help improve the lives of children, young people and families. It also outlines the issues and barriers that organisations encounter and overcome in implementing integrated working, many dealing with challenges faced setting up multi-agency teams.
Visit www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/cwdc-share

New research on the team around the child

In addition, in 2009 CWDC completed some research in to the Team Around the Child model of multi-agency working and looked at how a number of local areas are using the resource. To view this research and a number of detailed case studies visit www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/multi-agency/team-around-the-child

2. Schools-based multi-disciplinary team Describes two multi-disciplinary panels established through Camden's children's fund, working in two primary schools in the borough.

3. Multi-agency working: behaviour and education support teams Sets out the multi-agency model established to support 18 schools in Sunderland.

4. Setting up a children's centre Outlines the development phase of Sutton Hill children's centre in Telford and Wrekin, situated in one of the country's most deprived wards.

Leading and managing change

"The role has offered opportunities to help others to think 'outside the box,' to be less institutional and consider children's needs more holistically."

Manager quoted in survey of behaviour and education support teams (BESTs)

As a manager of a multi-agency setting, you are at the heart of improving services for children, and at the forefront of developments in leadership practice. You are, and need to be supported as, a pioneer of responsive, customer-led, joined-up working. Much of this work will involve breaking down boundaries and challenging the status quo.

Managers in multi-agency settings say some of the most common challenges they face are:

- Helping people perceive their role in terms of outcomes rather than their professional backgrounds.
- Helping practitioners reinterpret their professional role and adapt to changed expectations about how professionals should operate in a group.
- Managing the concerns of professionals who may be worried that parts of their job can be done by staff who do not share their qualifications.
- Managing the anxiety of unqualified support workers concerned their skills will be ignored by professionally qualified colleagues.
- Positioning the team so it can act as a catalyst for systemic change where necessary.
- Overcoming cultural and practice barriers to achieve common goals and maximum productivity.
- Overcoming practitioners' reluctance to 'step out of the box' and work in new and flexible ways.

In addition, there can be specific challenges for managers of multi-agency panels where team members are seconded on a part-time basis:

- Professional conflict and boundary issues that can arise if people only work to the agenda of their home agency.
- Lack of support for individuals from their managers in their home agency, particularly with regard to new ways of working.
- Helping practitioners maintain realistic caseloads, particularly when they are still carrying out statutory work in their home agencies.
- Managing distinct working practices, including when and how to intervene.

Leading and managing change

“When people join the team I have to help them remove their professional badges and to identify as a member of this team, working to a common goal.”

Manager, BEST

All these challenges relate to the need for changes in professional practice, identities and relationships. This section has information on some theoretical and practical aspects of managing change:

- Setting and communicating a vision.
- Organisational culture.
- How people respond to change.
- Advice on managing change.

Case study

Making the change to multi-agency working

Click here to read about the change management process adopted in Surrey for HOPE – an integrated service which supports 11- to 18-year-olds with severe mental health, behavioural, emotional and relationship difficulties.

Leading and managing change

Setting and communicating a vision

Developing a vision for your service is a vital starting point for leaders of integrated working. It is a useful unifying force, focusing people on why they are there and helping to inspire and motivate them.

Communicating a vision effectively involves encapsulating it in a broad statement that defines what your team or local area wants to achieve. A vision for services working in this area is likely to be framed in relation to the five outcomes for children and young people outlined in Every Child Matters (ECM). ECM will already provide an organising framework for local work and a shared goal all individual agencies working with children can subscribe to.

A vision gives you a firm base to build and develop your service on. It also provides a context for dealing with the inevitable differences and conflicts that emerge when people from different backgrounds are brought together. Research has shown that the majority of difficulties experienced in multi-agency working can be traced back to a lack of clarity about vision and purpose.

Principles for successfully communicating a vision

John Kotter, a leading change management theorist, recommends following these key principles when setting a vision:

- Keep it simple.
- Use metaphors, analogies and examples.
- Use many different forums.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat.
- Walk the walk (lead by example).
- Explicitly address apparent inconsistencies.
- Listen and be listened to.

If you can't communicate the vision to someone in five minutes or less and get a reaction that signifies both understanding and interest, then you need to work on it some more.

Purpose statements

A statement of purpose is also helpful. This describes what your service actually does and what it contributes to the health and well-being of the community it serves.

For example, the purpose statement of a youth offending team (YOT) might be: "To prevent offending by children and young people."

Leading and managing change

Setting and communicating a vision

As another example, the purpose statement of a behaviour and education support team (BEST) can be described as: "To promote emotional well-being, positive mental health, positive behaviour and school attendance and help in the identification and support of those with, or at risk of developing emotional and behavioural problems, through the provision of multi-agency support in schools and to individual families."

Your purpose may have already been defined by national or local guidance, or you may have the opportunity to shape and develop your own, perhaps in collaboration with the wider community.

The next step is to agree how each team member will contribute to fulfilling the purpose. This helps to avoid conflict over whose work is more important, because it focuses on how people need to work together to have maximum impact.

It helps to invest time at the start of the project sharing and communicating the vision and purpose of the service.

This also means understanding the intentions and expectations of others. Don't presume to know these. Take time to understand your future colleagues' hopes, expectations and concerns, and explore how these support or constrain people's ability and willingness to work to a common purpose.

Reading and resources

Kotter, J., 'Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail', Harvard Business Review (March-April, 1995), pp. 59–67.

Hutton, J. M., Working with the concept of organisation-in-the-mind (2000), London: The Grubb Institute.

Hutton, J. M., 'Re-imagining the organisation: Management in human service institutions' in Smith, E (ed.) Integrity and change: Mental health in the marketplace (1996), London: Routledge.

Hutton, J. M., Bazalgette, J. L. and Reed, B. D., 'Organisation-in-the-mind: A tool for leadership and management of institutions' in Neumann, J. E., et al. (eds) Developing organisational consultancy (1995), London: Routledge.

Associated documents

BEST purpose statement (example from Manchester) (23.5Kb)

Leading and managing change

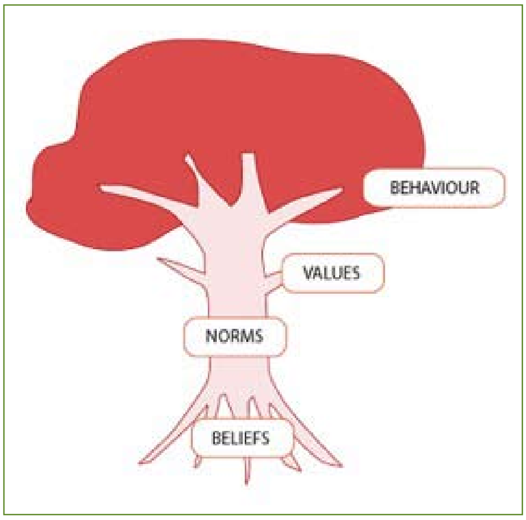
Organisational culture

The most commonly understood definition of culture is 'the way we do things around here'.

Culture is a difficult concept to pin down, but could be said to consist of the norms, values, beliefs and attitudes of an organisation. These drive its actions and its environment, guiding the way staff think, act and feel.

Culture doesn't define *what* an organisation does, but it does define *how* it does it. It is informed by a number of elements:
- Vision and purpose.
- People.
- Rewards.
- Technology.
- Procedures.

Organisational culture can be compared to a tree:



This diagram shows organisational culture represented as a tree, with beliefs at the roots, norms forming the trunk, values as a branch and behaviour as the leaves.

Examples of cultural beliefs include:
- Everyone is equal.
- It is OK to make mistakes.
- The client is always right.
- Honesty is the best policy.

Examples of cultural norms include:
- Things that are taken for granted.
- The definitions of acceptable behaviour, language and presentation.
- The way decisions are made.

Examples of cultural values include:
- Individuality versus conformity.
- Team work versus solo work.
- Attitudes towards other people.
- Attitudes towards the organisation and its vision and purpose.

Examples of cultural behaviour include:
- The way desks are laid out – open plan or territorial?
- People's gestures – do they smile and chat?
- Work – life balance.
- Dress code.

Leading and managing change

Organisational culture

So, an organisation's culture can broadly be defined as the social and behavioural face of a whole range of issues including:

- The way work is organised and experienced.
- How authority is managed.
- How employees feel rewarded, organised and controlled.
- The values and work orientation of the staff.
- Rules and expectations about shared values and shared identities such as dress and interpersonal relations.
- Differential status.
- Emphasis given to rules, procedures, performance and results, team or individual working.
- The scope for initiative, risk-taking, scope for individuality and personal expression.

In a multi-agency service, staff from backgrounds such as education, social care, health and the voluntary sector will bring their own cultural assumptions and ways of working. Before going through a process of developing a sense of shared identity and purpose it helps to understand more about where individuals are coming from.

Leading and managing change

How people respond to change

Change can be a challenging process for people starting to work in a multi-agency service.

They will be working with new people, with a new service remit, and in a new way. This means that it will not be possible or appropriate to work in the same way they did before. It will probably mean abandoning, or at least reassessing, old assumptions, values and theories about how things happen. Because these are an integral part of our professional identities, we are often strongly wedded to them. They provide us with the support and confidence to make decisions and to move forward. Few of us can abandon such things easily and many of us will resist change, at least in the short term.

The seven stages of bereavement described by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in 1969 can be applied to many situations involving significant change and disruption, including organisational change. As a leader, reflecting on and understanding these stages may help you support people through the process of change and prevent them getting stuck at a particular stage.

Shock That this is happening.

Denial That this is happening.

Frustration Often expressed in anger and outrage.

Depression As the anger turns inwards.

Experimentation Exploring the possibilities of the new reality.

Decision-making Options are presented by the new reality, and choices are made.

Integration Change is internalised and made sense of.

As practitioners grapple with the changes involved in being part of a multi-agency service, and as they discover new realities, they may experience this process of adapting to change.

The sequence is both normal and necessary, becoming dangerous only if people become stuck, for example at the frustration stage, and unable to move on. In such cases they may need space to express their frustration and help to move beyond it. You may feel a natural desire to suppress the frustration, out of concern that their anger will be destructive. But this risks locking the practitioner (and perhaps everyone in the service) in to this stage in the process rather than enabling the team to move on.

Reading and resources

Kubler-Ross, E., On Death and Dying (1969), New York: Macmillan.

Leading and managing change

Advice on managing change

Although it can be new, different and often challenging, people generally like working in a multi-agency way. They feel excited about sharing good practice, working in new ways and preventing families from 'falling through the cracks'.

"Change is difficult to achieve unless there is clear commitment from leaders, and unless the workforce is made to feel valued by being encouraged to contribute to the process. Consultation and inclusivity are key to successful change."

Stakeholder consultation

But the process of moving to this way of working needs to be managed carefully. You may find some of the following suggestions helpful:

- Establish a sense of urgency, but don't expect cultural change to happen overnight – it takes time to become embedded.
- Encourage openness and honesty – being upfront about the tensions at the heart of multi-agency working can be a catalyst for energetic discussions and getting closer to a shared understanding.
- Promote the benefits of the change and address 'what's in it for me?' at rational, political and emotional levels for practitioners and leaders at all levels.
- Find time and space to deal with the change agenda.
- Find time for joint training to promote sensitivity to one other and new working practices.
- Hold frequent and inclusive meetings for all staff.
- Promote positive working relationships – find what works and don't make changes for change's sake.
- Get management structures right – people can respond negatively to what they perceive as over-management or confusing arrangements. This can make people question where their loyalties should lie and who they are responsible to.
- Draw on any high-level support that exists for the initiative as it can help overcome stumbling blocks.
- Leadership must be robust, continuous and determined to make sure changes are taken seriously and are taking place. Review practice regularly to see if changes are being sustained.
- Embedding change means supporting people to do things differently by providing them with the tools, training and preparation to make the lasting changes that are needed.
- Middle managers in the contributing agencies should be fully engaged in supporting the development of new procedures and ways of working, both in their own work and in managing and supervising the work of their staff.
- Children and young people should be consulted and involved in the development of new policies, procedures and working practices. They have more confidence and trust in professionals who talk to them and who show they are listening. Their participation can be encouraged by building on existing ways of communicating with children and young people and through creative methods and approaches.

Getting strategic partners on board

This section relates to involving strategic partners and getting them on board.

As well as general considerations, it covers:

- Communicating the benefits.
- Identifying the right service partners.
- Getting the governance right.
- Putting partnership agreements in place.

General considerations

"It is about developing strong partnerships in the first instance: if these are in place you have sustainability."

Local authority education officer, extended schools pathfinder projects evaluation, 2004

To influence the delivery of service across all of your area, you need to form strong relationships with many agencies. In practice, this means working strategically with senior service managers to look at how resources are distributed, which approaches work best, and how you can all gain mutual benefit from working together.

The development of Children's Trusts and joint commissioning provides a framework for these discussions. However they are likely to place a number of demands on your skills and time, for example:

- Influencing complex situations even though the usual levers of power and status may be in short supply.
- Building trust between professionals and services.
- Knowing when to act collaboratively and when to be autonomous.
- Being accessible to both staff and partners.

There are a number of skills and behaviours described in Championing Children that relate to this aspect of your work, in particular 'providing direction' and 'working with people'.

Lessons from programmes like Sure Start and the extended schools pathfinder projects show that, while many strategic partners will be helpful and willing to engage, you may encounter some other less helpful attitudes. For example:

- Some statutory agencies may not want to engage with the new agenda, for example by reconfiguring their services or redirecting funding to place staff within the children's centre.
- There may be some resource-related hostility from some statutory agencies. Some agencies may feel that they would rather have the money and 'do their own thing' than work with a multi-agency service.
- Some agencies and providers, for example childcare providers or community play schemes, may fear that schools are duplicating the efforts of local services and reducing demand for their services.

Getting strategic partners on board

- Some voluntary agencies may feel they have been working in this way for some time, yet are not being consulted or included in the development of multi-agency working.
- Some statutory professionals may feel they are getting less favourable access to equipment and resources compared with the new multi-agency service.
- If service-delivery issues have not been resolved there may be frustration about the duplication of services to the same families.

"I don't feel we were involved enough – we thought it was going to be about involving existing services, but this hasn't happened."

Pre-school learning alliance coordinator, Sure Start evaluation, 2005

These issues are most successfully resolved through a coordinated partnership approach. This means service managers have to work with others at service manager level or above to address issues such as:

- Staffing the service.
- Reconfiguring core services to take account of the remit of the integrated service, to ensure that services are not duplicated.
- Clarity about the levels and types of additional need you can address within the service.
- Information sharing.
- Referral systems.
- Training and development.

Communicating the benefits

Communicating the benefits of strategic collaboration can be a very helpful way forward. For example, the Sure Start national evaluation highlighted the difficulties statutory agencies can face in delivering a preventive agenda. But by supporting a multi-agency service for early intervention, the statutory agencies' remit becomes easier to fulfil.

"We very much need – and want – to look at preventive services, but because of the demands on child protection, it is still very difficult for us in social services to prioritise that aspect."

Operational manager, Sure Start national evaluation, 2005

Other potential benefits for partner agencies include:

- It can be an efficient and effective way of sharing information about young people.
- Co-location should provide quicker access to services and contribute to positive outcomes for young people and their families.
- They will have access to increased resources for interventions and support for young people.
- The opportunity to access support and training for their staff.
- The opportunity to shape activities to contribute to specific targets and aims.

Getting strategic partners on board

A shared location and joint ways of working should increase their agencies ability to meet the needs of children and young people through:

- Increased knowledge of interventions and support being provided to shared clients.
- Closer working relationships with other service providers.
- Increased awareness of issues and services across the patch in general.

Identifying the right service partners

There are many agencies and providers who can help deliver your vision for children and families. The precise balance and the level of staffing will depend on the age range of the children and young people you are working with and, crucially, the requirements of the local community. You'll find more information about identifying service partners in building the work group.

Getting the governance right

Evidence from children's centres suggests strategic collaboration and support happens most successfully when there is a management or steering group of senior managers from across the agencies in the partnership. You'll find more information about setting up governance arrangements here.

Putting partnership agreements in place

Even where you have sound relationships in place, it helps to have formal partnership agreements (also known as service level agreements). If you have a steering group where the relevant agencies are represented, it may be possible to develop these agreements as part of the governance arrangements. You'll find more information on what might go into a partnership agreement here.

Reading and resources

Partnership assessment tool
This has been designed to help you find out more about the readiness of your core group of agencies to work in a collaborative way. Produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, this tool provides a quick 'health check' for your local partnerships. Based on six principles, it identifies problem areas and offers a shared language for tackling barriers to partnership working.

Integrated care network
This website is a government service to help frontline organisations deliver flexible services to adults and children. It includes resources and information on strategic partnership working, including sample partnership agreements.

Building the work group

This section on building the work group covers:

- The logistical process of identifying resources, getting them on board and sorting out any workforce issues.
- The longer term challenge of helping a group of individuals to develop and work effectively together.

When reading this section it's important to consider how the multi-agency group will work with other services – as every model will draw on services at some point. Managers should develop policies and processes to support joint working at an early stage. For more information you may want to read the section on partnership agreements and secondment.

This section looks at areas of team development including:

Staffing

There are many practitioners who can contribute to multi-agency working. There is also a variety of membership criteria in operation across different multi-agency service models. Click here for more details of staffing.

Considerations in multi-agency teams

- **Location** The right location, and a well-resourced base, is an important consideration for multi-agency services. Should the service be run from a school-based setting or a community setting? What about virtual teams, where practitioners remain in their home agency location? Click here for more guidance and information on the advantages and disadvantages of locations.
- **Workforce issues** Managers tell us key staffing issues are deciding whether to second or recruit staff, sorting out terms and conditions and assisting retention and career development.
- **Line management, supervision and performance appraisal** are distinct activities which, in a multi-agency service, may be carried out by different managers. Some agencies such as Sure Start will be familiar with dual line-management and supervision arrangements. However, practitioners who are unfamiliar with multi-agency working are often unsure of how this works. Click here for more about line management, supervision and performance appraisal in different multi-agency settings.
- **Team building** Building a good team spirit helps address some of the key challenges that can hold back multi-agency working. A helpful starting point can be to understand more about the concept of organisational culture. You may also want to read more about the conceptual and practical considerations for team building.
- **Joint training** is widely viewed as one of the most effective ways of helping practitioners work more collaboratively, as well as developing the capacity and capability of the service.

Building the work group

It may also be helpful to read more about the role of the lead professional when building your working group. Many of the children and young people you work with will have multiple additional needs requiring integrated support, coordinated by a lead professional. Therefore, it will be important that practitioners in multi-agency settings can be lead professionals when necessary.

Managing group dynamics

When building a team, leaders and managers need to be aware of group dynamics so everyone can have their say, get involved and have their particular contribution identified and valued. Issues can be addressed proactively as part of the induction process or through introductory training, for example by:

- Initiating discussions of inevitable issues which arise in multi-agency groups.
- Asking the whole staff to discuss what would be unacceptable behaviours related to group working.
- Using these as part of the 'ground rules' for working together.
- Using exercises and case studies to tackle issues in group dynamics.

The crucial role of management was highlighted in the National Evaluation of Children's Trusts (2005). Managers need to acknowledge practitioners' professional roles and expertise, protect professional boundaries, allocate cases according to the skills of staff, and trust professionals in their teams. They also need to balance recognition of the distinct skills and expertise of the different professionals in their teams with a requirement for common skills.

Building the work group

Staffing

This section has information on staffing multi-agency panels, teams and integrated services.

Staffing a multi-agency panel

There are many practitioners who can contribute to multi-agency working. There are also a variety of membership criteria in operation across different panels, for example:

- Some panels are open to anyone who feels they have an interest in a particular child or young person's welfare.
- Some panels, particularly those that are located in a school, are made up of practitioners who are already working in the school.
- Membership of some panels is steered by national guidance. For example, guidance for youth inclusion and support panels (YISP) says partners are likely to include the youth offending team, police, social services, youth services, housing, health (CAMHS), schools, community and play services, voluntary and community groups.

The precise skills balance for different panels will need to be decided locally, according to its purpose, how much direct casework it will be doing and the resources available.

Based on advice given to YISPs you might find it helpful to take the following into account:

- The catchment area of the service.
- Anticipated workload and method of operation.
- The roles and responsibilities of panel members in relation to assessment and planning.
- How children and families will be involved in panel decisions.
- The strength and efficacy of relevant local strategic partnerships.
- Information exchange and confidentiality.

You may also need admin and IT support for your panel. In addition to ongoing membership, you may want to consider inviting specific agencies from time to time, to share information on a new service that is available locally or to contribute to the action planning or service delivery for a particular young person.

Building a multi-agency team

The membership of a multi-agency team may also be influenced by national guidance. This applies to services such as youth offending teams (YOTs) or behaviour and education support teams (BESTs). For example:

- A YOT is typically made up of representatives from the police, probation service, social services, health, education, drugs and alcohol misuse services and housing officers.
- A BEST will also have education, social services and health staff, but any youth justice input is likely to be focused on preventive work, and there may be a greater emphasis on addressing mental health issues, for example with the input of educational psychology and psychiatric staff.

Building the work group

Staffing

The precise balance of skills in your team will need to be decided locally, according to local needs, the purpose of your team and available resources.

It is likely that all team members will carry out core functions within the team, for example needs identification and planning. But practice suggests that one of the key benefits of a multi-agency team is being able to bring in different specialisms to address multiple needs. This means that each member will need to use their own specialism and expertise where appropriate.

The National Evaluation of the Children's Fund found the most effective collaboration between practitioners was founded on clarity about the particular and different contributions of each agency. It found no evidence that multi-agency working was leading to the development of a generic all-purpose practitioner.

Identifying staff and services in an integrated service

The types of staff and services that may be provided in a co-located, integrated setting include:

- Childcare.
- Early Years learning.
- Lifelong learning.
- Healthcare.
- Social care services.
- Family support and parental outreach.
- Neighbourhood renewal.
- Access to ICT.
- Cultural and sporting activities.
- Play.
- Community centres.
- Police officers in schools.
- Connexions.
- Youth services.
- Study support.
- Work experience provision.
- Shops and commercial services.
- Third sector and outreach workers.

You may also need to identify admin and IT support to ensure the effective running of the team.

The precise balance of services and the level of staffing will depend on the age range of the children and young people, their needs, and the requirements of the local community.

Those involved in the extended schools pathfinder projects used the following methods to engage their local communities:

- Drawing on community consultation from other initiatives, for example Sure Start, neighbourhood renewal programmes or specialist schools.
- Employing workers whose key role was to consult with the local community, for example speaking informally to parents at the school gate, and attending community meetings.

Building the work group

Staffing

- Drawing on existing community forums, where members of the forum consulted people in the community.
- Holding specific activities, like ‘fun days’ to launch the project in the community. These raise awareness and involvement in the new service.
- Small-scale community consultation, for example using questionnaires.
- Drawing on the knowledge of experienced community workers, for example those in neighbourhood renewal teams.

To find out more about the types of services that are typically provided in these settings, you can read these documents:

- Extended Schools prospectus (June 2005)
- A Sure Start children’s centre for every community: Phase 2 planning guidance (July 2005)

Building the work group

Location

The right location, and a well-resourced base, can be important in encouraging children, young people and their families to use your multi-agency service.

The purpose of the service will have an impact on the location. For example, those providing preventive and early intervention services will need to work closely with schools. Practitioners in the multi-agency team should consider whether they run the service from a school or community setting.

The location will also impact the practitioners working in the multi-agency service. Should the service members be co-located or work as a virtual team?

Advantages of a base in a school or Early Years setting:

- It can enhance close working relationships with the school or Early Years setting.
- Children and staff are more aware the team exists.
- It helps promote the school or setting as a resource for all members of the community. This is consistent with the development of extended schools.
- Children, parents and their families are already familiar with and comfortable in these surroundings.

Whether or not a team has an administrative base in the school or Early Years setting, it will need private, comfortable therapeutic space for work carried out on school premises.

Advantages of a community base:

- Some parents feel more comfortable using a community resource.
- If the team serves more than one school, it can prevent it being monopolised by the school where it's based.
- It can help to re-engage children who are not attending school.

Virtual teams

Some multi-agency teams are 'virtual teams' where staff remain in their home agency, but with a formal commitment to be part of the multi-agency team.

Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, though research suggests that teams themselves prefer to share a base. For example, in a review of four 'virtual' behaviour, education and support teams (BESTs), two said that they had subsequently decided to set up shared accommodation, and the other two acknowledged that not sharing a base had a negative impact on team working. Other research has shown the importance of face-to-face contact in building and maintaining teams.

However, on the plus side, virtual teams are quicker to set up and may be more practical in large rural areas. For virtual teams, desk-to-desk video-conferencing can be a helpful way of maintaining contact, and it is getting cheaper.

Lessons from research

Co-location was a constant theme in the delivery of Sure Start local partnerships.

Building the work group

Location

Implementing Sure Start local programmes (2005) found general support for the concept of a shared base. People welcomed the opportunity that co-location gave them to stay in touch with the wider programme network.

For example, one staff member was responsible for facilitating play activities in the local park. She valued the opportunity she had to keep in touch with other staff members when visiting the base to pick up the keys to the park. She felt that otherwise she would hardly have seen them. Some health staff felt that having to return to a base wasn't the best use of their time. However, the generally positive picture suggests that co-location provides a supportive base.

Evaluation of Behaviour and Education Support Teams (2005) found advantages and disadvantages of different locations, as summarised in the table below.

Location	Pros	Cons
Schools (primary, secondary, including PRU)	Offers continuity for BEST pupils transferring from the feeder primaries (secondary) Independent from school (PRU) Increased access and communication The opportunity to build relationships/trust with schools Developing an understanding of school systems Direct access to pupils	Pupils may be reluctant to access the centre if it is associated with the school Objectivity/independence in relation to schools (including maintaining a separate team identity)
Local authority premises	Independent from schools Access to other services Appropriate workspace/facilities	Schools less aware of the BEST More difficult to build relationships/ trust with schools Confusion over the role and remit of the BEST in relation to other services
Community premises	Associated with other support services (by the community) Independent from schools Available workspace/facilities Opportunities for co-working	The BEST may be negatively associated with other services/ agencies More difficult to build relationships/ trust with schools
Commercial/ business premises	Independent from schools Excellent workspace/facilities	Expensive Difficult to access Schools and parents less aware of the BEST

Building the work group

Recruitment or secondment?

Multi-agency services can recruit their staff in two key ways:

- Through direct recruitment.
- Through partnership agreements or secondments with other agencies.

Direct recruitment

Direct recruitment involves employing practitioners to work in the service on a temporary or permanent contract.

In the extended schools pathfinders, some used funding to buy in non-teacher expertise, for example youth workers, counsellors and other specialist staff. This happened particularly when agencies could not respond quickly enough to requests for partnership working and staffing arrangements.

The evaluation of the extended schools pathfinder projects found one school had funding for health professionals, and employed the staff themselves because the health service was unable to make decisions quickly enough.

Some of the benefits of recruitment are:

- You are able to fill the post, even if staff shortages mean local agencies are not in a position to offer staff.
- You are likely to have more influence over who is working in the service.

However, recruitment is not without its challenges and drawbacks:

- Recruitment can draw staff away from statutory services – such as social services – leaving these under-resourced and unable to provide the specialist support needed to back up the integrated service.
- If you are only able to offer a short-term contract, this may result in small numbers of candidates to choose from.
- Services with high numbers of directly recruited staff may see the multi-agency nature of the service being undermined, particularly if links with parent agencies are weak.
- The lead agency may not have the expertise to take full management responsibility for certain aspects of provision.

These challenges point to the need for a coordinated approach to recruitment across all agencies as a constructive way forward. A single human resources function across the Children's Trust could help to make sure services are staffed in a complementary way.

Services that have recruited successfully have used the following techniques:

- Some have brought in graduates and other less qualified staff, to give them a 'starting point' from which they can work their way up.
- Other areas have developed the capacity of parents to get involved as staff or volunteers. This can work well as it gives parents the opportunity to develop key skills and enhance their employability.
- At the very beginning of the process, one area placed a joint advert to show the joined-up thinking across agencies. The logos of all the relevant services appeared on the advert.

Building the work group

Recruitment or secondment?

- One area 'took a risk' by making permanent appointments, but felt this showed their commitment to the development of multi-agency working.
- One area placed all their adverts at the same time, then held a local recruitment fair at a hotel and issued a press release. More than 600 people attended, and 1,200 application forms were given out. They felt this approach was necessary because the contracts were short term so they were keen to generate as broad an interest as possible.

Your lead body or home agency is likely to have its own recruitment procedures you can use and build on, and these are not included in this toolkit.

You need to remember that from October 2010, the Home Office is introducing increased safeguards under the new Vetting & Barring Scheme (VBS). The new scheme will be delivered by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and the CRB. As a manager of a multi-agency team it is important you ensure safety checks in place to allow them to work with children and young people. Visit www.crb.gov.uk for more information.

Partnership agreements and secondments

With secondments and partnership agreements, practitioners remain employed by their home agency, but agree to work for the multi-agency service on a full-time or part-time basis. The appointment is formalised by a partnership or secondment agreement. In many cases the home agency will fund the post.

"We got professional qualified staff who otherwise wouldn't have left their jobs for us."

Manager, Sure Start evaluation, 2005

In children's centres this is an important way of filling posts. When it works well it has a number of benefits:

- The integrated service can access skills they may not be able to bring in through recruitment.
- Practitioners can develop new skills and networks, while maintaining links with their home agency. This is likely to mean the home agency is more trusting of, and receptive to, the work of the team.
- It enables the partner organisation to develop a stake in the programme and to develop a more preventive remit to their services.
- It can be an attractive option for staff who don't want to change terms and conditions and who wish to resume their mainstream career.
- It may be an attractive option for statutory agencies not wishing to lose key staff permanently.
- It ensures that skills are replenished and updated in the team.
- It can pave the way for mainstreaming multi-agency services by showing how a flexible approach on the part of statutory agencies can help them deliver services in new ways.

Building the work group

Recruitment or secondment?

At the same time, secondment can present management challenges where people have dual lines of accountability, particularly where they work part-time both in the integrated setting and in their home organisation. This was one of the issues identified in Implementing Sure Start local programmes: An in-depth study (2005).

Other challenges include:

- Some organisations do not have sufficient resources to locate staff in an integrated service.
- Staff can fall between two management systems and cultures.
- Practitioners can have concerns about missing out on promotions and personal development during their secondment.
- Replacing staff can be slow and staff may frequently change.
- Some organisations may use this route as a way of relinquishing responsibility for underperforming staff.
- Other agencies may use this route to relieve themselves of responsibility for providing services themselves.
- There can be differences in terms and conditions between staff doing similar jobs.

Two Sure Start programme managers expressed reservations about having seconded staff working in the programme – one because it represented a loss of control; and another because of the 'hurdles related to differentials in pay and contracts'. **"It's not easy; there is a lot of tension."**

Services that have overcome these challenges have:

- Invested a lot of time in the planning phase with other service managers.
- Put in place detailed service level agreements so that all three parties – practitioner, home agency, integrated service – are clear about roles and responsibilities.
- Amended practitioners' existing contracts, or drawn up an additional contract that lasts for the length of their time with the integrated service.
- Worked to help managers from home agencies understand the implications of staff working for two or more organisations.
- Worked with home agencies when they are recruiting new staff, so that together they can set job descriptions and interview candidates for working in an integrated service.

Training and development can help to clarify roles, as well as providing additional skills for staff to deliver effective multi-agency service provision.

Building the work group

Terms and conditions

Whether your service is staffed by direct recruits or practitioners seconded from partner agencies, you may encounter issues over terms and conditions.

Pay

Different pay can become a source of tension, particularly if it is not addressed openly and up front. Some services have used these methods to address tensions:

- Get highly skilled and highly paid workers to share their skills. This benefits less skilled and lower paid team members, as well as building up the overall capacity of the team.
- Ensure maximum value for money by recruiting the right people for the right jobs. This means carefully reviewing job descriptions and person specifications.
- Give staff access to other benefits, like training offered by other agencies.
- Use the budget to make additional payments where people are working across professional boundaries, but being paid less than colleagues.

Some services have found that pay differentials are not an issue. Some say their staff accept they will all be on different rates of pay, because they are carrying out different jobs. They recognise that this would be the case in a hospital, school or private company. However, it can become an issue where staff believe they are doing equal or more work and getting paid less.

In some areas, staff have taken a lower salary in moving to a new multi-agency service. This tends to be because they are keen to work in a preventive and early intervention capacity, which allows new approaches and ways of working. Not all staff move jobs in the expectations of increased salary – the reasons for changing can be much more complex than this.

Other terms and conditions

Some services, particularly those with a high proportion of secondees, may also encounter difficulties if people are on very different terms and conditions. This is apparent in projects with a strong schools focus, as education staff are likely to be on term-time-only contracts, while others may have more flexible leave arrangements.

This can give rise to two sets of tensions:

- Staff on year-round contracts may have less annual leave and have to work in school holiday periods. Some may feel resentful that responsibilities for holiday projects and support may automatically fall to them.
- Staff on term-time-only contracts will only be able to take holiday in school holiday times, and therefore have less flexibility over their annual leave than others.

Building the work group

Terms and conditions

Ways of addressing this include:
- Identify whether there is scope to re-negotiate terms and conditions so they have flexibility to take a percentage of leave during term-time.
- Specify in job descriptions that the number of days' leave remains the same, but that the post requires staff to work all year round.

Services that have dealt successfully with issues over pay and terms and conditions say it's best to recognise and acknowledge the situation from the start. They say the following steps are useful:
- Make it clear to all service members before they join that individual salary and employment terms may differ.
- As part of initial team-building, build up commitment and enthusiasm for the vision and common purpose.
- Sell the benefits of multi-agency working by focusing on what it can give individual members in terms of experience, career progression and job satisfaction.
- Acknowledge the individual strengths and expertise of all service members, and create an environment where individuals know their expertise is recognised and safeguarded, and where they are motivated to use their skills.
- Appreciate and acknowledge the differences between service members, whether in skills base, salary or employment terms – but do this in the context of the common purpose and vision.
- Don't forget that team building is an ongoing and evolving process, requiring regular discussion and analysis of roles and responsibilities, and including scope for individual and confidential discussions.

Building the work group

Retention and career development

Retention

Every workforce undergoes changes due to staff turnover, sickness and promotion. However, good services do not expect users, or remaining staff, to put up with regular disruption. These are features of good practice in recruitment and retention:

- **Recruit the right people**
  - Attract people from the community by advertising in the right places, and presenting the right image.
  - Have good support and organisation from human resources departments.
  - Use joint agency advertising of relevant posts.
  - Give volunteers clear aims, descriptions of their roles and support.
- **Retain and develop good people**
  - Provide clear line management and leadership, direction and support.
  - Review and reward good performance; involve users in identifying staff who are performing well.
  - Provide opportunities for personal development and career progression.
  - Listen to staff ideas and support new ways of doing things.
  - Provide flexible working arrangements and childcare facilities.
- **Develop robust and reliable support**
  - Have good back-up systems and agree and communicate changes to service users.
  - Keep staff briefed and equipped to meet users' needs (eg by sharing caseloads).
- **Attract new people**
  - Look for opportunities to employ young people in ways that put them on the economic ladder, for example as receptionists.
  - Think about employing local people as support workers and mentors.

Career development

In some multi-agency settings, there is a perceived lack of opportunity for promotion. This may be because the organisation has a limited lifespan or because the structure is very flat. Research also suggests that sometimes parent organisations of people working in multi-agency settings do not place a high 'career value' on the time they have spent there.

Existing teams have tried to find opportunities for acknowledging and recording the new skills and competencies that people are developing.

The introduction of the Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) will help to address this. The Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) is a framework for making sure that qualifications for the children and young people's workforce reflect an integrated working culture. When a qualification is on the IQF, it is fit for purpose and meets regulatory requirements and reflects the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge.

The IQF will be a practical guide to new and revised sector approved qualifications and will help practitioners to see how qualifications link to each other. It will also improve opportunities to move from one job to another.

Building the work group

Line management, supervision and performance appraisal

These are distinct activities that, in a multi-agency setting, may be carried out by different managers.

Line management

This generally refers to the management of day-to-day issues and may cover:

- Planning and monitoring workload.
- Ensuring quality of work.
- Ensuring health and safety.
- Time management.
- Motivating.
- Administration.
- Record keeping.

Supervision

Supervision is the process of reflecting on the practice issues that arise in the course of everyday work. It can help practitioners to become more effective as they use their experiences to rethink the way they work.

A good supervisor will help practitioners to reflect on their practice, to support and challenge it, to discuss skills needs, and to help them work through situations where they may be experiencing resistance.

Putting high-quality supervision, consultation and support in place helps practitioners to:

- Become more self-aware in terms of their approach and evidence base.
- Understand their role in assessing and identifying need.
- Know how to respond to concerns raised by family members, young people, other practitioners and the community.
- Recognise their limitations and when to call on the expertise of others.
- Be familiar with current guidance on working together.
- Know how to manage issues of confidentiality and information sharing.
- Know who to contact when they have concerns about a child or family.
- Understand procedures for making referrals and involving others.
- Be clear about what information to share with whom and when.

Professional supervision

In some disciplines – for example nursing, midwifery, health visiting and clinical and educational psychology – there is a requirement for professional supervision by someone from the same discipline. Supervision will still involve working through everyday practice issues in a reflective way, but it tends to be provided through the home agency.

Supervision, essentially, is a way of helping professionals to use their experience to assess the way they work, becoming more efficient as they go.

Performance appraisal

This is an important issue for staff coming to work in a new multi-agency setting. Appraisal systems vary from agency to agency, but it is important to give consistent messages and show consistency in the way that performance is managed.

Building the work group

Line management, supervision and performance appraisal

In *Youth justice 2004: A review of the reformed youth justice system*, the Audit Commission advised that youth offending team (YOT) steering groups should take responsibility for implementing a performance framework incorporating:

- Assessment of overall performance using national and local performance indicators and targets.
- Translation of the performance indicators and targets into individual tasks for all staff.
- Periodic review, at least once a year.

Line management, supervision and appraisal in different multi-agency settings

In a multi-agency panel, line management and supervision will usually be carried out in the home agency. However, it can be helpful for the panel manager to have some input into this process, for a number of reasons:

- To build relationships with panel members.
- To track and monitor the progress of individual cases.
- To ensure the quality of overall service delivery.

This needs careful negotiation with home agencies. It may be more appropriate for any input to be of a supervisory nature, perhaps in collaboration with anyone else supervising the practitioner.

In some multi-agency settings (especially multi-agency teams and integrated services) there may be dual line management. If this is the case, reporting, performance appraisal, and provision for regular three-way dialogue should be clear. There also needs to be a clear system for handling complaints and disciplinary procedures, which all members are aware of and feel they can sign up to.

Performance appraisal is a particular consideration for staff in multi-agency panels. Sometimes parent organisations do not place a high 'career value' on the time they have spent working on multi-agency panels. By developing links with the line managers of panel members you will be able to input into their appraisal process. It also provides an opportunity to raise any performance issues.

Building the work group

Training opportunities

This section has more information on personal and team development, including training on integrated working processes and tools, and behaviour, skill and attitude training.

It also discusses the key features of an effective induction programme, informal training opportunities and continuing professional development (CPD).

Personal and team development

"The overwhelming significance of training in multi-agency teams is to enable workers from different disciplines to familiarise themselves with the concerns and expertise of their peers… an opportunity to dispel and demystify negative perceptions of the role of others. It built on the training received in the [home] agency and many respondents said they appreciated having both sorts of training opportunity."
National evaluation of Sure Start

Implementing Sure Start local programmes: An in-depth study (2005) found that a systematic and proactive approach to training appeared to be more successful than an ad hoc approach. It makes sure resources are used in a targeted way. It also means staff are less likely to miss out on training as their needs are constantly being updated.

Traditionally, personal development is planned by assessing learning needs with reference to individual and service-level objectives, current levels of competence and levels of competence required for future performance. But these approaches can be mechanistic and formulaic. In the case of multi-agency working, it can be more helpful for the group to define their collective learning needs. The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge provides a starting point, as training in these areas is essential for everyone in the children and young people's workforce.

The children and young people's workforce is made up of the approximately 2.7 million people working with children and young people in England. This includes volunteers and people who work with children and young people all the time, or who do so as part of jobs which also involve working with adults. For more information about the children and young people's workforce, visit www.cwdcouncil.org.uk

A personal development plan that emerges from this kind of collective understanding will highlight knowledge and skills that will benefit everyone in the service. For example, if they identify a need for restorative justice training, then a staff member attending a course is there to learn on behalf of their colleagues. That knowledge enhances the collective capacity of the service. In effect, their individual learning becomes corporate learning for the whole service.

Building the work group

Training opportunities

Joint training with partner agencies and with home agencies is another good way of sharing skills and knowledge and building links.

Training on integrated working processes and tools

A number of processes and tools have been developed to support the work of multi-agency services. These include information sharing, ContactPoint, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), National eCAF (when available), and the lead professional. Multi-agency staff are likely to need priority training in these areas.

For more information or to access guidance and training materials on information sharing, Common Assessment Framework and lead professional, ContactPoint and National eCAF visit www.integratedworking.com or www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/iw/

Behaviour, skill and attitude training

In 1996, Kotter noted that we don't think carefully enough about the new behaviours, skills and attitudes that will be needed when major change happens. As a result, we don't recognise the training that will be needed to help people learn these new behaviours, skills, and attitudes.

Leaders and managers need to consider what is needed, both for themselves and for their practitioners. These new behaviours and attitudes are obviously major considerations for planning training and team building exercises. They should also be considered when recruiting the team.

Training programmes need to be structured to challenge stereotypes and to break down traditional barriers between professional groups.

Induction

"I've had a lot of training. The training that I've been helping to organise in the Sure Start programme has been an exciting opportunity for me to look out of my own silo and learn from some of the other staff."

Sure Start manager quoted in national evaluation

People joining a service need opportunities to get to know their colleagues, to find out more about the context they are working in, and to share their views and experiences. If your service is completely new, the induction process offers huge potential for getting the team 'forming' stage off to a good start.

People will need both formal and informal occasions to get to know more about each other, why they are there, and who they need to know in partner agencies and elsewhere.

In established services, a new colleague will alter the existing group dynamics. To minimise disruption, get things off to a positive start with a comprehensive common induction. First impressions play an important role in shaping someone's views of an organisation. A good induction programme will show your service is organised, that you want new people to settle in quickly and develop a shared understanding of why they are there.

Building the work group

Training opportunities

Induction can include:

- Providing information on administrative and domestic arrangements.
- Providing information about the team's work and other agencies.
- Work shadowing with other members of the service.
- Work shadowing in other agencies, for example schools and social services.
- Welcoming and understanding the new staff member's skills and perspective, and considering this in the context of the existing culture.

Informal training opportunities

There are numerous other opportunities to help team members get to know one another and develop as a more effective unit. These include:

- Regular whole staff meetings.
- Group lunches or evenings out.
- Developing a culture of openness so that people have the confidence to say when they don't understand something.
- A weekly lunch or other informal 'team building' time.

Continuing professional development

In some disciplines, for example psychology, CPD is necessary to maintain professional status. These requirements may not fit neatly with the whole staff approach to training identified above, but they need to be considered to avoid tensions and to work out the training budget. It helps to consider:

- Is there a need for a ring-fenced training budget?
- What training does the group need, and what will any additional CPD requirements cost?
- If staff members can still access training opportunities through their parent agency, can you agree staff release for the days needed?

It is helpful to discuss this situation openly with everyone in the service, to explain why some people receive more training than others. However, these tensions should be minimised if everyone's personal development is seen as beneficial to the capacity of the whole service.

Building the work group

Training opportunities

Training for multi-agency panels

Training in multi-agency panels can be difficult because there is limited opportunity for joint training and development, simply because members are not based together, and their time commitment to the service is focussed on attending meetings and carrying out casework.

However, joint training can help panel members move through the 'norming' stage of team development. It can also help meet individual learning needs. Training opportunities can be formal or informal, for example:

- An induction to the panel and its work.
- A regular slot once or twice a year where all panel members get together for a few days for a programme of training which they have jointly agreed.
- Opportunities to do specialist training, which an individual then cascades to the rest of the panel.
- Opportunities to do joint training with partner agencies.
- A weekly lunch or other informal team building time.

The precise balance of training should reflect the needs of the panel, as well as resources. Finding the time for training is also likely to be an issue.

There is an ongoing debate in training circles about the best way to integrate individual and organisational learning needs. As a manager of a multi-agency panel, you are likely to be more focused on training that can help all your panel members work together collaboratively. In multi-agency working, it can be helpful for the group to define their collective learning needs.

The more individual members of staff are able to work on behalf of the service as a whole, the more their individual learning will become learning for the whole service. Effective multi-agency services develop collective competences through a process of reflecting together. Try to find opportunities for acknowledging and recording the new skills and competencies that people are developing, so that they can use this as a way of demonstrating how their personal practice is developing during their time in a multi-agency setting.

Governance

The Audit Commission defines corporate governance in the public sector as:

"The framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives."

Good corporate governance combines 'hard' factors, like robust systems and processes, with 'softer' characteristics including effective leadership and high standards of behaviour, in particular:
- Leadership that establishes a vision, generates clarity and fosters professional relationships.
- An open and honest culture where decisions and behaviours can be challenged and accountability is clear.
- Supporting accountability through systems and processes, such as financial management, performance management and internal controls.
- An external focus on the needs of service users and the public.

What does this mean for leaders of multi-agency services?

When services work together in new ways, with new planning and a new environment in which performance is measured, it can be helpful to take an equally collaborative approach to governance.

One effective way is to use a steering group of strategic stakeholders who take shared ownership of the service. This may be an existing partnership or it may be a new forum bringing together pre-existing structures.

This model features in a number of extended schools. The evaluation of the extended schools pathfinder projects found that most projects established dedicated management structures, some of which involved reporting to a steering group drawn from participating schools and stakeholders.

It can be helpful to involve the following types of people in a steering group:
- Senior managers from all the agencies represented within the multi-agency service.
- One or more head teachers or nursery school heads, depending on who you are working with.
- A parent representative.
- A young people's representative.
- Local authority representatives such as the access and inclusion coordinator, or the Early Years development and childcare partnership (EYDCP) officer.

Good practice in setting up a steering group

- In most areas there is a proliferation of multi-agency groups, which can prove time-consuming for senior officials. Consider whether an existing forum can do the job.
- Establish clear reporting procedures for the service.
- Representatives on any steering group should be people with the seniority to make decisions and take a strategic overview. However, arrangements should be solid enough to withstand someone leaving the group.

Governance

- When a steering group is established, the service manager will need to work at keeping senior representatives involved, by focusing the group on strategic rather than operational issues, enabling it to take decisions and encouraging members to take ownership of the service. If an individual representative's attendance is poor, follow up and find out why.
- If a steering group or partnership board covers a range of different services, an independent chair may offer straightforward objectivity and balance.
- Secure effective involvement of the community and voluntary sector, so they are included in the decision making processes. Click for more on the benefits of community and voluntary sector involvement.
- Secure effective involvement of children, young people, their families and the community in shaping and governing services.

Ten early tasks for a steering group

1. Organise a needs analysis and develop a shared vision and philosophy for integrated services.
2. Ensure parents, families and the community are fully engaged in every part of the planning and decision making process.
3. Agree the commitment that each agency will make to the new service.
4. Agree the direction of the service and produce a business plan for its funding and financial operation.
5. Establish management and decision-making processes and authority. Address insurance, health and safety and legal issues.
6. Identify key differences in policy and practice across the services which will need to be integrated. Support the service manager to harmonise these through dialogue and staff development.
7. Identify where services will be housed.
8. Agree new job descriptions and change of contracts (where appropriate), establish supervision and support arrangements, and appropriate appraisal systems.
9. Identify appropriate training and training budgets to support the professional development of all staff. This will include teamwork, child development, techniques for working with children and families, and financial management.
10. Review, evaluate and revise policies and practice with a view to continual improvement.

Models of governance

Governance arrangements for children's centres and extended schools will vary from service to service. It will depend largely on the way that services are being integrated:

- For new services, this is likely to come from the steering group and may be based on the governance arrangements of the lead organisation.

Governance

- Centres developed around nursery schools have tended to extend the remit and membership of their governing bodies to reflect parental, community and multi-agency participation.
- Extended schools can be managed in a variety of ways, for example through the school governing body, through delegation to a sub-committee or local partnership, or through a school. Click for more on governance of extended schools.
- Children's centres can also be managed in a number of ways. Local authorities and their delivery partners will need to agree structures, roles and responsibilities. It is likely that a number of pre-existing structures will come together to deliver the full offer for parents and children.

Evaluation of the extended schools pathfinder projects found that some projects built inter-agency collaboration into the management of the project. In one local authority the coordinator was also the Sure Start manager, who already worked closely with the neighbourhood management team and other agencies.

Other projects had developed multi-agency steering groups at an authority wide or district level, and/or multi-agency community focus groups. The multi-agency steering group in one area was made up of statutory agencies. The focus of their work was developing a tiered referral system and support network.

In another area there was a community focus group with representatives from voluntary agencies, the primary care trust, Sure Start, a further education college, school governors, parents, Children's Fund, a local football team and teachers.

Whichever form of governance is chosen, key elements of its success include:

- A unified structure which works for the centre and the whole range of services to be delivered.
- Representation by all stakeholders on a decision-making group.
- Support and training for decision-makers.
- Unified policies agreed and applied to the whole centre.
- Shared organisational development, planning and evaluation.

Partnership agreements

Multi-agency services will bring together the work of a range of agencies. These might include:

- Schools.
- Early Years provision.
- Sure Start children's centres and other Sure Start settings.
- Social care services.
- Child and adolescent mental health services.
- Local Authority education support services, for example special educational needs (SEN), behaviour and education support teams (BESTs) and educational psychology.
- Healthy schools programmes.
- Primary care trusts.
- Children's fund programmes.
- Voluntary and community organisations.
- Private sector organisations.
- Police and other youth justice agencies.

It's critical to invest time up front to develop sound relationships with partner agencies. It can be helpful to reinforce this mutual understanding with a formal partnership agreement. This will need to be updated at regular intervals (eg each year) and can cover a number of areas, including:

- **A statement of the purpose and tasks of the multi-agency service.**
- **A list of the services or resources to be provided**
  - By the multi-agency service (eg location).
  - By the partner agency (eg staff resources).
- **Details of relevant access and referral arrangements**
  - Both into and out of the service, where applicable.
- **Training and development issues, for example**
  - Details of any joint training to be undertaken.
  - Details of arrangements for continuing professional development for different members.
- **Data collection and information sharing**
  - Details of information both services will provide to facilitate effective work.
  - Details of privacy policy, consent and confidentiality procedures.
  - Details of management information required.
- **Planning and review**
  - Procedures for reviewing service delivery.
  - Date for reviewing and updating partnership agreement.
- **Quality**
  - Contact details for staff with responsibility for quality assurance.
  - Contact details for making a complaint about either service.

Partnership agreements are particularly important for work with schools, where a lot of different staff may be involved and it's possible to get pulled in lots of different directions. The agreement should set out clearly what each party will contribute, and be recognised by all school staff as underpinning the work of the multi-agency team within the school.

Reading and resources

Integrated care network
This government website helps frontline organisations deliver flexible services to adults and children. It includes resources and information on strategic partnership working, including sample partnership agreements.

Systems and processes

Multi-agency working relies on a complex series of relationships – with each other, with partner agencies, and with children and families. These relationships are easier to maintain if they're underpinned by formal systems and processes, such as:

- Workplace policies.
- Common operational policies and processes.
- Requests for support.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Information governance (information processing and information sharing).

Workplace policies

When people have come from diverse backgrounds to work together, a set of workplace policies can help things to run smoothly. These are areas where common policies can be helpful:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including child protection.
- Diversity and equal opportunities.
- Information governance.
- Home visits.
- Identity checks.
- Ethical framework.
- Compliments, complaints and grievances.
- Disciplinary procedure.

If you're planning new community and family services, you'll need to review how premises themselves are managed. For example, it may be necessary to develop new visitor and security procedures and revise health and safety policies.

You may already have common policies in place across your local area, for example in relation to safeguarding children. If not, you should work with partner agencies to develop a new, common policy appropriate to the setting. Methods for doing this include:

- Adopting an existing policy – from the lead agency or other agency.
- Adapting an existing policy.
- Creating a new joint policy.

The process of reviewing and comparing existing policies can be useful in exploring cultural norms, values and practice, as well as providing the basis for a team development exercise.

Safeguarding

All multi-agency services should have written procedures for responding to concerns that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect. These procedures should reflect local procedures agreed by the local safeguarding children board, which will in turn be in line with relevant government guidance.

It will be helpful for service members to understand these safeguarding procedures. In a school setting there will be a designated member of staff who has responsibility for coordinating and liaising with other agencies. You can access more detailed information and links to key guidance documents in the safeguarding children area of the ECM website.

Systems and processes

Requests for support

It's a good investment of time during your start-up phase to develop a system that defines the scope of your work, the type of support you offer, and how practitioners, parents, carers or children can ask for your support.

Monitoring and evaluation

An effective monitoring and evaluation system is important for a number of reasons:

- It provides information about the impact of the service on outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- It provides information about the impact of the service in relation to strategic targets.
- It highlights areas for improvement.

Click for more information on monitoring and evaluation.

Information governance

Information governance addresses five broad aspects of information processing – how information is held, obtained, recorded, used and shared. It is good practice to establish an information governance framework (or make use of an existing framework) so that all staff are clear about the service's position on information sharing.

An information governance framework would be expected to include:

- A code of practice outlining the principles and standards of expected conduct and practice for the service.
- Information sharing protocols (for pre-planned or bulk sharing of information only).
- Policies and procedures for information processing.
- Processes and documentation for service users.

For more information on information governance frameworks and how information sharing protocols work, read the cross-government guidance, Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers (HMG, 2008)

Information processing

Multi-agency services all need facilities and procedures to process information about the children and young people using their services. These will include:

- Developing specifics including a privacy policy and notices, processes for obtaining consent, and subject access requests.
- Defining what information on children and young people will be stored by the multi-agency service and how it will be stored.
- Defining who can access this information and how this access will be provided securely.
- Providing or adapting the ICT systems that will be used to support this (if any) to keep information secure.
- Providing relevant staff with access to tools to support integrated working, such as ContactPoint and National eCAF (when available).

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- Developing any specific policies and arrangements for security, audit, record ownership and data retention.
- Developing protocols for regular or pre-planned sharing of information with other services where appropriate.
- Making sure staff are clear on when and how personal information can be shared legally and professionally within and between services, are confident in making information sharing decisions and have access to sources of advice when required.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the need to keep personal information secure and what this means for their daily working practices.
- Assigning a dedicated owner of the information such as an Information Asset Owner (IAO) who will remain responsible for the management and protection of information including each of the points listed above.

Information sharing

Sharing information is vital for early intervention. It helps to make sure that children and young people with additional needs get the services they need. It is also essential to protect children and young people from suffering abuse and neglect, and to prevent them from offending. To provide the most effective service, practitioners in multi-agency services will often need to share information about children and young people within their service and, at times, with practitioners in other services.

Recognising that many decisions to share personal information at the front-line require professional judgment and that lack of clarity on the legal position was acting as a barrier to information sharing, in April 2008 the government updated its information sharing guidance and extended it to cover practitioners working with adults and families as well as those working with children and young people.

This guidance aims to improve practice by giving practitioners across children's services clearer direction on when and how they can share information legally and professionally about an individual with whom they are in contact. It also outlines how organisations should support practitioners and the organisational and cultural aspects that are required to embed good practice in information sharing. You can access more detailed information and links to key guidance documents in the information sharing area.

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Any of these people can ask the multi-agency team to support a child or young person:

- Practitioners, as part of a Team Around the Child.
- Parents and carers.
- The child or young person themselves.

The process is sometimes called referral.

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For integrated services, one of the key principles is that service users access them on a voluntary basis. Because of the range of services on offer, integrated services also tend to be accessed in a number of ways, for example to get information, attend a drop-in or join a breakfast or after school club.

Request for service criteria and procedures

During your start-up phase it is helpful to invest time developing an effective system that sets clear criteria for the scope of your work and the type of support you will offer. These criteria should flow directly from the vision and purpose of your service.

Increasingly these criteria are likely to be generated with reference to the factors in the Common Assessment Framework for children and young people (CAF). It is important that a CAF should not be seen as a pre-requisite for a service request, or a guarantee of service.

The CAF will be commonly understood across children's services and will help promote a common language and understanding. Many services call these criteria their 'referral criteria'. However not everyone likes to use this term as it can undermine attempts to get people to request services voluntarily, or may be seen as a guarantee of service provision.

Whatever you call it, it helps to have something written down and made available to all partners. It helps people to understand the specific services you can offer and, in turn, keep caseloads manageable by deterring unnecessary requests. Developing an effective service request system requires:

- An unambiguous definition of the purpose, scope and boundaries of the service.
- A clear set of service request criteria which are agreed with other agencies, consistent with the CAF, coherent with other local provision, and accurately reflect the scope of the service.
- A referral form which is filled in by those making a service request.
- A deadline for service requests to be submitted prior to each panel meeting.
- A commitment by agencies to work within the scope of the service and supply the required information to help the new service team respond effectively.
- Raising awareness with all partners (other agencies, parents/carers and children and young people) so that they understand how they can request support.

You will also need to agree procedures to make onward service requests to other agencies, where a child or young person requires more specialist support (see overleaf).

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Service requests by practitioners

A clear service request system saves time, avoids disagreements between professionals, and prevents the multi-agency service being overwhelmed with requests for support.

For services working in an early intervention and preventive capacity, key referring agencies will be early years providers and schools, although other agencies – particularly those represented in the service – may also refer children and young people they consider to be at risk. Try to get slots at training days run by these agencies to explain how the system will work.

An effective service request system depends on the requesting agency supplying relevant information about the needs of the child or young person, and why they feel additional support is needed.

If you work in a targeted or specialist service, such as a children's social care team, you may receive a common assessment on a child or young person as part of the referral process, or you may be on a multi-agency team or panel that considers children who have had a common assessment.

If the service request is not supported by a CAF assessment, you may want to use a referral form which encourages the requester to write down clear and comprehensive notes about the problem, any other issues they are aware of, and strategies they have used to address them. A CAF could be used to help provide prompts on the type of information which may be gathered.

Informal requests for help

Your team members may receive informal requests for help from other staff members, for example following a conversation in a school staff room. In these cases the team member could offer a short consultation appointment. In these discussions the staff member should keep the identity of the child or young person anonymous, unless they have agreed for their information to be shared. If, on the basis of the consultation, it is apparent that the needs of the child or young person come within the remit of the multi-agency service, and that they would benefit from its input, a process should be agreed for carrying out a common assessment and making a service request.

Need for consent

All common assessments using the CAF need the consent of the child or young person. You may have to remind referrers of this need. This means that referring practitioners are expected to obtain consent before they make a service request. The language they use in these discussions will need to be clear and sensitive to cultural differences, and behavioural and mental health issues.

Click to go to the information sharing section of the website for more details of consent.

Service requests by parents and carers

Depending on the nature of your service and the age range you are working with, you may receive service requests from parents or carers.

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It is important for parents and carers to understand the full range of services on offer and to feel confident enough to ask about them, either for themselves or for their child. In practice, once people have a good experience of some parts of a service (eg a drop-in or an after school club) and get to know some of the staff, they will be more likely to find out about and access other things that are happening.

For parents or carers who want more targeted help for their child, it helps to have some form of documentation as part of the overall service request process. Staff can offer to help parents or carers fill in the form. It is important to use appropriate and sensitive language in discussing their child's needs, and to make sure they understand why this information is needed.

Self-referral by children and young people

In some cases, particularly if your service is for older children and young people, it will be helpful to have procedures in place for children and young people to make their own service requests. The voluntary engagement of young people can be an important indicator that the service is really meeting the needs of its target group, but to do it effectively the service will need to be:

- Seen as non-stigmatising.
- Accessible.
- Well-marketed, using channels of communication favoured by your client group.

Service requests to other services

Sometimes your service may need to draw on other support services, for example if an intervention has not achieved the desired outcomes and the child or young person needs more specialist or sustained support. Planning for service requests should be considered early in the assessment process.

If you are considering a common assessment yourself as the supporting evidence for a service request, you may need to join up with another practitioner's assessment. In these cases, you should discuss the common assessment with the practitioner who completed it. Doing this through multi-agency meetings, involving the child or young person and/or their parent or carer, is good practice in many areas. Discussing the child or young person with the assessing practitioner will help you to pool your knowledge and expertise and reach a shared, better informed view of the child or young person's needs.

A service request form should be completed making it clear what is being requested from the multi-agency service. If the CAF is used as supporting evidence for the service request – there should be no need to duplicate the information contained in the CAF assessment on a service request form. CAF does not guarantee service provision.

In setting up onward service request arrangements, the child or young person should remain at the centre of all decisions. To keep their needs at the centre of the process it is helpful to:

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- Identify the local agencies you may need to refer on to and make links with a contact person.
- Understand the scope of these services, their referral criteria, and operational issues such as opening hours. Your local services directory may be able to provide information to help identify the appropriate agency, if required.
- Set up referral procedures, using existing protocols developed by these agencies where appropriate, to ensure swift access to support.

Even for services working in a preventive or early intervention capacity, it is likely that at some point they may need to make a crisis referral to a specialist service and this issue needs to be given some thought before it occurs. It is important that referral procedures for emergencies are set up with relevant professionals.

The most likely services to need a crisis referral at some point are:
- Health services.
- Psychologists and psychiatrists (perhaps through child and adolescent mental health services).
- Social services.
- Youth offending teams.
- Police.

CWDC is currently developing guidance on how CAF supports and complements other assessments and step up and step down requests for services.

Further information will be available in spring 2010.

Move into Share Street

Share Street is a new online community of learning for the children and young people's workforce.
It makes it easier for everyone who works and volunteers with children, young people and their families to connect, discuss ideas and challenges, share resources and be inspired.

Take a stroll down Share Street and visit the newsagent for the latest news. Be motivated by engaging films from the workforce in the cinema and find and share resources in the library. Pop into the café to network and join discussions with colleagues across the children and young people's workforce, and read and comment on inspiring case studies behind the rainbow.

Join Share Street, strengthen the sense of community across our workforce and help to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Move in now!

1. Visit Share Street, look around and register.
2. Invite people you work with to register.
3. Start conversations, discuss challenges and share your resources.
4. Be inspired.

If you have any difficulties accessing Share Street then you may need to contact your IT department to ask them to make an exception for http://sharestreet.cwdcouncil.org.uk

See you on the Street!
www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/sharestreet

The Children's Workforce Development Council leads change so that the thousands of people working with children and young people across England are able to do the best job they possibly can.

We want England's children and young people's workforce to be respected by peers and valued for the positive difference it makes to children, young people and their families.

We advise and work in partnership with lots of different organisations and people who all want the lives of all children and young people to be healthy, happy and fulfilling.

For more information please call **0113 244 6311**
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Or write to CWDC, 2nd Floor, City Exchange
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or fax us on 0113 390 7744

Contact us to receive this information in a different language or format, such as large print or audio tape.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Children's Workforce Development Council work together to support integrated working. Visit www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/integratedworking for more information.

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