



The Government's Response to the  
Education and Skills Select Committee's  
Ninth Report of Session 2004-05:  
*Every Child Matters*





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Presented to Parliament by the  
Secretary of State for Education and Skills  
By Command of Her Majesty  
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The Government welcomes the Select Committee's report and we have considered carefully its conclusions and recommendations.

The Government remains wholeheartedly committed to the *Every Child Matters* reforms. We welcome the Committee's findings that the vision of *Every Child Matters* is widely shared and has generated enthusiasm and commitment among those charged with delivering on the front-line. We believe this reflects the compelling case for reform set out in the report of Lord Laming's Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié and the fact that *Every Child Matters* also builds on examples of existing good practice in service delivery from across the country.

A wide ranging and extensive public consultation on the *Every child matters* Green Paper showed that our reforms had secured a broad base of support. We listened carefully to constructive criticism from our key partners and stakeholders as we developed and took through the Children Act 2004 and refined the wider programme of reforms needed to support change on the ground. We continue to involve our partners fully as our policies and services evolve. Therefore, while we take the Committee's comments about the handling of change very seriously, we have good reason to believe that our reforms are both necessary and achievable.

As the Select Committee has said, *Every Child Matters* is 'an ambitious and wide-ranging programme of root-and-branch reform'. The Government recognises that with ambition comes risk and the responsibility to manage risk. The Government notes the Select Committee's concerns, particularly around the introduction of child indexes; the adequacy of levers for securing the participation of certain agencies in local change programmes; the relationship between *Every Child Matters* and youth justice and immigration policy; and the overall level of resource allocated to the programme. We accept that getting things right in these areas is crucial to the success of *Every Child Matters*. We will closely monitor progress in these areas and review our position where appropriate.

The Select Committee's conclusions and recommendations are in bold text. The Government's response to the specific recommendations in the report is set out below in plain text. For the purposes of the response some of the conclusions and recommendations have been grouped together.

## PACING CHANGE

1. We understand the drive toward rapid transformational change at policy level and think that this is entirely legitimate given the urgency of protecting children better and promoting their development and well-being. However, a Government committed (rightly) to pursuing evidence-based policy has a difficult balance to strike. It is crucial that significant changes are thoroughly trialled and evaluated before roll-out, especially in cases where doing things badly risks worsening outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

2. The balance between local determination and action from the centre is likely to remain a critical issue as *Every Child Matters* unfolds. Too much central direction risks alienating those on the ground who know a great deal about local circumstances; too little, on the other hand, risks inconsistency and the appearance of gaps in services. In respect of certain aspects of the reforms, our evidence suggests that more central responsibility and direction may be needed than is currently the case.

22. The Government has made a welcome commitment to respecting local needs, and putting control over change in local hands and we would encourage them to maintain this commitment. Statutory guidance should contain explicit reference to the need to protect front line services during transition, and to implement change at a pace suited to local needs. At the national level the Government can assist by remaining alert for any evidence that unintended negative side-effects of change are occurring, and, especially, that any decrease in the effectiveness of critical front line and child protection services is taking place.

As the Committee acknowledges, the Government's drive for reform is motivated by the pressing need to secure improved outcomes for children and young people. We accept that changes to the way services are configured and delivered should be formed by evidence and evaluated. Sure Start will continue to be evaluated as we move to the universal roll out of children's centres. Other key elements – such as the children's trust way of working, the Common Assessment Framework and extended schools – will be trialled. The lessons from this evidence will be fed into the roll-out of policy on an ongoing basis in line with the national framework set out in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*.<sup>1</sup> (December 2004).

The children's trust model described in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* is based on examples of good practice from across the country. It represents what we already know to be achievable and effective. That said, we do not underestimate the scale of the local challenge that more closely integrating services presents. We recognise that during times of change front-line services may be vulnerable to dips in performance. Local managers are responsible for managing change in such a way that it does not jeopardise front-line services' effectiveness. The Duty to Cooperate Statutory guidance will make clear that improving the wellbeing, which includes the safety, of children and young people must remain a priority throughout the change process. So too, will the draft guidance on Local Safeguarding Children Boards, which will help ensure that key agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

The same principle applies to school standards – which we are clear should benefit from the development of extended services in schools and the wider *Every Child Matters* reforms.

Central Government will remain alert to any signs that the implementation of local change programmes is having an adverse impact on service delivery. If necessary the Government will work constructively with local areas on a case by case basis to put in place the most appropriate package of support for their needs.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

Statutory guidance will also make clear that change should be implemented at a pace which is appropriate to local circumstances, within the timescales set out in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*. Although the Government expects to see children's trust arrangements in place in most areas by 2006 and in all areas by 2008, we recognise that in many cases these arrangements will be a platform for further work on integrating services more closely.

The Government welcomes the Select Committee's support for locally led change programmes. Local ownership is – and will continue to be – an essential feature of the Government's reforms. *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* made clear that local change programmes should be built around an analysis of local needs and priorities. This analysis will be reflected in each local area's statutory Children and Young People's Plan.

The Government believes that too much central direction over local change programmes would be at odds with the principle of local ownership. To accommodate better the wide range of local starting points and priorities, the Government has deliberately chosen not to prescribe a single model of integrated services. We have chosen instead to be very clear about the outcomes we are seeking and the characteristics of the services and the ways of working that will be required to deliver them. Nevertheless we accept the Committee's view that the balance between local determination and action from the centre is likely to remain a critical issue and will keep this balance under review in the light of progress towards the outcomes we are seeking.

In addition, the Government agrees with the Select Committee that there is (and for the foreseeable future will continue to be) a demand for practical advice and support support which helps local areas decide how best to meet local needs. Regional Change Advisers jointly appointed by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health are working with local change managers and specialist advisers to support local areas. A series of regional conferences this Spring enabled local areas to share their practical experience of change. The Department's communications activities will be focused increasingly on sharing emerging practice, while the assessment and inspection process will monitor local progress and delivery.

**27. Statutory guidance and other communications which concern themselves with budget-pooling need to make absolutely clear that local areas should not pursue such pooling for its own sake. Until sufficient evidence has been amassed from Pathfinder Children's Trusts on best practice in this area, it would be preferable to give a clear steer for local areas to thoroughly analyse the benefits likely to accrue from budget pooling before embarking on the process.**

Communications on pooled budgets already make clear that the pace and focus of the development of pooling arrangements will depend on local priorities and local change programmes. A recent Department for Education and Skills question and answer guide to pooling emphasises that pooled budgets are a means to an end but also that a clear strategy for their creation and deployment will need to be an integral part of all local trajectories for the development of children's trusts.

Children trusts are being phased in gradually between 2006 and 2008 in order to allow local authorities to introduce change in a way that suits their circumstances. Local change programmes, and from 2006, Children and Young People's Plans, will reflect local priorities, strengths and preferred approaches.

## INVOLVING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS IN SURE START

**3. We are concerned that significant changes are being made to the Sure Start programme when evidence about the effectiveness of the current system is only just beginning to emerge. This relates back to our wider point about the inherent difficulties of pursuing transformative and rapid change while at the same time maintaining a commitment to evidence-based policy.**

The changes made to the Sure Start programme have been developed on the basis of a thorough assessment of a reasonable body of evidence generated from our regional field forces, performance assessment and local and national evaluations. This has been supplemented by evaluation evidence from other similar programmes both here and from the United States – for example, the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study<sup>2</sup> and Early Head Start.<sup>3</sup> Taken together these sources of evidence have enabled us to take an evidence based approach to reviewing the Sure Start programme and make changes aimed at improving it. This has been especially important in considering how best to expand the programme in the form of children's centres to reach a much greater number of children, with a children's centre for every community in the country by 2010.

The National Evaluation of Sure Start was designed to produce timely information which informs the programme's continuing implementation. It has produced valuable information on parental involvement, reaching the community, working in partnership and multi-agency working. The EPPE study has been particularly important in pointing towards the benefits of good quality early education for later child development, especially for children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. This included firm evidence on the importance of better trained staff for improving child development which has led directly to the requirement that children's centres currently being developed in the most disadvantaged areas, must employ a trained teacher to plan and deliver integrated care and learning from 0-5 years.

Robust evidence of a programme's impact on children and families can take time to emerge. However, it is important to strike the right balance between measuring longer term impacts and the need to be able to use interim evidence to improve our programmes in the short term. This is particularly relevant for a programme like Sure Start, the design of which enabled a whole range of different approaches to be explored. As further evidence becomes available on the programme we will develop a more precise understanding of how children's centres can operate most effectively.

Involving parents through early consultation and supporting them effectively to find their voice in discussions to plan and deliver services requires sensitivity and commitment. It also requires ongoing effort. Sure Start local programmes have worked continuously to engage with parents and this has been successful at community level as well as, for some individuals, at a personal level. We have seen families more inclined to use services that they have been actively involved in and consulted over.

We have urged the continuation of this approach in phase 1 guidance to local authorities on children's centres. Our phase 2 guidance will stress the need to involve parents through consultation, during planning and delivery, and as part of the review and evaluation of the services provided.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://k1.ioe.ac.uk/schools/ecpe/eppe/index.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [www.ehsnrc.org](http://www.ehsnrc.org)

## CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER

### *The Commissioner's role and remit: Recommendations 4,5 and 10*

4. We have yet to be convinced that a Children's Commissioner role primarily defined in terms of promoting children's views, will be as effective in practice as one focused on promoting and protecting children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5. We are concerned that the definition of the role of the Children's Commissioner for England as one primarily framed in terms of promoting children's views and concerns, rather than promoting and safeguarding rights, may directly and negatively affect the ability of the Commissioner to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people.

10. We suggest that a fully independent review of the role and remit of the Children's Commissioner for England should be commissioned within three years of appointment. This should include analysis of the effectiveness of the Commissioner post, with particular reference to the impact of the statutory framework. Amendments to statute should be pursued if the review indicates that the Children's Commissioner is unduly constrained by the existing legal framework.

There was extensive debate about the role of the Children's Commissioner during the passage of the Children Act 2004. The Government believes that the role embodied in the Act gives the Commissioner a powerful remit to influence the achievement of better outcomes for children and young people.

We do not view the Children's Commissioner's function in promoting the awareness of views and interests of children as an alternative to the concept of rights, but as complementary to it. The Government has repeatedly stressed its commitment to honour the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), subject to the reservations the Government has entered. The Act specifies that the Children's Commissioner must have regard to the UNCRC in determining what constitutes children's interests for the purposes of his work. The Commissioner will thus be considering children's rights in the discharge of his general function.

However, the Government argued strongly that a remit to safeguard children's rights would involve the Children's Commissioner in casework that would duplicate other existing safeguards for children and young people. The legislation was designed to give him a much broader and strategic remit, with the flexibility to investigate any issue relating to children's well-being, the freedom to pursue whatever issues he considers most important to children and young people and the power to investigate an individual case where he thinks this will identify lessons for the wider system. He must work in the context of the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes for children that are specified in the Children Act 2004. They represent in broad terms what children have said that they consider to be important for their well-being. They highlight the need for the Commissioner to ensure that our systems do work together to improve outcomes for every child.

The Government does not wish to commit to an independent review of the Commissioner's role after any given period of time. The Children's Commissioner is a new post and we will want to review its development with the Commissioner as his work develops. If in due course the statutory framework proves unsatisfactory then it will be open to the Government to propose changes. But our current priority is to support the Commissioner in acting as a powerful independent champion for children as we believe the current legislation empowers him to be.

*The Commissioner's relationship with the Secretary of State and Parliament: Recommendations 6, 8 and 11*

6. We welcome the Minister's assurance that the circumstances in which the Secretary of State will direct the Commissioner will be limited to very serious or tragic cases that require a national inquiry. We also welcome the assurance that the Secretary of State will under no circumstances prevent an inquiry being conducted. However, further clarification of the limits of directive powers should be made through regulation if necessary. Moreover, if there is no intention to ever prevent the Commissioner from conducting a particular inquiry, we fail to see the purpose of a duty to consult prior to launching an investigation. It is conceivable that future Secretaries of State may not take the same view, and we believe the Government should consider modifying this part of the Act.

8. We are reassured to hear the Minister's assessment of her likely working relationship with the Children's Commissioner for England as one that was likely to be uncomfortable at times – in our view, anything less would be profoundly worrying, and as a Committee, we will look for evidence that the relationship between the Children's Commissioner and Ministers is developing in an appropriate way.

11. To preserve independence of the Children's Commissioner for England, there needs to be a strong link between the Commissioner and Parliament. By custom and practice Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools reports directly to Parliament through this Committee and we envisage a similar relationship with the Children's Commissioner for England.

The Government has repeatedly stated its commitment to the independence of the Children's Commissioner. We have reflected this in practice in the arrangements for establishing the Commissioner's office, where the standard Non-Departmental Public Body processes have been amended to reflect the statutory independence of the Children's Commissioner whilst ensuring propriety, regularity and value for money in the use of public funds. Copies of the documentation setting out the financial framework within which the Children's Commissioner will work, will be placed in the libraries of the Houses of Parliament.

With regards to the Secretary of State's power of direction, the Children Act 2004 is clear that the Children's Commissioner has the power himself to initiate an inquiry into a case that raises issues of wider relevance as long as this does not duplicate any other statutory exercise. The duty to consult the Secretary of State before holding any such inquiry enables the Secretary of State to offer guidance and advice to the Commissioner where appropriate. For example, the Secretary of State may be able to inform the Children's Commissioner that a similar investigation is being carried out by another body during their discussions and so a further inquiry would be a duplication of effort. However, the duty to consult does not give the Secretary of State any power of veto over the Children's Commissioner holding an inquiry.

The legislation gives the Secretary of State the power to direct the Children's Commissioner to hold an inquiry. The Government expects that this power will only be used in exceptional circumstances in cases where the issue is so serious that the Secretary of State considers that an urgent inquiry is necessary, and that the Commissioner is best placed to undertake it. Where this is the case, the Secretary of State will discuss the practicalities of the matter, with the Commissioner.

The Government is committed to preserving the Children's Commissioner's independence and to encouraging a strong relationship between the Commissioner and Parliament. The Commissioner will submit his annual report to the Secretary of State, who will in turn lay a copy before each House of Parliament, as is standard practice for a Non-Departmental Public Body. The Secretary of State would not be able to alter the report in any way or delay it. The Committee will be able to ask the Commissioner or other witnesses about the Commissioner's report in the usual way.

## *Resources for the Children's Commissioner's office*

7. It should be made clear at the earliest possible opportunity what level of funding will be available for the operation of the Commissioner's office and whether additional resources will be provided if the Secretary of State instructs the Commissioner to conduct a major inquiry which is likely to tie up large amounts of resources and personnel time – or whether it is expected that those costs will be met out of current allocations.

The budget will be £3 million per annum. We have increased the budget from the £2.5 million originally proposed to allow for the Children's Commissioner's power to institute inquiries into cases with wider relevance. The Government wants the Commissioner to determine his own workload on the basis of what children and young people are saying to him and he will be able to spend the money as he sees fit (as long as this is within the remit of his statutory functions). If the Secretary of State instructs the Commissioner to conduct an inquiry, the Secretary of State will need to discuss the resource implications with the Commissioner and provide extra resources as appropriate.

## *Relationship between the English Commissioner and the Commissioners for the Devolved Administrations*

9. We are pleased that the three existing Commissioners are committed to working with the Commissioner for England to resolve any problems concerning jurisdiction. Their suggestion that a memorandum of understanding should be drawn up at the earliest possible convenience seems a productive way forward, and is one possible way to broach issues of jurisdiction. This would also provide an opportunity to capitalise on the valuable experience of the three existing Commissioners – which they are extremely keen to share with the appointee for England.

The Government agrees that it is vital for the four Children's Commissioners in the United Kingdom to form effective working relationships. It will be for the Commissioners concerned to draw up any protocols of how they will work together to the timescales they think appropriate. The Government stands ready to assist if the Commissioners think it necessary.

## **INTEGRATED SERVICES AT THE FRONTLINE**

12. The Department for Education and Skills told us that they would shortly launch a prospectus on Extended Schools. Where conversion to an Extended School is being considered, we recommend that the prospectus should stress the benefits of planning with local partners, including voluntary services, who often have wide experience of engaging vulnerable groups, to ensure local needs are met.

We agree that successful partnership working will be key to delivering extended services in or through schools.

We have published advice and examples on the *Every Child Matters* website earlier this year for schools wanting to develop extended services. A fuller prospectus, *Extended Schools: Access to Opportunities and Services for All*<sup>4</sup> was published in June. Throughout the prospectus it is stressed that schools should consult with local partners before developing extended services to ensure that the services they develop complement and make links with existing provision. Indeed there is a legal obligation for schools to consult in these circumstances. There are several case studies provided to show where and how this can work well. There is also a chapter about 'Working in Partnership' where working with the voluntary sector and other children's services is emphasised. The National Remodelling Team, which has been appointed to support all schools on developing extended services, will also be highlighting the importance of partnership working at their events with schools.

<sup>4</sup> [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschool](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschool)

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING NEEDS

### *Multi-agency working toolkit*

13. A toolkit on multi-agency working is scheduled to be released in April 2005 – and we will be interested to see what prominence is given to challenges around the reconfiguring of professional identities and responsibilities that working in a multi-agency team is likely to present.

The multi-agency working toolkit which we expect to publish shortly, will be a web based resource for managers and practitioners setting up and delivering multi-agency services in a range of different settings. It provides general principles based on research evidence about what works, together with practical advice on setting up services, activities to help managers and practitioners work through some of the issues and case study examples of good practice.

A major focus of the toolkit is on managing the process of change and we recognise that the reconfiguring of professional identities and responsibilities is a major challenge. We are using this opportunity to provide practical advice and examples to managers who will need to ensure that practitioners feel supported in their new roles. Following publication, we will be using feedback from managers and practitioners to make certain that we are providing them with appropriate and useful resources to address this challenge.

### *Resources for workforce development and training*

15. We are not convinced that workforce training needs for all in-service staff are likely to be given the priority across the board at the local level that they merit and which the Government anticipates. While we appreciate that there are significant resources already invested in the training of children's professionals in some sectors, we are particularly concerned about the priority which will be attached to *Every Child Matters*-related workforce development for staff in other sectors, and particularly the health services.

The Government agrees the importance of workforce development across all sectors of children's services. This is reflected in the Government's *Children's Workforce Strategy: a strategy to build a world-class workforce for children and young people*<sup>5</sup> published for consultation on 1st April 2005.

The strategy sets out the Government's vision of a world-class workforce that:

- is competent and confident;
- people aspire to be part of and want to remain in – where they can develop their skills and build satisfying and rewarding careers; and
- parents, carers, children and young people trust and respect.

The strategy sets out a range of propositions with mutually reinforcing national and local actions to address four key challenges:

- Improving recruitment into the workforce;
- Retaining and developing the workforce;
- Strengthening inter-agency and multi-disciplinary working; and
- Promoting stronger leadership, management and supervision.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/workforcereform/childrensworkforcestrategy/](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/workforcereform/childrensworkforcestrategy/)

The strategy makes clear that whilst there are urgent capacity and quality issues to be addressed in some sectors such as the early years – to deliver the Government’s 10 year childcare strategy – and social care, the skills and competence of everyone working with children and young people across all services are vital to improving outcomes.

The strategy looks to Local Authorities to work with partners to develop locally relevant workforce strategies. These strategies will need to address skills and career development to take account of local need and local circumstance, including the constraints of the local labour market.

The integrated inspection framework (see recommendation 14) will allow Government to assess the extent to which local workforce strategies are being developed and their effectiveness.

Both the strategy and the accompanying partial Regulatory Impact Assessment reaffirm the Government’s view that there is sufficient funding either already in or planned for the system to ensure effective workforce development in all sectors of the children’s workforce, including health services.

In the Autumn, the Government will publish its response to the consultation, which ends on 22 July, and an update of the workforce strategy.

**16. Department of Health officials told us that there was no ring-fenced money at departmental level for training. With little or no extra resources identified for the implementation of *Every Child Matters* in general, we are concerned that with many pressures on primary care trusts and other budgets, crucial *Every Child Matters* related training will not be given the priority it deserves.**

To implement the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (NSF) – which forms an integral part of the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programme – health partners will need to work with others to address the workforce challenges. This was recognised in the Government’s *Supporting Local Delivery* (Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Health Services)<sup>6</sup> document which followed the NSF and identified workforce as one of the key underpinning requirements for delivering the standards.

The key document for local planning of health services is *National Standards, Local Action*,<sup>7</sup> the Health and Social Care Standards and Planning Framework published in July 2004. In that document, the NHS Chief Executive highlighted the need for local health bodies to work in partnership with other organisations - including Local Authorities - to ensure that the needs of children were taken account of in planning services. The workforce, and training in particular, will play a key role in delivering improvements. This will be reinforced through the Local Delivery Planning process, where Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities identify the needs of the health workforce – both in terms of numbers needed and skills required. The new Children and Young People Plan - which will be prepared in partnership with the local Primary Care Trust or Trusts - will provide a broad framework for meeting the needs of children and young people in a local area, and will therefore support joint action to build a workforce that can meet those needs.

The use of ring fenced budgets for the NHS has been – quite deliberately-reduced in recent years in line with the Government’s policy of shifting power and resources to the frontline. This does not reduce the need for training and other workforce development, but it does ensure that resources for these crucial elements of reform are in the hands of those best placed to make best use of them.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/health](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/health)

<sup>7</sup> [www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics)

**17. We would urge that the presumption against an entitlement to training – with a pooled fund at interdepartmental level to support it – is reconsidered. Such a move would send out clear signals to local areas that training and workforce development were being given a high priority, and would also provide vital initial resources to address some of the staff development and training needs arising from the implementation of the *Every Child Matters* agenda.**

The Committee is right to stress the vital importance of training and we note the Committee's proposal for a centrally funded training entitlement. As set out under recommendation 15, we are currently consulting on our *Children's Workforce Strategy* which highlights the importance of workforce development. The strategy sets out the Government's expectation that local partners will establish a clear understanding of the needs of the children and young people in their area and an analysis of the workforce numbers and skills, service redesign and workforce development and reform required to meet those needs better.

The strategy suggests the need for local workforce strategies to be developed to set out the necessary steps to improve services.

Building on the best of existing good practice, local strategies should include:

- programmes to support career progression, using work-based routes, for those with talent and ambition;
- clarity about opportunities for progression between partner services and agencies;
- the necessary human resource capacity to deliver support to managers on job design, job evaluation and agreement on reward packages;
- regular training needs analyses, as part of performance management arrangements, to identify skills gaps including in the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and language;
- induction training for all new recruits based on the *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge*;
- good quality opportunities for continuous development to share and embed good practice;
- training opportunities to meet particular needs identified by Local Safeguarding Children Boards and others; and
- agreed approaches to support workforce development in the private, voluntary and community sectors.

As set out above, the Strategy and the accompanying partial Regulatory Impact Assessment reaffirm the Government's view that there is sufficient funding either in or earmarked for the system to ensure effective workforce development in all sectors of the children's workforce, including health services. However, the Government will review its position in light of the responses to the consultation.

## CHILD INDEXES

### *Evidence and evaluation*

**18. In the past, this committee has been concerned that crucial policy decisions are sometimes taken without sufficient research or evaluation of existing practice. In this case, the fundamental decision to go ahead with child indexes appears to have been taken before the activities of the Information Sharing and Assessment Trailblazers could be fully analysed.**

19. We are not convinced that sufficient evidence currently exists to justify the commissioning of the proposed IT-based child indexes. We have significant reservations about whether this will represent the best use of resources and very significant concerns about critical issues such as security, confidentiality and access arrangements. We are concerned in particular that the current research evidence does not conclusively demonstrate that expenditure in this area is the best way of improving outcomes for children.

20. We welcome the news that further evaluative work on the impact of indexes in Trailblazer areas is now being planned, and that the results of this will be used to inform the business case for implementation. This research should analyse the comparative benefit of the indexes as a means of improving outcomes and other ways of improving information-sharing within and between professionals.

The Government believes that indexes offer an important tool to make frontline services more effective. They can facilitate communication among practitioners to help ensure that all children get the services and support they need at the earliest possible stage. However, the Government is committed to a steady, staged approach. It has made clear in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* that the decision to proceed to implementation will depend upon Ministers being satisfied that a robust business case, analysing costs and benefits, has been made for the investment and that the necessary resources are available. That business case will be informed by evidence from the experience of the nine Trailblazer local authorities that have implemented index solutions on a trial basis.

The Government is pleased to see that the Committee has welcomed the further evaluative work now underway on the impact of indexes in Trailblazer areas. This work will place particular emphasis on how the Trailblazers are realising the benefits both in terms of service delivery and practitioner practice – especially in a multi-agency environment.

The Government will ensure that any index solution it supports will be technically robust. Security controls will be subject to independent scrutiny and audit, both at design stage and after implementation and security standards will be in line with industry and Government best practice. Built-in audit trails will ensure authorised and appropriate use of the index. The Government is announcing its response to consultation on how practitioners would record and access the provision of sensitive services and record a concern on the index alongside this response. The Government has listened closely to views expressed on these very important issues of index operation and our response to the consultation demonstrates our commitment to client confidentiality and confidence in the system.

## COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

### *Testing, evaluation and implementation*

21. It is essential that the design and implementation of the Common Assessment Framework takes place at a pace that allows informed development. The commitment to further testing and assessment before national rollout is therefore extremely welcome. While it is sensible that the assessments will examine the impacts of Common Assessment Framework on services, we would also hope that they take a broader view and examine the extent to which the Common Assessment Framework is leading to improved outcomes for children, young people and families.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the development and implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is informed by testing, assessment and evaluation. The CAF is to be trialled in a number of local areas in 2005-06 before national roll-out in 2006-08.

The Department for Education and Skills is commissioning a formal evaluation of CAF implementation in those areas adopting it this year. This will inform the CAF's implementation in all local areas from 2006-08. There will be further evaluation during that period to assess the CAF's impact, and of other related changes to practice in children's services, on outcomes for children, young people and families.

## INTEGRATED INSPECTION

### *Inspection and continuous improvement*

14. The introduction of an integrated inspection framework offers a further opportunity to emphasise the importance of integrated working at the front line, and we hope the final guidance on integrated inspection later this year will focus in part on this issue.

23. We maintain that for inspection to serve as a lever for improvement, there needs to be a clear process linking inspection findings, communication of these findings to service(s) inspected, and suitable intervention to bring about change.

24. To play the critical role in *Every Child Matters* that the Government envisages, integrated inspection must ultimately contribute to the improvement of services. We would welcome clarification on how this will happen with regard to inspections of children's services. The specific procedures which will be triggered should a local area be deemed by integrated inspection to be failing require clearer explanation. In particular, it needs to be made clear how the findings of area reviews will be played back to individual service providers, and how these will be used to bring about improvement.

We fully agree with the Committee. Ofsted and the other participating inspectorates and commissions expect to publish shortly – with the Secretary of State's consent – the Framework for Inspection of Children's Services, and arrangements and criteria for joint area reviews (JARs) of children's services. These documents reflect general support received in over 200 written responses to consultation documents issued in December 2004.

The Framework for Inspection of Children's Services will emphasise the importance of integrated working, including at the front line. It will do this in two main ways. First, it will provide explicitly that, in assessing the quality and management of services for children and young people, inspections will judge the effectiveness of the steps taken to work co-operatively with partners to share information and provide services. Second, it will reinforce the point that all services should contribute to the same overall purpose of improving the well-being of children and young people. Accordingly, the Framework will provide that all inspections will focus on services' contributions to delivering the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes. The Framework will define these outcomes further, using the 25 aims in the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children Outcomes Framework*, and listing 36 service contributions on which key judgements may be made by inspectors.

For example, the new school inspection framework will require inspectors to assess the school's contribution to the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes. Inspectors will evaluate links between the school and its wider community in a number of ways. They will assess:

- the overall effectiveness of the school, including any extended services;
- how far programmes or the curriculum meet external requirements and are responsive to local circumstances; and,
- the effectiveness of links made with other providers, services, employers and other organisations to promote the integration of care, education and any extended services so as to enhance learning and promote well-being.

The Framework for Inspection of Children's Services will make clear that the purpose of inspection is to help improve outcomes for children's services. Part of that process includes the Inspectorates saying what should be done to improve services' contributions to achieving the outcomes, and informing the action that needs to be taken to pursue improvement. *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* shows that integrated inspection of children's services is a component of the improvement cycle for children's services.

The way inspection findings are communicated varies according to the inspection programme concerned. Taking JARs, for example, the arrangements published by Ofsted include the steps to be taken before a report is finalised. Throughout and at the conclusion of inspection fieldwork, inspectors will discuss emerging issues and findings with the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and other senior managers; and before issuing the report they will hold a feedback meeting with the DCS, the Lead Member for children's services, representatives of partner organisations and the local Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership.

The publication requirements for JARs will be set out in regulations. Draft regulations, on which the Department consulted from 18 March to 13 June, propose that Ofsted must issue a report to the Local Authority, and the Authority must then publish the report and a plan of the action to be taken in response by the Authority and its partners. Publication will involve sending the report and plan for action to relevant partners, Local Safeguarding Children Board partners, and a local newspaper and local radio station; and making a copy available for inspection free or supplying a copy on demand for a reasonable charge. These requirements ensure the inspection findings and plans for action, are not only communicated to the services inspected, but also to the service users.

Where a joint area review finds service contributions to outcomes to be unsatisfactory, Government will engage with the relevant service providers to develop and agree robust and tailored solutions. Where agreement on a solution cannot be reached, as a last resort, the Children Act 2004 includes powers for Government to intervene across education and children's social care services. Some Government departments and agencies also have statutory powers to intervene in non-Local Authority services for children. The Department for Education and Skills has worked with other Departments and agencies to develop a shared understanding of intervention experience and to agree how we will communicate to facilitate timely and joined up intervention where necessary.

## FUNDING – OVERALL COSTS OF REFORM

29. We think – and our concern is amplified by what witnesses have told us – that the additional resources needed to 'bridge' the transition from 'fire fighting' to more effective preventive, universally accessible services are unlikely to be found through 'efficiency savings' generated by services working in a more 'joined-up' way.

32. Our evidence demonstrates that at the very least, in respect of some specific areas of policy there is a strong case for identifying additional funds for implementation, over and above those which have already been put aside. These areas include, but are not limited to, workforce development and the setup and maintenance of Children's Trusts. The Government should therefore consider committing additional dedicated resources – cross-departmentally and ring-fenced if appropriate – to enable successful implementation of *Every Child Matters*.

The Government notes the Committee's concerns about the level of resources but considers that there are already substantial resources available to bridge the transition from fire fighting to more effective prevention. These include:

- increases in baseline funding for children's social care, education and health services;
- very substantial additional resources made available to fund the roll-out of Sure Start children's centres, for child care and Extended Schools;
- the introduction of the Change Fund specifically to support the implementation of *Every Child Matters: change for children* locally; and programme budgets held by the Department for Education and Skills to fund the development of child index systems and Children Workforce Development Council.

All these will be supplemented by resources freed up through efficiency gains which will be available for recycling to front line services.

*Baseline increases.* In 2004-05 and 2005-06 all Local Authorities are receiving a non-hypothecated Safeguarding Children Grant of £90 million to help them respond to the recommendations of Lord Laming's Report of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié.<sup>8</sup> This grant is being used to improve a wide range of services to help safeguard children. Children's health services will also benefit from growth in NHS expenditure by almost 70% in six years from £33 billion to almost £56 billion. NHS expenditure will rise steadily over the next five years to more than £90 billion. The Children's Social Services Formula Spending Share (FSS) rises by £500 million between 2005-06 and 2007-08.

*Additional resources.* As a result of increases announced in Budget 2004 and the 2004 Pre-Budget Report, investment in early years and childcare is planned to increase by £918m between 2004-05 and 2007-08. Around £160 million has been invested in supporting the development of extended schools to date and a further £680 million will be invested over 2006-08. This will support the Government's aim for all schools to become extended schools by 2010 with half of all primary schools and a third of all secondary schools doing so by 2008.

*Funding specifically to support the Every Child Matters agenda.* From October 2004 to March 2006 a local Change Fund grant of £15 million has been allocated across all Local Authorities to help them to build on progress in putting children's trusts in place. Local Authorities can spend the grant on any aspect of children's trust arrangements, including multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working, common assessment, information sharing, joint commissioning or setting up Local Safeguarding Children Boards. While this small grant will allow local areas to kick-start change in various ways, the increased efficiency of more joined up working and less duplication gives every incentive to reconfigure baseline budgets in order to support new ways of working. The remainder of the Change Fund is being used to support central activities on children's workforce development and Information Sharing and Assessment; Regional Change Advisers; supporting strategic local leaders; technical support for children's trusts around commissioning and pooled resources; the identification and dissemination of emerging practice and on funding the Children's Commissioner. From 2006 the Government will be making available £22.5m in 2006-07 and £63 million in 2007-08 to help Local Authorities implement the changes in *Every Child Matters*.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications)

Further funding continues to be made available to support specific aspects of *Every Child Matters*. On information sharing, the Government has already provided £100 thousand to each unitary and county council to help them improve arrangements for sharing information across local services. It has also provided £1 million each to 10 groupings of 15 trailblazer local authorities to test new information sharing processes more intensively. This includes funding for trailblazer local authorities to develop local versions of an information sharing index, in order to enable lessons to be learnt nationally about how this can be done most effectively. For 2006-07 and 2007-08, £5.5 million and £23.75 million respectively are being held centrally to fund further national development work on index systems, subject to Ministerial decisions on next steps.

For workforce reform, additional resources are also being made available to the Children's Workforce Development Council (£15 million in 2006-07 and £30 million in 2007-08).

In addition, funds are being held centrally to support national level initiatives on:

- support for parents and carers (£5 million in 2006-07, £10 million in 2007-08); and
- support for foster carers and other activity to improve the life chances of children looked after by local authorities (£5 million in each of 2006-07 and 2007-08).

A further £2 million in 2007-08 is being made available to support voluntary and community organisations to engage with local change.

*Efficiency Gains* In addition, Local Authorities are able to use resources released locally through any efficiency savings they make. The Government expects the reforms in *Every Child Matters* to make a substantial contribution to improving the efficiency of children's services and delivering the target of at least 2.5% more output in children's social services each year. The Government has produced a toolkit to help Local Authorities in delivering efficiencies across children's services. Local Authorities will be able to use all their efficiency gains in the change process. In the short term the savings are likely to be as a result of the Choice Protects agenda which began in 2002. Longer term the *Every Child Matters* agenda – with its emphasis on joint working, better commissioning and prevention – will enable councils to meet the target. Early evidence attained from the annual efficiency statements suggests that local authorities expect to achieve the efficiency gains set out in the Gershon Review.

**30. The evidence we have seen has not convinced us that the financial implications of the *Every Child Matters* programme of reform have been properly assessed or comprehensively modelled, and it is therefore not clear on what basis the Government is able to assume that *Every Child Matters* will be largely self-financing. We recognise and welcome the significant extra resources for primary school capital projects, announced in Budget 2005 which, it is intended, will be used partly to support the *Every Child Matters* agenda. However, we are still unclear as to whether capital building, adaptation or maintenance costs associated with the roll-out of Extended Schools and Sure Start Children's Centres have been properly modelled.**

The Government believes it has properly assessed the costs of reform. Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) were published for *Every Child Matters* and the Children Act 2004 that looked in broad terms at the funding implications of the reforms. A partial RIA on the Children's Workforce Strategy was published alongside the consultation on the Strategy; we expect to publish a full RIA when we publish the Government's response to the consultation. An RIA on policies associated with the Duty to Co-operate, which provides the legal underpinning for children's trust arrangements, is being prepared for publication with the associated statutory guidance. Further RIAs will be published on, for example, the establishment of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, and on

information sharing. Those detailed RIAs together will provide a detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of the *Every Child Matters* reforms.

Regarding capital expenditure, by 2008 the Government will have made available £840 million, including capital funding, on the development of extended schools. This funding is to help kick-start extended services, building on what some schools are already providing. The funding should be used to help schools overcome barriers they face in developing extended services. For example, it could be used to employ support staff to help plan, develop, manage and maintain extended services or for minor capital costs such as improved play areas.

On schools capital in general, the Government collects data on the building needs of the schools estate from local authorities approximately every two years. This includes data on the condition and suitability of school buildings. This data is used to inform the development of the Department's schools capital programmes and the allocation of funding to need.

Total capital investment through the Department for Education and Skills' schools programme will amount to over £17 billion between 2005-06 and 2007-08. The majority of this funding can be used for buildings that will support extended services (e.g. rooms with dual use). Programmes are allocated as flexibly as possible, and local authorities are able to decide investment priorities depending on local need, which varies from area to area. Other resources may be contributed by other services (e.g. health or leisure) in order to support children's centres and extended services in schools.

The resources announced for primary schools in the Budget 2005 will support a new long-term primary capital programme starting in 2008 (£150m in 2008-09 and £500m in 2009-10). Details of this programme, including detailed financial modelling, are being developed.

Building Schools for the Future is the parallel long-term programme for secondary schools, starting this year. Financial modelling for this has been based on expressions of interest submitted by every local authority in 2003. These covered authorities' building plans for every secondary and special school they considered in need of capital investment. It is our intention that these local authorities will update their expressions of interest at regular intervals over the 15-year programme so that our national programme assumptions remain up to date.

Some revenue funding for extended services in schools will go direct to schools. Some will be devolved down to school level through local authorities, and targeted where it is most needed. By 2008 half of all primary schools and a third of all secondary schools will have developed extended services and all schools will have done so by 2010. We are also encouraging the joining up of extended schools funding with other funding streams, such as children's centres funding, where appropriate. Funding can be used flexibly, recognising that schools are at different stages of development, will face different barriers and will have different priorities. Maintenance and other running costs will also be covered by schools charging for some services such as childcare (for people on lower income help will be available to cover charging through childcare working tax credit).

However, this is not just about new school buildings or refurbishment to existing buildings to cater for extended services. Schools are a valuable community asset usually situated at the heart of communities, but often underused. The extended schools approach is very much about making better use of school premises and equipment outside of normal school hours for the benefit of all children, young people, families and others in the local community.

In 2006-08 the Government plan to make £970 million capital funding available to support the delivery of Sure Start services, including extended schools and children's centres. Of the £970 million, £597.6 million is for Sure Start and children's centres. This is in addition to the £241 million of capital made available in 2004-06 to support the delivery of 1st phase children's centres.

Children's centre capital and revenue provides additional funding to deliver services for children aged 0-4 years through the provision of integrated services. Our expectation is that centres will be developed from a range of other provision and will generally be adaptations and extensions to existing buildings that in many cases have previously benefited from large sums of capital investment as a result of one or more programmes e.g. Sure Start Local programmes, Early Excellence Centres and Neighbourhood Nursery Initiatives. Only a small percentage of capital projects will be newly built. We expect local authorities to maximise opportunities for joint funded capital projects: this should lead to better use of public money and the delivery of buildings that better support the delivery of integrated services.

The Sure Start Unit has a comprehensive framework of universal and targeted support to support the delivery of Sure Start capital projects. This includes the guidance, *Building for Sure Start Design and Client Guide*,<sup>9</sup> which focuses on the delivery of children's centre capital projects. A guide for extended schools is also being developed. Guidance is supported by information on cost of projects and design specifications. The Unit works with internal and external partners, including CABE (Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment) to monitor the cost and delivery of projects. Information gained is used to develop approaches to funding, policies, support and guidance. So for example the allocations for 2nd phase children's centres include a London and rural uplift (for those Local Authorities with rural areas).

**31. We are doubtful that a policy as ambitious as *Every Child Matters* can be funded in the main from existing budgets. Better deployment of existing resources is a laudable aim, but we believe the Government needs to lead from the top on this issue and build up an evidence base which demonstrates how this can be achieved in practice.**

The response to recommendations 29, 30 and 32 set out the Government's analysis of costs and resources for *Every Child Matters* and the additional resources being provided. The Government accepts the importance of building up an evidence base which shows how resources can best be deployed. As part of helping Local Authorities and partners to implement *Every Child Matters*, the Government is including trials of different elements of the programme and is working to ensure lessons are learned. These are described below.

*Children's Trust Pathfinders.* As described under the *Pacing Change* section, the evaluation of Children's Trust Pathfinders should help local areas develop more efficient planning and commissioning. The Children Act 2004 will enable the pooling of funds between a wider range of agencies than existing powers and thus make it easier for agencies to work together in the commissioning and delivery of services.

*Information Sharing and Assessment.* As we have shown in the Child Indexes section, the Information Sharing and Assessment Trailblazers have helped local areas see the benefits of joint working, underpinned by training. The lessons are feeding into the cost-benefit analysis of the case for child index systems as well as informing good practice locally.

Trials of the *Common Assessment Framework* (CAF) are taking place. CAF is a standardised approach to assessing children's needs for services and is being trialled before national roll-out (see also our response to recommendation 21).

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<sup>9</sup> [www.surestart.gov.uk/communications](http://www.surestart.gov.uk/communications)

The Government is currently consulting on the practical implications of the *Children's Workforce Strategy* (see the Workforce Development and Training Needs section) and of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to identify the best way forward.

The Government is working closely with Local Authorities to encourage shared learning of emerging practices and has introduced Regional Change Advisers, Children's Services Improvement Advisers and children's trusts co-ordinators to support authorities in carrying forward change locally. A series of Regional Events provided opportunities for authorities to share their experiences and discuss real examples. A lot of useful emerging practice has already been generated – for example through children's trusts pathfinders, ISA trailblazers and the Beacon Council scheme – and has been shared through conferences, workshops and the Department for Education and Skills' *Every Child Matters* website.

The Department for Education and Skills is working closely with partners to capture and disseminate emerging and effective good practice on all aspects of the ECM programme and to disseminate it widely (see also our response under the *Pacing Change* section). This will be an important part of the guidance for local areas on achieving efficiency savings.

## DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS – RESTRUCTURING

**33. We are not convinced that the rollout of *Every Child Matters* will be successfully implemented in the context of significant job cuts and restructuring at the Department for Education and Skills and the Children, Young People and Families Directorate in particular. While we appreciate that a more 'strategic' department (and directorate) potentially frees up money for front line services, we are not convinced that this can be achieved at the same time as a major programme of change. Clarification on the kinds of modelling and analysis which have been carried out to demonstrate that the two agendas are complementary is required.**

The programme set out in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* is based on a relationship between central Government and local delivery partners that is very different from that which existed previously. The Government's role will be to support 150 local change programmes but increasingly to move away from direct delivery.

This change in the role of central Government and its relationship with delivery partners must be reflected in the structure of the Children Young People and Families Directorate. It has to be a different Directorate in order to discharge that new more strategic role, and our internal change programme is designed to establish that new Directorate over the next few years.

We are confident that the internal change programme is consistent with delivery of the objectives set out in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, and will enable us to deliver those objectives.

It is important that we keep the programme priorities of *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, and the resources needed to deliver them under review. We have recently revised our programme arrangements to ensure that we are focusing on the key priorities. Each part of the programme is defining the models of change and estimating the resources required to deliver these priorities. Current activities are also being reprioritised in order to focus resources where they are most needed. In addition, the restructuring is being phased and key stages in that process will be aligned with significant changes in the sectors in which we operate.

We have arrangements in place for senior managers to monitor regularly the progress of both the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* Programme and the internal change programme. These include reviews of both short-term and longer-term priority activities to focus resources on the activities that will deliver the most positive outcomes for children and young people, introducing new ways of working as appropriate. Current activities that will contribute to more efficient working include a review of field-forces, combined with re-defining the role of Government Offices in delivering DfES objectives, and centralising certain functions within DfES, for example correspondence handling, to raise quality and deliver economies of scale.

We also have Department-wide arrangements in place for taking forward the programme of internal reform, with those leading reform in different parts of the Department having the opportunity to share good practice and lessons learned with their peers.

## INTRA-DEPARTMENTAL POLICY

### *Standards, inclusion and securing participation of schools*

25. We are not convinced that the levers for participation suggested by the Government will provide the necessary safeguards. This is especially true in the light of policy tensions in the Department for Education and Skills, which appear to be producing contradictory drivers and to be demanding conflicting responses from schools and service providers.

26. We await final confirmation of the details of integrated inspection, but we are deeply concerned that some schools, GPs and other services not under a statutory duty to collaborate in Children's Trust agreements may choose, for one reason or another, not to participate. This has the potential to fundamentally undermine the aims and intentions of *Every Child Matters*. It is unlikely that the current incentives and penalties in the system will be adequate to make reluctant schools, in particular, cooperate. The Government needs to clarify what additional incentives will be introduced into the system to address this issue, and especially, what changes will be made to the framework for the inspection of schools.

34. We accept that there is a fundamental convergence between the standards and the inclusion agendas. However, what concerns us is that the drivers in the system – including inspection and 'league tables', to give two examples – may not be sufficiently strong to encourage schools to see the two agendas as complementary.

The Government agrees that schools' engagement in children's trust arrangements to deliver better outcomes for children is crucial. Schools are one of the most important universal services for children but pupils can't learn if they don't feel safe or if health problems are allowed to create barriers. Doing well in education is the most effective route for young people out of poverty and disaffection, so what this generation of pupils achieve in school has an effect on the next generation of children and how they will fare. The Government agrees with the view of the Director of Children's Services for Brighton and Hove, David Hawker, who said in evidence to the Committee on 20 December 2004 that: *'Most schools that do one well do the other well as well. I think it is a false dichotomy to say that you either do achievement or you do inclusion ... I do not think a school can be truly successful unless it does genuinely address both aspects.'*

The Government also believes that schools should be free to decide for themselves how they are to create opportunities for their pupils and support pupils to achieve. That freedom is a major incentive for success. If schools adopt the message of inclusion from a position of self-confidence and conviction, they will operate, and co-operate more effectively than if they feel they are merely complying with processes and red tape. The Government proposes to

build up schools' commitment to inclusion by two main means: inspection, and the work of the new cadre of School Improvement Partners. Both means will be underpinned by data (including performance tables) and by schools' self-evaluation.

The Government sees the new inspection arrangements as a powerful lever because they reflect the complementary nature of achievement and well-being within school life. As we have said in response to recommendations 14, 23 and 24, the new framework for inspecting schools in England which comes into effect in September will require inspectors to inspect and report on schools' contribution across the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes, including in terms of their co-operation with other services and agencies.

There is specific training for inspectors to ensure that they are clear about what to capture in relation to well-being and how this should be covered. This emphasises that schools should be working towards the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes in collaboration with key services. For example, in evaluating school leadership and management, inspectors will look at the effectiveness of links made with other providers, services, employers and other organisations to promote the integration of care, education, and any extended services to enhance learning and to promote well-being, as well as the extent to which enrichment activities and/or extended services contribute to learners' enjoyment and achievement. Inspectors should evaluate the overall effectiveness of the provision, including any extended services and the main strengths and weaknesses; the capacity of the school to make further improvements; and the effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection.

Schools are therefore being given a very clear message that well-being is important and that they will be held to account for making accessible services and measures that promote it. Moreover, the framework for the inspection of schools will sit under the overall Framework for Inspection of Children's Services which also emphasises the need for co-operation between services and for services to contribute across the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes. Joint Area Reviews will take into account how local schools cooperate to secure improved outcomes for children.

School Improvement Partners, whom Local Authorities are to appoint and engage, will work on the premise of school autonomy. But they will challenge and support schools over their performance. They will review the data on all students' attainment, well-being and progress; significant variations and inequitable outcomes within each school; pupils' attendance and behaviour. Their reviews of pupils' well-being will address the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes and how these are affecting educational outputs.

Both inspections and the work of School Improvement Partners will refer to schools' self-evaluations. Self-evaluation will include performance table information, but will go wider and deeper. For example, the Self Evaluation Framework calls upon schools to consider the standards attained by different groups such as girls and boys, the gifted, children in public care, the talented, those from different ethnic groups, and those with different special needs; the progress made by different groups of learners over time – for example, how well they do between entering nursery and leaving the Foundation Stage or between Key Stages 2 and 4 or in all-age settings across all the key stages; and the outcomes from learners' personal development and well-being, including how far they meet the five outcomes. An important recent development here is improved individual pupil level data which will allow for detailed analysis.

The Government is providing guidance and funding, both to local authorities and to schools, so that all schools can develop extended services (see also our response to recommendation 12). A core menu of extended services will either be in or accessible through all schools by 2010. The core services are: high quality wraparound childcare available from 8am to 6pm all the year round; a varied menu of activities to be offered

during these hours including homework clubs, sport and arts and crafts; parenting support – including parenting programmes run with the support of other children’s services; swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services such as speech therapy, child and adolescent mental health services and intensive behaviour support; and wider community access to ICT, sports and arts facilities. In many cases schools will need to engage with partner agencies that can provide these services but in any case the law requires schools to consult widely before starting to provide extended services, as a minimum with parents of children registered at the school, the children, staff and the local authority. The new school profile will give schools the opportunity to set out for parents the full range of services they offer.

Local Authorities will be developing 3500 children’s centres by 2010 – one for every community. Children’s centres serve children and families from the ante-natal period until the child goes to school. Services will include integrated early learning and care available 10 hours a day, 48 weeks a year; and family support and health services, including midwives and health visitors. Many centres will be co-located with schools. Where the school is offering extended services as well, families can be supported throughout the age range. Children’s centres which are co-located with schools will either be managed by the headteacher or a separate manager.

The Government considers these measures to be powerful and effective levers for securing schools’ engagement in local children’s trust arrangements. Schools’ participation is crucial to success. We will therefore keep the position under review.

The committee is right to identify primary care as a vital component in the set of services that will improve outcomes for children. When Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills jointly published the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, we also published a dedicated section on Key Issues for Primary Care in recognition of the importance of General Practitioners (GPs), Practice Nurses, Health Visitors, Midwives, and other members of the primary health care team in the provision of integrated care for children, young people and their families. There are a number of incentives in place for primary care providers to engage in children’s trust arrangements and the local change programmes that the children’s trust will lead.

Primary care contracting arrangements (including those used for GPs) can, for example, be used to deliver ‘enhanced services’ that may well in future be developed through agreements reached by participants in a Children’s Trust.

The way that the NHS – including primary care providers such as GPs – delivers services is increasingly governed by the system of ‘core’ and ‘developmental’ standards that NHS bodies are performance managed and inspected against. These include standards that deal with child protection (core standard C2) and with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (NSF standard 5 and other parts of the NSF).

In the case of both safeguarding and also co-operation to bring services together around the needs of children, young people, families and carers, there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the legislative provisions of the Children Act 2004 and the standards set out in the National Service Framework and the NHS core standard set.

The document *Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Health Services / Supporting Local Delivery*<sup>10</sup> published in December 2004 notes that in reviewing the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) for the General Medical Council contract, the Department of Health will put the case for a new QOF which reflects the need for more child-centred primary care.

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<sup>10</sup> [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

Inspection is another important lever. The Healthcare Commission will inspect against the core and developmental standards. In addition, the Joint Area Reviews starting in September and conducted by a number of inspectorates working together (including the Healthcare Commission) will look across services – including primary care – and give a picture of how well they are working together to improve outcomes. It will include a series of ‘case-tracking’ examples that will follow the child’s journey through services. This has the potential to act as a strong lever for change and improvement.

Another important mechanism for supporting local health partners to deliver improved outcomes in partnership are the jointly-appointed DH-DFES Regional Change Advisers who are working with Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and others to build relationships and support change.

**28. The Department for Education and Skills is currently consulting on the Director of Children’s Services role. When statutory guidance is finally issued, it must make explicit the actions which will be open to Directors of Children’s Services should essential partners fail to co-operate.**

Guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children’s Services (DCS) and Lead Member for Children’s Services (LM) was issued on 5 April 2005. In finalising the guidance, the Government took account of the response to public consultation on the draft, which was generally positive. The purpose of the guidance is to explain the statutory duties under Sections 18 and 19 of the Children Act 2004. The guidance to be issued on Children’s trust arrangements and the Children and Young People Plan will set out clearly the expectations on partner organisations and will also be sent to them when the guidance is issued.

Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 also sets out a framework for co-operation. The expectations on partner organisations will be reinforced by the statutory guidance under that section and in other ways – for example through the Public Health White Paper and the National Standards Framework for health. Those in turn will be supported by joint area reviews (JAR) which will look at the effectiveness of local co-operation arrangements.

As discussed in the response to the Committee’s recommendations 14, 23, and 24, the Department is consulting on regulations that propose that, following a JAR, Ofsted will issue a report to the Local Authority, and the Authority must then publish the report, and a plan of the action to be taken in response by the Authority and its partners.

It would not be appropriate, and we do not think it necessary, to give Local Authorities the power to direct action by other statutory bodies. But where local agreement on a way forward cannot be reached and services are, as a result, not operating effectively to meet children’s needs, the Act includes powers for Government to intervene across education and children’s social care services. Other Departments and agencies also have statutory powers to intervene in non-Local Authority services for children.

## INTERDEPARTMENTAL POLICY

**35. We do not think that the challenges involved in dealing with children and young people in custody have been properly addressed by the *Every Child Matters* reforms. The youth justice system is not sufficiently distinct from the adult criminal justice system and is too separate from the mainstream children’s legislation and services.**

The Government agrees that working with children and young people in the secure estate presents particular challenges. Although the support and welfare needs of children and young people in custody can differ from those of adults, the Government does not accept that the youth justice system should be detached from the wider criminal justice system.

An integral part of the *Every Child Matters* reforms is to protect children and young people from involvement in – and exposure to – crime and anti-social behaviour. *Every Child Matters* made clear that its approach does not involve addressing the needs of young offenders in a way that is separate to helping young people with other social care needs. Therefore the Duty to Co-operate in the Children Act 2004 covers the probation service, the police and Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), whilst the Duty to Safeguard includes the probation service, police, YOTs and prisons/secure training centres.

How YOTs and other children's services work together through local children's trust arrangements is crucial, but of course YOTs will need to always maintain their strong links with Criminal Justice Boards. The *Every Child Matters* reforms will help YOTs by linking their work to the wider range of children's services, and help those services benefit from the experience and knowledge of YOTs, thereby offering the child/young person a more complete package of support. This will also help ensure the youth justice system is not just a copy of the adult system.

The Department for Education and Skills is continuing to work closely with the Home Office and the Youth Justice Board to ensure youth justice developments do not stand in isolation from the progress of the overall *Every Child Matters* agenda.

**36. We heard evidence that in some cases children's outcomes are secondary to immigration outcomes. We accept that there are sincere attempts to look after children's welfare within the immigration system, but we are concerned that some of the fundamental policy decisions – such as detention of asylum-seeking children – may make the achievement of the five outcomes for these children much more difficult.**

The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), which includes both National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and the UK Immigration Service (UKIS), takes its responsibilities towards children very seriously and fully appreciates the importance of safeguarding children. However, the Government has to balance this with the need to maintain an effective immigration control. In recognition of their responsibilities towards the children it encounters, IND has established a Children's Taskforce. The primary aim of the Children's Taskforce is to ensure that IND has adequate safeguards in place so that children in need are identified promptly and are referred to the appropriate agencies. The work of the Taskforce is informed by an external advisory group of experts in child protection issues.

Both NASS and UKIS have well established working arrangements with Local Authorities and IND have established a Local Authority Taskforce. This consists of a multi-disciplinary IND team looking at the range of asylum-related problems faced by Local Authorities and establishing how these could be jointly resolved.

IND is continuing to improve its policies and procedures concerning children. While it has traditionally worked in partnership with Local Authorities and the police to ensure that any concerns about a child are acted upon, it is working to improve these good working relations with Local Authorities and other agencies in a number of ways. These include the establishment of a single point of contact for all Local Authorities and social workers who want to clarify the immigration status of a child and promoting awareness of this contact point amongst social workers; issuing new instructions to caseworkers to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to engage social services at an early stage in any case involving a child where there is cause for concern; the development of Best Practice guidance to raise awareness among Immigration Officers about identifying and making appropriate referrals of vulnerable children; and establishing a range of measures for working with social services in relation to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, including teams of social workers based at ports of entry. This is a challenging area and IND will closely monitor and review these initiatives to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children are being met.

Detention is an unfortunate but necessary element of the Government's immigration control procedures. In the overwhelming majority of cases those families with children that are detained have had their applications to remain in the UK refused and have removal directions in place. Children are therefore only detained in these circumstances for the shortest possible time, and usually for no more than a few days. The Immigration Service have introduced enhanced arrangements for the rigorous and frequent review of family detention and put in place a system of regular Ministerial authorisation for the detention of children beyond 28 days. UKIS does not detain unaccompanied children, except for no longer than overnight in exceptional circumstances, whilst alternative care arrangements are made. UKIS is aware of concerns expressed recently about the adequacy of child protection and welfare arrangements in removal centres that may hold families with children. Whilst UKIS is satisfied as to the adequacy of the child protection arrangements and with the general position in relation to child welfare, further work has been undertaken to enhance links with local social services and is ongoing to enhance welfare provision. Both NASS and UKIS will be fully involved in Local Safeguarding Children Boards where appropriate, and particularly in areas where there are Reception and Removal Centres.

















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