



MILLION

**One-year business plan
April 2009 – March 2010**

July 2009

This document is for adults who are:

- * Professionals in national and local government
- * Professionals who deliver children's services
- * Parliamentarians
- * 11 MILLION's Audit and Risk Committee
- * Other children's commissioners and their staff



**"The 11 MILLION children
and young people in
England have a voice"**
Children's Commissioner for
England, Professor Sir Albert
Aynsley-Green

Foreword by the Children's Commissioner



As we enter the next exciting phase of 11 MILLION's evolution, we will be building on the success and impact we have had in the first four years of our existence.

This, my final business plan as Children's Commissioner, outlines what my team and I will work hard to deliver during 2009/10, where we will dedicate our efforts, energies and resources; and how we expect to be held accountable for delivering effective outcomes.

We take our unique statutory duty to promote the views and best interests of children very seriously.

We will focus on six strategic areas that affect children and young people, and in which we can make a significant impact, given our statutory responsibilities and unique role.

Selection of these areas has been based on listening to children and young people across England. We have done this in many ways including our Worries and Wishes project, our website and our listening tours; coupled with cross-referencing against the desired Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people and promoting their rights as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The hallmarks of our new direction is strategic engagement with children and young people to inform our influencing of policy and practice, and effective partnership and collaborative working – with government, parliamentarians, professionals working with and on behalf of children and young people as well as with parents, carers and families.

Starting this financial year, we intend to increase significantly the number and range of children and young people's voices that are heard across England by decision makers and the public, particularly reaching out to children and young people who are vulnerable and whose voices are otherwise not heard.

We look forward to working with you as we make our contribution to improving children and young people's lives. This is our enduring promise.

Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green
Children's Commissioner for England

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1 Who are we?

11 MILLION is a national organisation led by the Children's Commissioner for England, and established in 2004.

The Children Act 2004

The Children Act that created the post states the Children's Commissioner for England must promote the views and interests of children.

The Act also states we must be concerned with the five aspects of well-being covered in Every Child Matters – the national government framework aimed at improving outcomes for all children and young people; and we must 'have regard' to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Act also gives us some unique powers including the right to enter any premises where a child or young person resides except a private home, and to set up an inquiry under particular circumstances.

Our vision

Children and young people will be actively involved in shaping all decisions that affect their lives, are supported to achieve their full potential through the provision of appropriate services, and will live in homes and communities where their rights are respected and they are loved, safe and enjoy life.

Our mission

We will use our powers and independence to ensure that the views of children and young people are asked for routinely, are listened to and that outcomes for children improve over time. We will do this in partnership with others, by bringing children and young people into the heart of the decision-making process to increase understanding of their best interests.

For more information

Do visit our website for everything you need to know about 11 MILLION including our values and behaviours at www.11MILLION.org.uk



2 The way we work with others

Our promise to children and young people

Their views and interests will shape our work and their active involvement is essential. We will reach out to ever more children and young people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. We will make a real difference to their lives through achieving clear, tangible and measurable objectives.

Our promise to decision-makers and service delivery agents, including the voluntary sector and parliamentarians

We will work with them to review existing policies and services from the perspective of children and young people and help them formulate new policies and services that put the needs and interests of children and young people at the heart of what they do. Their views and interests will also shape our work and their active involvement is essential.

Our promise to the media

We will encourage the media to project a fairer and more positive image of children and young people. We will facilitate safe direct contact with children and young people, so journalists can hear first-hand their views and experiences.

Our promise to parents, carers and other adults

We will work in partnership with them to ensure children and young people have the best opportunities to achieve their full potential.

3 Our corporate strategy 2009-12



We are determined to promote the views and best interests of children and young people, so that we can support improvements to their lives. But we want to be crystal clear about the difference we are making, and this is why we will continue to focus our efforts on two major long-term goals, assessing our progress regularly.

Our long-term goals are:



Children and young people see significant improvements in their well-being and can freely enjoy their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



Children and young people are more highly valued by adult society.

We have also agreed the following strategic objectives:



To show that we have made a significant difference to the lives of children and young people by promoting effectively their views.



To target, within our resources, a finite range of policy areas, working with others in partnership to achieve maximum impact.



To develop a wide-ranging body of knowledge about the experiences and challenges children and young people face.



To ensure children and children's organisations help to shape and drive our strategies and priorities.



To show that we are delivering an efficient and effectively managed organisation.

4 Our HOME OF 11 MILLION

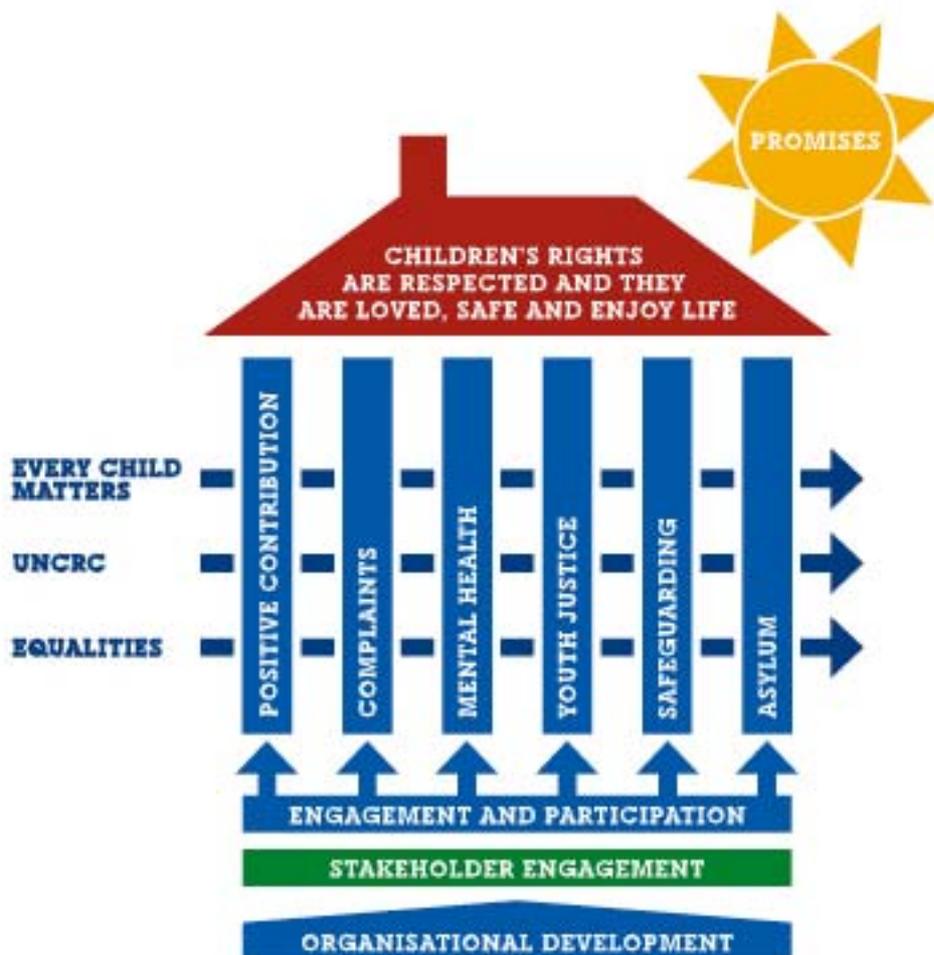


We depict our corporate strategy 2009-2012 as our HOME OF 11 MILLION

In order to achieve maximum influence within our resources, we will focus over the next three years on six major themes. Selection of these themes has been based on listening to children and young people in many different ways.

Our HOME OF 11 MILLION shows how children's rights, safety and quality of life will be upheld by our six strategic themes, within the context of national and international legislation.

These six themes are underpinned by our golden thread, which is children and young people's strategic participation and engagement, supported by effective stakeholder relationships and organisational development. All of these actions are watched over by our declared promises and ways of working with others.



5 Themes and goals



Theme 1 - Positive contribution

We believe that children and young people's contribution to society should be properly valued. We will do this by celebrating and highlighting children's achievements through a number of joint initiatives.

The National Youth Week consortium will be a key partnership, to which we will give our full support. We will also support initiatives like Shine Week that seek to highlight young people's contribution to society.

During this financial year we will explore and launch a ground-breaking two-year pilot with the local authorities in the South East to gather and promote extensively the views of children and young people from that region.

Following the success of 11 MILLION TAKEOVER DAY 2008, which resulted in around 17,000 children and young people being given the opportunity to shadow or 'take-over' adult positions in over 700 participating organisations, this will become a regular event in our calendar. 11 MILLION TAKEOVER DAY 2009 will take place on 6 November as a precursor to our celebrations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, marking its 20 year anniversary, on 20 November.

The Children's Commissioner will continue with a programme of Listening Tours, the purpose of which are to listen to children and young people and promote their achievements.

We will scope the advantages and benefits of implementing a kitemark and/or award that recognises statutory and non-statutory services that welcome children and young people. This year will be spent exploring partnerships with Government departments and non-governmental organisations who also have an interest in this area.

We want to generate and lead a better way of thinking of and speaking about children and young people so that society's perceptions of children and young people become more positive.

To enable achievement of these objectives we will need to develop our partnerships and relationships with the media, the Press Complaints Commission, regulators and unions with a view to promoting balanced and responsible reporting of children as well as responsible commissioning of TV programmes. Our first year will be spent in the field and agreeing an action plan.



Theme 2 - Complaints

Our long term goal is for a complaints and advocacy system for children and young people and for those who speak for them in all settings that will be easy for them to understand and use, and our intention is to systematically examine and strengthen the structures and processes in place across key areas of the public sector.

Listening to the views of children and young people and understanding how institutions can best engage, listen and respond to their concerns and aspirations will be at the heart of this work.

In our first full year of work on this theme we will examine youth justice and asylum services and seek the participation of a wide range of children and young people – including those directly involved in these areas.

This work will inform our recommendations for improvements to Government and the relevant service delivery organisations and disseminate best practice lessons amongst those delivering these services. We will also build on our first year's work in examining other sectors and services in the future and begin to build a comprehensive picture of the complaints and advocacy systems across public services.



Theme 3 - Mental health

The Children's Commissioner will focus on raising awareness of the impact of bereavement on children and young people. His work in this area will include special events, media interviews and encouraging children to share their views with him.



Theme 4 - Youth justice

The needs of children and young people at the milestones of being in conflict with the law and in the Youth Justice System should be understood and properly addressed, and we will work to increase government understanding of these needs.

We will conduct a review into the treatment of young people who offend and will cover the four specific areas of resettlement, reoffending, mental health and strip searching. To ensure that we make the most impact in this field our first year will be spent identifying and engaging partners with whom to work, undertaking research and data collection e.g. into strip searching, and developing the review scope.

The overall specific focus will be on young people who have a history of maltreatment prior to committing offences and entering custody.

An expert reference group will oversee and monitor the progress and quality of this project.



Theme 5 - Safeguarding

The safety and protection of vulnerable children and young people has been at the forefront of the public's attention over the last year and as policy, systems and practice are reviewed it is essential that the voice and views of children and young people are used to realise real improvements.

Therefore, following the recent publication of Lord Laming's report 'The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report', and the Department for Children, Schools and Families' subsequent response, we will undertake to support key recommendations around safeguarding and child protection training. We will do this by working with the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO), to look at children and young people in families that have been highly resistant to social worker support or involvement.

This year we will also be looking at promoting the views of vulnerable children and young people whose cases have been through the family courts system, and to understand the impact of opening up the family courts to the media.

Our goal in all of this work is to ensure that the voices of children and young people are genuinely able to shape and influence national policy and practice.



Theme 6 - Asylum

Our over-arching goal in the field of asylum is to end the detention of children, and to ensure that every young person is treated fairly and humanely at all stages of the asylum and immigration process.

To realise these goals we will continue to work with key partners, such as the Refugee Children's Consortium and UK Border Agency (UKBA) to ensure that the interests of children and young people inform and guide the passage of the Citizenship and Immigration Bill and any statutory guidance that follows.

In order to ensure that the asylum process treats children with dignity and respect in all the milestones of their 'journeys' through the process of seeking refuge we will work to identify ethical standards and provide associated guidance to the UKBA on the screening process, and assist in the development of an appropriate and non-invasive process for age assessment and determination.

We will follow through the recommendations in our report 'The Arrest and Detention of Children Subject to Immigration Control' by working with the UKBA to achieve implementation of all recommendations. We will work with key partners to promote awareness of the issues that affect this group of vulnerable children and young people.

6 Responsive mode



Our business plan is highly focused so that we can affect real change for children in our chosen areas. However, during the year there undoubtedly will be opportunities for 11 MILLION to influence policy that were not evident at the start of the financial year.

In previous years we have realigned our resources to respond, for example, to the rise in the number of mosquito devices, the debate around the introduction of an equivalent to Megan's Law, and the review of safeguarding by Lord Laming as a result of the tragic death of Baby Peter.

We will continue to respond to key emerging issues that children raise with us, that affect children's rights or their best interests.



"I wrote this because every one is equal and should be treated equal and sometimes when you get treated different you feel lonely and upset!!"

(Shape made by Anna, 14, on 11MILLION.org.uk)



7 How we will deliver our strategy in year one

We will engage actively with children, young people, key partners and stakeholders.

Children and young people's participation and engagement

Our promise is to ensure that children and young people's views and best interests are promoted and that they are actively involved in our planning and delivery.

We will ensure that our participation and engagement with young people is of the highest evidence-based standard. Therefore we will support and fund research into the effectiveness of participation and engagement methodologies across England, in collaboration with the National Participation Forum and other key stakeholders.

We will continue to promote the views of children and young people and reach out to ever more children and young people by extending our strategic participation and engagement activities. We will also establish a network of YOUNG FRIENDS OF 11 MILLION who will act as key advisers.

We will continue with our programme of Listening Tours during which the Children's Commissioner and others in 11 MILLION will visit nominated local government regions in England. The purpose of these visits is to meet with children and young people in various settings, to find out about the key factors that affect their lives and feed their views back to local directors of children's services and other service providers.

Our website will continue to provide a space for young people to put forward their views and issues, to collect information and start dialogue with others based on children's solutions. It will enable us to collect the views and opinions of large numbers of children and young people.

Stakeholders

Over the period of this plan we will be implementing our stakeholder engagement strategy and action plan in order to communicate our messages and work effectively with the children and young people's sector.

Each project will be overseen by an expert reference group drawn from the sector.

An advisory group of children and young people, known as the YOUNG FRIENDS OF 11 MILLION, will be established.

Organisational development

Staff capacity and capability

Our people are our most valuable asset and as such we are making a commitment to develop, support and nurture our staff so that we have a suitably skilled and motivated workforce with the necessary capabilities and

capacity to deliver our corporate plan. To achieve this we are consulting with staff in the first half of this financial year on how we reshape our organisation to maximise effectiveness and efficiency.

We will further develop our personal development review and appraisal processes, ensuring training and development plans are in place and that each individual's personal objectives are clearly linked to our organisational objectives.

Work will continue on developing our HR processes with a view to us gaining Investors in People accreditation. This first year will be spent concentrating on scoping the necessary steps to such accreditation.

In support of the Government's commitment to the apprenticeship scheme; we will also be looking at how apprentices can be best welcomed into our organisation.

We will work to ensure that equality and diversity issues are central to our organisation, and make sure that we meet our additional public sector equalities duties under existing and upcoming legislation.

Governance and accountability

As a non-departmental public body we take seriously our responsibilities around governance and accountability as well as the requirement to deliver efficiency and value for money. As such, we will deliver on our statutory duties to produce and publish an annual report to Parliament, plus publishing our three-year corporate strategy and our one-year business plan.

To show how we are delivering against our strategy and plan we are developing a new performance framework coupled with a monitoring and reporting framework.

We are implementing a new risk management framework, which will be scrutinised by our Audit and Risk Committee. We will undertake further work in relation to information data security and ensure that all staff members undertake the Cabinet Office training on data security.

To enable our organisation to deliver we need to ensure that we continue to have the premises from which to work. During 2009/10 we will seek to negotiate the extension of our current lease or look to secure alternative accommodation that meets our needs.

8 How we will spend our money



11 MILLION receives its grant-in-aid funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), which has been agreed at an annual level of £3million over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11.

As a guide, our spend this financial year is forecast to be:

Budget	£'000
Pay	1,592.70
Corporate communications	115.50
Project and themes costs	304.00
Premises and support costs*	456.70
*Including the rent and maintenance of our offices and the costs of running the office e.g. printers, phones etc.	
Governance*	61.20
*These costs support our statutory responsibilities for internal and external audit and our Audit and Risk Committee.	
Non-pay staff costs*	108.70
*This budget covers the costs of training and recruitment, and of any temporary staff that we may need.	
Depreciation and cost of capital	364.20
Income	(3.0)
Total budget	3,000.0

The amount we receive in grant-in-aid each year will depend on a number of factors and other technical financial accounting aspects.



9 How we will measure our progress

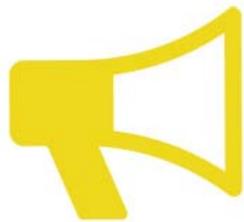
Our evolving Strategic Performance Framework sets out a number of key performance questions and key performance indicators, which we will use to assess how we are delivering on our statutory duty and our progress against our strategic objectives.

- To show that we have made a significant difference to the lives of children and young people by promoting effectively their views.
- To target, within our resources, a finite range of policy areas, working with others in partnership to achieve maximum impact.
- To develop a wide ranging body of knowledge about the experiences and challenges children and young people face.
- To ensure children and children's organisations help to shape and drive our strategies and priorities.
- To show that we are delivering an efficient and effectively managed organisation.

These indicators will form the basis of a regular performance report to our stakeholders including the sponsor team within the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Parliament via our annual report, giving clear information on our progress against this plan and within our statutory responsibilities.

Progress on our one-year plan will not only be assessed according to this strategic framework but against an operational framework made up of project milestones, performance indicators and targets. This framework will evolve as the new planning cycle is embedded across the organisation during 09/10.

For more information and updates on our progress do visit our website at www.11MILLION.org.uk



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MILLION

11 MILLION, 1 London Bridge, London, SE1 9BG
Telephone: 0844 800 9113 Fax: 020 7357 8329
Email: info.request@11MILLION.org.uk
www.11MILLION.org.uk
C04/09