

# The Children's Plan

## Two Years On:

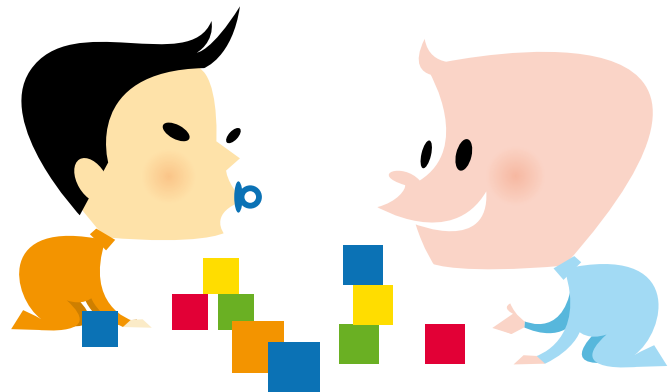
a progress report



department for  
children, schools and families

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# Foreword



Our mission is to make this the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. Two years ago, we published the Children's Plan which set out how we intend to make this a reality.

The Children's Plan has put children, young people and families at the heart of what we do and marked the beginning of a very different relationship between government and families – one where at every level there is closer partnership between services and families, children and young people.

When we prepared the Children's Plan we listened to children, young people, parents and professionals up and down the country about what mattered to them. In tougher financial times, it is even more important that we keep listening, and make sure we are doing all we can to make our services the best in the world. I was delighted to welcome back our Children's Plan Expert Groups this year to review the progress that has been made and advise on the challenges ahead, both for government and for all those working with children and young people, if we are to achieve our ambitions. Their views are summarised on page 52, and throughout the document there are testimonials from those at the frontline on their experiences and achievements, as well as from children and their parents.

## Becoming the best in the world

The Children's Plan built on the success of the *Every Child Matters* framework in bringing professionals together, and a decade of reform and investment in schools, health and children's services. Much has been achieved. To support new parents and make sure every child has the best start in life we have developed a network of Children's Centres across the country to meet the needs of parents and children in the early years. We have provided, for the first time, universal early education for three and four-year-olds, to give them an opportunity to play and learn – and we are now extending those opportunities to more two-year-olds. We have

dramatically reduced poor performance in our school system and invested in school leaders and teachers to ensure children are able to develop their potential. Through investment combined with reform we have taken action to reduce problems which blight children's futures – poverty, obesity, abuse, neglect and underachievement. We have a proud tradition of universal preventative services for children, young people and families and of providing extra support to those who are vulnerable. Our young people are now given a choice of learning pathways to suit their needs and develop their skills, with guarantees of a place in education or training, on the way to education for all until age 18. And, in *Every Child Matters*, we have a world-leading approach to delivering services for children and young people.

The Children's Plan looked at all aspects of a child's wellbeing – their safety and health, enjoyment and play, achieving their potential and preparing for their future. It also set out a series of guiding principles – that parents bring up children, not government; that all children have the potential to succeed; that children and young people need to be safe, healthy and enjoy life; that all children and families deserve services that work together for them; and that it is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later.

Two years on, and a great deal has been achieved:

- This year we published the Schools White Paper and Implementation Plan, setting out our ambitions for more and more schools working together in partnership to deliver improvements and efficiencies, as well as working with wider children's services, the NHS, local government and the police under the leadership of Children's Trusts, to deliver the right support to meet each child or young person's needs.
- Our £200 million co-location fund has supported 101 successful bids in 2009, enabling schools and other services to work together on one site to deliver integrated support to children and families.

## 4 The Children's Plan – Two Years On

- We have continued our unprecedented investment in new play facilities in every community, with 607 new play sites now open in 82 local authorities.
- On 1 December this year we received the final report of the Social Work Taskforce, and accepted all its recommendations.
- We launched the Youth Crime Action Plan in July 2008 to tackle the immediate and long term causes of youth crime and anti-social behaviour, and this year we have seen it is already having an impact.

Two Years On from the Children's Plan and important improvements have now been delivered for children and families, including:

- over 3,000 Sure Start Children's Centres;
- free early learning and childcare places for disadvantaged two-year-olds;
- support for 2.5 million parents through the Parent Know How programme;
- over 4,000 people now trained as Early Years Professionals;
- funding for one-to-one tuition through the Making Good Progress pilot;
- 97,000 young people working towards an Apprenticeship;
- a reduction in the proportion of 16 and 17-year-olds who were not in education, employment or training – the lowest level for more than a decade for 16-year-olds;

- 93 per cent of schools offering extended services;
- over 2,000 families supported by Family Intervention Projects; and
- a reduction of 21.6 per cent in the number of young people entering the youth justice system, meeting the target set for 2020.

But there is more to do if we are to make the Children's Plan principles a reality for all children and their families across the country. In the next period, we need to move services for children, young people and families from good to outstanding in what they achieve. This will mean:

- guarantees for parents and children of what they can expect from all our services, so that parents' and children's needs are at the heart of everything we do
- great leadership that innovates to drive ever greater improvement and shares knowledge right across the system, supporting all children to realise their potential;
- a highly skilled and professional workforce across all our services for children and young people, which can ensure no child is left behind; and
- partnerships within and between schools and children's services – because no one can deliver for children alone and services need to work together if they are to intervene early and successfully.

At the same time, we should not tolerate poor performance at any level and so I will not hesitate to take action where the life chances of our children and young people are put at risk.

We will also be taking important steps at the beginning of 2010 on some of our major priorities – setting out an implementation plan for social work reform in the light of the Social Work Task

Force recommendations, and publishing a Families and Relationships Green Paper to consult on how we can best support families in the future.

### **Investment at the frontline**

Now, more than ever, we need to ensure we are getting real value for money from our investment. The Pre-Budget Report has set out how we will continue to increase our investment in the core services of early years, Sure Start, schools and colleges to deliver the ambitions set out in the Children's Plan.

Securing greater value for money is an essential part of the job for all of us who are charged with spending public money, and it is the key to helping even more children live better lives. So while committing to protect investment we will have to take the tough decisions necessary to save money and be more efficient.

Sure Start Children's Centres will receive funding increases in line with inflation and alongside efficiency savings of two per cent this will mean they will be able to continue offering integrated services for children under five. The free entitlement to early learning and childcare for three and four-year-olds has also been protected.

For schools, 0.7 per cent annual average real growth combined with efficiency savings of 0.9 per cent will mean that per pupil funding at the frontline will rise and we can deliver our Pupil and Parent Guarantees with funds secured for one-to-one tuition and catch up support.

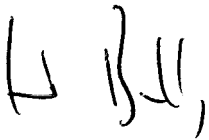
We have also increased funding for education provision post-16. An extra £202 million has been allocated in 2010-11 to provide an additional 50,000 places for school leavers in sixth form, college, apprenticeship or training as part of the September Guarantee. 0.9 per cent real growth combined with three per cent efficiency savings over 2011-12 and 2012-13 will ensure that all learners who wish to stay in education can do so.

We will work with all who provide frontline services for children and young people to deliver efficiencies and improve the quality and consistency of early intervention so that every child and young person gets the help they need at the earliest possible opportunity. This is vital to the efficient operation of children's services in the coming years, to achieving the best possible value for money from our continued investment, and to our unrelenting focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people.

## Conclusion

The frontline is vital to improving the lives of children, young people and families. It is what is done by headteachers, teachers, social workers, support staff, nurses, doctors, youth workers and police that makes a difference to children and young people's lives. We need to build on the progress we have made through the first two years of the Children's Plan by working together, continuing to invest in our frontline services, and making efficiencies that will deliver more for children and young people.

Here we set out progress so far, hear from professionals, children and families about their experiences, and set out our next steps as we continue to work towards a better future for every child and young person.



Ed Balls





# The Children's Plan

In December 2007 we published the first ever Children's Plan, to put the needs of families, children and young people at the centre of everything we do. The Children's Plan marked the beginning of a new way of working and a very different relationship between Government and families – one where at every level there is closer partnership between services and families, children and young people.

The Children's Plan was based on what children, young people, their parents, and the people working with them told us they wanted. It set out what we all need to do to make *every* child matter, for happy and healthy childhoods, staying safe from harm, fulfilling potential, and being prepared for adulthood.

Over recent years, since the publication of the *Every Child Matters* framework, a quiet revolution in children's services has been unfolding in local communities around the country – with schools, health, children's services, police and other services working together to put children at the heart of local provision.

Since the publication of the Children's Plan, this model of integrated working has become the expectation in every local area. We have seen significant improvements in local infrastructure developed to support the aims of the Children's Plan. Sure Start Children's Centres will, from next year, be available in every community. Schools are increasingly working in partnership with other schools and local services. Children's Trusts are taking a leading role in providing integrated children's services in every local area, with Children's Trust Boards now being a statutory requirement.

We are now two years on since the publication of the Children's Plan and these changes to ways of working are starting to yield real improvements for children, young people and families.

In this Two Years On document we take the opportunity to celebrate the progress so far, and share our next steps.

Five principles guided our Children's Plan:

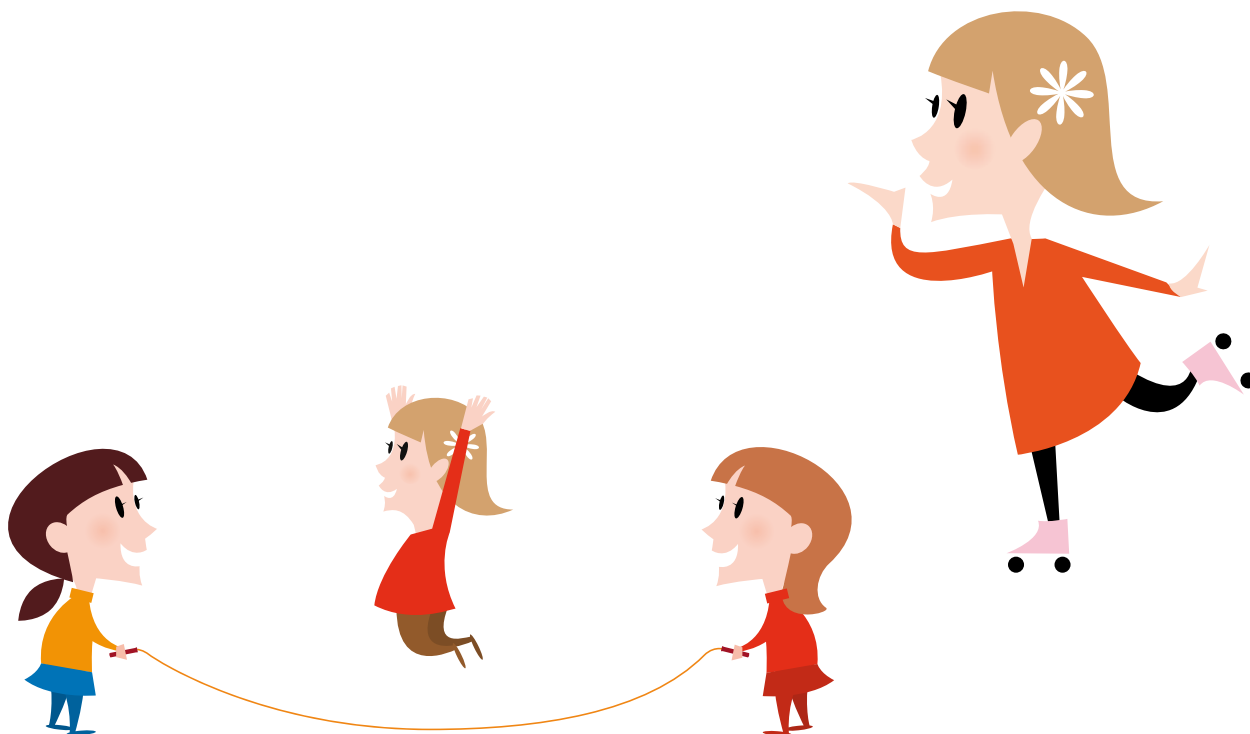
- government does not bring up children – parents do – so government needs to do more to back parents and families;
- all children have the potential to succeed and should go as far as their talents can take them;
- children and young people need to enjoy their childhood as well as grow up prepared for adult life;
- services need to be shaped by and responsive to children, young people and families, not designed around professional boundaries; and
- it is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later.

Under each of these principles, we set out here progress made so far as well as hearing from those who have benefited from changes over the past two years.

All our policies for children, young people and families continue to be underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognises the rights of all children. Our ambitions set out in the Children's Plan embody the Convention and our desire to make it a reality for children and young people.

As part of the Children's Plan Two Years On process, the three age-related expert groups that advised on the content of the original Children's Plan met to discuss progress and identify areas for future focus. Their findings can be found on page 52.

We know that there is still more to do, and the Children's Plan presented a long-term vision. On page 58 we set out next steps and a timeline showing key milestones between now and 2015, in particular reaching our target of 3,500 Sure Start Children's Centres in 2010, expansion of one-to-one tuition, new play facilities and **myplace** projects and increasing numbers of Family Intervention Projects.



# Parents bring up children, not government

Being a parent can be tough at times and most families need and welcome some support, in different ways and at different times. Some want support with the day-to-day aspects of parenting, whilst others need help with their own problems, such as difficulties in their relationships, or issues with substance misuse, so that they can look after their children as well as they would like. Support for parents has grown in recent years, with more local services available for parents who want advice and information. This has led directly to improvements in many thousands of children's and families' lives.

## The best start in life

There are now over 3,000 **Sure Start Children's Centres**, offering integrated services to more than 2.4 million under-fives and their families. Children's Centres offer health services, parenting advice and support, early education and childcare, and training and employment opportunities. They are an excellent means of improving outcomes for young children, reducing inequalities in outcomes between the most disadvantaged and the rest, and helping to end child poverty. From January 2010, Sure Start Children's Centres will be established as a legally recognised part of universal services for children, mothers, fathers and grandparents. Funding for Sure Start Children's Centres has been guaranteed in 2011-12 and 2012-13.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Families are already discovering more at their local Sure Start Children's Centre, and research shows there is a positive Sure Start effect. Children living in Sure Start areas behave better and are more independent, and parents have more positive parenting skills and provide a better home learning environment for their children.

"His speech has just improved no end. Who knows how long that would have taken had Sure Start not intervened and said 'Hang on a minute, we think we could help you here'. He can communicate now, he's a little person now, he's not a baby. He can talk to you. He can tell you what he wants and what he doesn't want. And that is down to them, they started that process off."

*Steph – Parent from East Midlands*

### Free early education and childcare

We want *every* child to have the best possible start, and we want parents to have confidence in how they choose to arrange their work and family life. We are extending the entitlement to free early learning and childcare places for all three and four-year-olds to every local authority – the 25 per cent most disadvantaged families are now able to get 15 hours a week of flexible childcare.

In the last two years, free early learning and childcare places for disadvantaged two-year-olds (of at least ten hours a week for 38 weeks a year) have been piloted. The success of these pilots means that by September 2009 the offer had reached 15 per cent of the most disadvantaged two-year-olds in England – more than 20,000 places.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- The evaluation of the free places for two-year-olds pilot showed that good quality childcare has positive effects on children's development.
- The family support element of the two-year-old offer also helps to improve outcomes for parents by signposting them to appropriate services and supporting them to take up training or get back into work.

- 95 per cent of three and four-year-olds are accessing at least some of their entitlement to a free place.

Three-year-old Will loves his visits to nursery. But until he was offered a place under a national pilot scheme for two-year-olds, his worried mum thought she might have to wait another 12 months before he had access to education and the chance to mix with other children.

Now Will, who had speech difficulties, is delighting his parents and therapists with the progress he is making after just a few weeks at the Bobbles Day Nursery in Stoke-on-Trent.

Will's mum, 28-year-old Suzy, said the transformation had been amazing and Will simply couldn't wait for his visits every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and his sessions with speech therapists.

"Something has just clicked with Will. The structure of the day at nursery and being around other children who show him what to do have rubbed off on him and given him confidence."

*Suzy, a parent, Stoke-on-Trent*

## Supporting family relationships

Many families experience problems, and in some cases parents look for extra help to get through difficult times. We know that loving and resilient relationships have a direct impact on a child's happiness and wellbeing.

Our forthcoming **Families Green Paper** will discuss the link between strong relationships and overall wellbeing for parents and children, and how we will provide the right support for families.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- In December 2008, we published the *Kids in the Middle* booklet, written by agony aunts based on Deidre Sanders' guide for parting parents and their children, which provided advice on minimising the impact of separation and sources of help for children and young people affected by separation.
- £3.1 million has been made available, mostly in 2009-10, to support mothers, fathers and young people through the recession in developing and strengthening family relationships, including £1 million to Relate for counselling services.

### Partners in education

Parents have the biggest impact on their child's learning, health and wellbeing. Nearly all parents want to be involved in their child's education but some find it difficult. Over 3,500 **Parent Support Advisers** and similar professionals are now helping parents across England to be fully involved in their children's learning and are working with schools and families to support better pupil behaviour and attendance.

To ensure that parents can be involved in their children's education, we are intending to require local authorities to gather parents' views on the school choices available in their area, and publish an improvement plan if a high proportion of parents are dissatisfied. Parents' views will also feed into the new School Report Card. By September 2012, parents will be able to access online information about their child's attendance and progress in learning. Taken together, these measures will ensure a strong parental voice in the education system.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- The Parental Involvement in Children's Education Survey 2007 shows that parents feel their child's education is not solely the school's responsibility, and that they feel more involved.
- The Parent Know How programme, which is improving the quality, choice, provision and awareness of parental information and support services, has helped support over 2.5 million parents since April 2008.
- The Family Learning Impact Funding will provide £30 million over three years to enhance, expand and develop existing family learning provision. During 2008/2009:
  - 3,391 mothers and fathers and 9,700 children enrolled on courses;
  - 800 new Family Learning practitioners were trained; and
  - a range of new courses for practitioners was developed.





A pupil with Asperger's Syndrome was referred to the Bexhill Parent Support Adviser team when he was still at primary school. He was anxious about the move to secondary school and, in particular, about spending time in the playground. The team arranged weekly visits to the new school so that he could meet his form tutor and other teachers and get to know the canteen and independent learning centre. The Parent Support Adviser also arranged for him to have a lunch pass so he knew that he could go home for lunch. Now in Year 9, the boy is successfully managing life in secondary school and his attendance is excellent. His mother has felt confident enough to start looking for work and has taken a training course at Bexhill College.

"This student had the potential to be a child that refused to attend school. He has made excellent progress and his family are delighted that he has settled so well."

*Bexhill Parent Support Adviser team, East Sussex*



# Enjoying, achieving and fulfilling potential

The second guiding principle of the Children's Plan is that all children have the ability to be successful in life. We have a moral responsibility to give *all* children the opportunity to unlock their potential.

That means supporting children's development right from the start by offering high quality early years provision, providing them with the best possible education in our schools and offering a variety of options for young people to continue their education and training post-16. This will enable them to develop the broader skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need for the future world.

Educational standards in England have improved dramatically over the past 12 years, mainly due to greatly improved learning and teaching in our schools and colleges. Parents and their children want excellent schools with excellent teaching that help their children achieve their best and get good qualifications, overcoming any barriers they might face. Schools in the 21st century will develop stronger partnerships and work with other schools, local children's services, health and police to share their expertise and facilities, and provide children with the skills and confidence for greater independence in adult life. We are also introducing Pupil and Parent Guarantees underpinned by legislation, matched by stronger accountability and an uncompromising approach to school improvement so that every child can succeed.

For those children and young people that are or have been in care, the local authority should provide the same support, and have the same aspirations for these children and young people as any other good parent would have.

## Early learning

All children can now start school better prepared to benefit from education:

- the **Early Years Foundation Stage** is a clear and consistent framework for everyone providing early learning and childcare, reassuring parents of the quality they can expect;
- over 4,000 people have now been trained as **Early Years Professionals**; and
- **Every Child a Talker** helps children who may fall behind their peers in the crucial skills of speaking and listening.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 44,000 more children are recognised as having a good level of development at age five, up from 45 per cent in 2007 to 52 per cent in 2009.
- At age five the attainment gap between the lowest achieving 20 per cent of children and the rest has narrowed from 37 per cent in 2007 to 34 per cent in 2009.
- Over 66 per cent of the 26,139 early years settings inspected by Ofsted in 2008/2009 were found to be either good or outstanding.
- Significant improvements have been made in primary school standards over the past 12 years – 100,000 more 11-year-olds are achieving expected levels in both English and mathematics now than in 1997.
- In the longest running international survey, TIMSS (Trends in Mathematics and Science Survey, looking at ages ten and 14), which has been running since 1995, England has consistently moved up the international league table and is now, overall, the highest performing European country taking part.



"The Early Years Foundation Stage has provided a logical, understandable, holistic framework covering the variety of ages within my setting. I had previously attended Children's Centre meetings and worked closely with other providers, but this has developed into a more formal structure where we now exchange information and work together to support children's needs and interests. Sharing the Early Years Foundation Stage with parents through discussion, newsletters, and profile books has helped parents understand and further support their children's learning.

I am now able to offer funded nursery education, and feel confident in using the Early Years Foundation Stage as a framework for learning and development."

*Childminder, Shropshire*

## Improving the curriculum

Sir Jim Rose published the final report of his **review of the primary curriculum** in April 2009. He recommended having six broad themes: understanding English, communication and languages; mathematical understanding; understanding the arts; historical, geographical and social understanding; understanding physical development, health and wellbeing; and scientific and technological understanding. This will better prepare children for a smooth transition to secondary school, allow literacy and numeracy skills to be developed across all subjects, and put a greater emphasis on skills for a changing world, including ICT. A **new secondary curriculum** began rolling out in secondary schools from September 2008.

It is important that nothing gets in the way of children's learning, which is why good discipline and behaviour are essential in the classroom. This is why we have committed to taking forward all of the recommendations of Sir Alan Steer's report, ensuring all schools are supported to improve behaviour.

"The new secondary curriculum made a real difference to our life at Haybridge High School as it enabled us to personalise the curriculum for all of our students post-14 and post-16. By working alongside schools from the wider community, we have been able to enhance the provision for all of our students. As a result, our students have a greater chance of success as they are following suitable courses that are relevant to them. Greater flexibility has given us the opportunity to design a curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3, that engages and motivates students and encourages them to see links between their subjects. As a school we were keen that alongside academic subjects we should support our students in developing their wider skills in order for them to compete in a global market. Our three key aims of the curriculum are:

- to enable our students to see relevance to their whole curriculum;
- to teach the skills that students need to succeed, not only within school but outside school long into the future; and
- give our students more 'real life' experiences to put what they have learned into practice."

*Headteacher, Haybridge High School, Worcestershire*



## National Challenge

We want every school to be a good school, committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for its pupils. The National Challenge, launched in June 2008, challenges and supports secondary schools with low GCSE results to improve. We are doing this by ensuring headteachers, supported by a dedicated adviser, can draw on a range of options that include carefully targeted help for teaching and learning, support to develop strong leadership and the flexibility to design local solutions.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- By 2011, National Challenge will ensure that at least 30 per cent of Key Stage 4 pupils in each school achieve at least five good GCSEs including English and mathematics.
- In 1997, around 1,600 secondary schools failed to achieve this level. This figure has steadily fallen since then to 440 schools in 2008.
- We will continue to accelerate the creation of Academies to 200 by September 2009, with a further 100 the next year, and of Trust schools and Accredited Schools Groups, bringing in new sponsors and partners as we do so.

## Gaining Ground

The Gaining Ground programme offers support to those schools where pupils are failing to meet their potential with regards to their progression and attainment, as demonstrated by their GCSE results. By March 2010, schools on the programme will have received a total of £20 million worth of support in the form of support from their School Improvement Partner, extra curricula academic-focussed activities and specialist support for teaching staff.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- A total of 400 schools in 97 Local Authorities are participating in the Gaining Ground programme.

### Personalised support

**One-to-one tuition** can help some children achieve more than they are able to in classes or small groups. Last year, funding was made available to the 450 schools in the Making Good Progress pilot to deliver one-to-one tuition in English and mathematics to ten per cent of their pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3. A further 36,000 places were available nationally for Year 5 and 6 pupils over spring and summer 2009.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- After the first year of the Making Good Progress pilot, 86 per cent of headteachers surveyed felt that tuition had contributed to improved rates of progression in their school, and teachers, parents and pupils all reported improved confidence and motivation as a result of the tuition programme. The interim evaluation shows that pupils receiving tuition are more likely to make good progress than their peers.

“For two years, students at Ratton School have benefitted from one-to-one tuition because the school was part of the Making Good Progress pilot. The students who were tutored made good or exceptional progress. For some students this was life-changing, moving from Level 3 in English in Year 7 to Level 6 by the end of Year 9. One looked after girl in Year 9 said ‘one-to-one tuition has made a real difference to my life because now I can go to university, something I never thought would be possible’.”

*David Linsell, Headteacher, Ratton School, East Sussex*

## Supporting every child

It is vital that the children and young people who find learning the most difficult have the support to achieve as their peers do. This support should be through specialist and personalised teaching to meet their needs as well as ensuring all teachers and school staff have a better understanding of special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities and how best to help.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Brian Lamb is leading an inquiry into parental confidence in the SEN system which will report this month.
- We are investing in funding places for 4,000 specialist dyslexic teachers.
- We have made a £31 million investment in the Achievement for All project over 2009-2011. This project aims to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN and disabilities. So far 460 schools are engaged in the project across ten local authorities.
- We have appointed Jean Gross as the Communication Champion. She will take up her role on the 1 January 2010 and will promote the importance of speech, language and communications needs amongst commissioners, service providers, the children's workforce and the wider public.
- We have invested £12 million to improve the workforce's knowledge, skills and understanding of SEN and disability through better initial teacher training and continuing professional development, to raise the confidence of teachers and other staff in these areas.



## Support for families with disabled children

*Aiming High for Disabled Children*, was launched in May 2007 and set out a range of measures to transform service provision for disabled children and their families. The measures include a core offer, which sets out national expectations for families on how the services they use should be provided, and a national indicator capturing parents' experience of services in relation to the core offer components.

Local authorities are extending and developing the **provision of short breaks for disabled children and their families**. Examples of investment include: converting holiday accommodation; climbing walls; sensory gardens; and adapted dance floors. Together for Disabled Children (TDC) has already reported significant growth in the number of short breaks available.

The child health strategy *Healthy lives, brighter futures* sets out how we will support families who rely on health services for urgent, short-term care as well as those who need ongoing support for children with complex and long-term conditions including mental health. We aim to ensure that timely access to high level support is available.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The 21 pathfinder areas created nearly 13,000 more overnight breaks and approximately 376,000 more hours of short breaks provision during the day than in 2007-08. In non-pathfinder local authorities expansion is now planned in every type of short break service, especially in group-based specialist provision.

## Education to 18

We want to ensure that all young people participate in education or training until at least 18 to develop the skills that the economy needs and they need to succeed in adult life and employment. To support this, we legislated in 2008 to **raise the participation age to 18**.

To support the delivery of the raised participation age, we legislated in 2009 to make local authorities responsible for securing education and training opportunities for young people up to age 19, and age 25 for those subject to a learning difficulty assessment, from April 2010. These changes will give local authorities a central leadership role focussed on improving outcomes for all children and young people from 0-19; enabling them to take an even more integrated approach to the delivery of all children's services.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The raising of the participation age is one of the most fundamental changes being introduced to education. It means that all young people will continue in education or training to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015.

## Learning routes for young people

The aim of our **14-19 qualifications strategy** is to make sure that every young person has a high quality learning offer that prepares them to progress at 18. Young people will be able to choose their courses and qualifications from Apprenticeships, Diplomas, Foundation Learning, GCSEs and A levels, all of which will give young people the chance to gain functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT.

We are piloting and preparing to roll out Foundation Learning, to give 14-19 learners at Entry Level and Level 1 a better chance of achieving and progressing, to Diplomas, Apprenticeships and GCSEs wherever possible. Data suggests up to 25 per cent of 14 to 19-year-olds could benefit from this offer.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Last year 97,000 young people aged 16-18 started an Apprenticeship. In 2009, we legislated to introduce a new offer for every suitably qualified young person aged 16-18 of an Apprenticeship place from 2013. Recognising that some people need extra support and take longer to meet the minimum qualification requirements, this offer also applies to care leavers and young people subject to a learning difficulty assessment up to their 25th birthday.
- Around 12,000 young people started the first Diplomas in September 2008. 72 per cent of secondary schools and 88 per cent of colleges are now working together to teach the first ten Diplomas.
- A number of local authorities are piloting Foundation Learning for young people currently below Level 2 (equivalent to five GCSEs A\*-C).
- Young people are now studying reformed and strengthened GCSEs and A levels.
- Over 100,000 young people have taken part in Functional Skills pilots so far.
- We legislated in 2009 to establish Ofqual as an independent regulator, so that everyone can have full confidence in qualification standards.



"When I first started out as a volunteer at Barnardos I had very little confidence and few qualifications. The Apprenticeship has had a really huge impact on my life, offering learning in a way I hadn't been able to at school, and a real focus. Having completed my Advanced Apprenticeship in retail and management, I feel as though my career is going from strength to strength. Now, I am the manager of a successful store employing three paid staff and 57 volunteers. The store is now doing so well that Barnardos are buying the building next door to double the size of the store, so that I can expand the business."

*Paul Boulton, Advanced Apprentice of the Year, 2009*

"What I love about the Advanced Diploma is that you get the opportunity to personalise the course to study the areas you are interested in. And every day we spend time on mathematics, English and ICT because we have to reach a high standard in functional skills in those areas in order to get our Diploma. We also have some really interesting visitors who come to talk to us, such as people from local radio stations and music websites. And it's good when you get a reaction to your work from people who know what they are talking about."

*Ellis Deaves, Advanced Diploma in Creative and Media, Truro College*

## Supporting young people to participate

We are investing over £6.9 billion in post-16 participation and offering every 16 and 17-year-old a suitable place in learning through the **September Guarantee** – guaranteed offers of a place in post-16 education or training – and will build further on this approach with a **January Guarantee** in 2010. In the Pre-Budget Report in December 2009, we announced that the September Guarantee would be funded for 2010-11 and into 2011-12 and 2012-13, on the way to education to 18.

Employers have led the creation of the new Education and Employers Task Force (EETF). The EETF, launched in October 2009, is a charity committed to encouraging employers to work with schools and young people. It has published new guidance for schools and employers about the benefits of working together and how best to do so, and will continue to mobilise employer support.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The proportion of 16 to 17-year-olds participating in learning reached a record high at the end of 2008, and those who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) fell for the third consecutive year, and at 16 reached the lowest level for more than a decade.
- We have introduced fast track entry to the New Deal for 18-year-olds with a history of being not in education, employment or training.
- The *Strategy for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance* launched in November 2009 will modernise information, advice and guidance and careers education to make it more relevant and accessible to young people today and to keep pace with the needs of a rapidly changing economy.
- We are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to implement the Young Person's Guarantee from 2010, which will provide unemployed 18 to 24-year-olds with an offer of a job, work-focused training or a work experience place. It was announced in the Pre-Budget Report that this support will now be brought forward to be available from the six month point of a young person's claim.
- Through the Backing Young Britain campaign, we are encouraging employers to provide employment, Apprenticeships and work-experience opportunities for young people.

# Happy, healthy and safe

The third guiding principle of the Children's Plan is that children and young people should be safe from harm, healthy and able to enjoy their childhoods. Staying safe is a fundamental part of the Children's Plan. Unless children are safe, they cannot enjoy their childhoods or achieve their full potential. Every child and young person deserves to enjoy good health, not only so they can make the most of their childhood, but also to guard against health problems in adult life.

## Tackling child poverty

Poverty prevents children from leading fulfilling lives and achieving their potential. Child poverty blights the daily lives of many children, families and communities. Many people believe there is very little child poverty in the UK today, but this is not the case: just over a fifth of children are in relative poverty (2.9 million children in 2007/08). Poverty damages childhoods: some families cannot, for example, afford to keep their homes warm, or pay for basic necessities and activities, such as school uniforms or social outings. Children who grow up in poverty lack many of the experiences and opportunities that others take for granted, and can be exposed to severe hardship and social exclusion.

Child poverty pilots are underway across the country. The pilots are enabling local partners to introduce new and innovative support for families. For example, Islington Council is using its housing and council tax benefit data to identify children living in households on out-of-work benefits and living below 60 per cent median income so they can effectively target services to tackle poverty.

The **Child Poverty Bill** aims to make tackling child poverty everybody's business, setting out what we can all do to support more families out of poverty. The Bill aims to enshrine in law the Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020 and take action now to tackle the causes as well as the consequences of poverty.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- The Government has made substantial progress in halting and reversing the rising trend of child poverty, with 500,000 children lifted out of relative income poverty since 1998/99. Taken together, measures announced since Budget 2007 will lift around a further 550,000 children out of poverty.

### Staying healthy

To deliver our ambitions, we need to support families in securing world-class health and wellbeing outcomes for their children. In February 2009, we launched our **child health strategy** *Healthy lives, brighter futures*, with the Department of Health. The strategy sets out how we will improve existing support by:

- providing support during pregnancy and the early years of life, through increased numbers of health visitors, a strengthened role for Sure Start Children's Centres and expansion of the Family Nurse Partnership;
- developing a core health programme (the Healthy Child Programme) for school-age children and their families; and
- providing opportunities for young people including access to sport and young people friendly health services.

We know that a healthy school lunch contributes to maintaining a healthy weight. We have introduced standards that mean school lunches must now include at least one portion of fruit and one of vegetables contributing to the recommended five a day, limits on the amount of fat and saturated fat that can be included in a meal and schools can no longer provide snacks and drinks which have no nutritional value.

The 2009 Pre-Budget Report announced the phased roll out of **free school meals** to primary children whose parents are on work related benefits, starting in September 2010, and the extension of pilots testing universal free school meals for primary pupils to at least one in each English region. This will increase the number of children eating a healthy school lunch and, importantly, increase access for significant numbers of children from our poorer families in the next school year

The ***Real Meals – Simple Cooking Made Easy*** cook book was launched in September 2008 by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. It is free to all Year 7 pupils to help them learn healthy versions of old favourites – including spaghetti bolognese, lamb hotpot, roast chicken legs, chow mein and apple crumble and contains 32 classic recipes. Though launched more than a year ago, it is still proving extremely popular with children and young people and to date, more than half a million copies have been delivered to schools. The cookbook is currently being revamped and a new version with a wider range of recipes will be launched in 2010.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- **The Healthy Child Programme** helps ensure child health services are available across the country and encourages local areas to develop multi-disciplinary teams of health, education and children's service professionals to support families. The programme is delivered in GP surgeries, hospitals, schools, the community, the youth justice system and more. They also help children and young people reach a wider range of specialist support, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and speech and language therapy.
- Good eating habits developed at school are more likely to continue into adulthood and have a positive impact on general health and nutritional status. Research by the School Food Trust shows that improvements in food and the dining environment in school resulted in significant improvements to how well pupils concentrate and pay attention in the classroom after lunch.



## Information and support on alcohol misuse

Many parents are concerned about young people's drinking habits, and they have asked for more support and guidance for them and their children. In June 2008 we published the **Youth Alcohol Action Plan**, based on our conversations with parents and young people about their lives. As a result:

- the Chief Medical Officer has produced the first ever set of guidelines on safe drinking levels for young people; and
- we have introduced new powers for police to tackle anti-social behaviour linked to alcohol amongst young people, including the ability to confiscate alcohol from young people and to disperse young people drinking in public.

For those young people with the most serious problems we have created a record number of drug and alcohol treatment places and better integrated drug and alcohol treatment for parents, which respond to the needs of the whole family.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Far fewer young people are drinking alcohol than in 2001.
- In a summer 2009 crackdown, over 5,000 litres of alcohol were confiscated, 2,400 licensed premises checked for under age sales, 1,982 young people referred for support, and 1,829 parents offered support to address their child's behaviour. In most areas there was a noticeable reduction in calls to police about youth anti-social behaviour.
- Latest figures show there are a record number of treatment places available with almost 24,000 young people accessing treatment in the last year for drug and alcohol misuse, with almost all able to get help within a maximum of three weeks.

## PE and sport for young people

PE and sport have clear educational and health benefits, and develops confidence, self-esteem, and team working.

Over the last two years, School Sport Partnerships have helped all schools meet the Government's target to get more children doing two hours a week of high-quality PE and sport. We have now embarked on the next challenge – to offer access to five hours of high-quality PE and sport a week for 5-16 year olds, and three hours for 16-19 year olds. By 2012/2013, we expect 60 per cent of young people to have access to five hours of PE and sport a week.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Schools have opened 250 new multi-sport clubs for young people with disabilities, as part of Playground to Podium.
- The Sport Unlimited programme introduced over 200,000 young people to sport by providing new non-traditional sports and repackaged traditional sports.
- Young people across the country received over 450,000 hours extra sports coaching at school to increase their skills and enjoyment in playing sport.
- The Premier League has launched an innovative pilot with 80 hub clubs and 320 satellite clubs offering a range of sports to 25,000 young people.

## Emotional health and wellbeing

The Children's Plan announced a review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to understand what progress has been made in delivering services to meet the needs of children and young people at risk of and experiencing mental health problems. As recommended by the review, we established a National Advisory Council for Children's Mental Health and

Psychological Wellbeing to advise and hold Government to account for implementing the review's recommendations. We have responded to the review by setting out the actions we are taking to improve children's emotional wellbeing and mental health.

One way we are doing this is through the Targeted Mental Health in Schools programme running in clusters of schools in 80 local areas.

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning is available in almost all primary schools and take up in secondary schools has doubled since July 2008 (from 30 to 60 per cent).

99 per cent of schools are currently participating in the Healthy Schools Programme with 80 per cent currently achieving National Healthy Schools Accredited Status (an increase of around ten per cent in the last 12 months).

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Many of the schools involved in the Targeted Mental Health in Schools programme report:
  - reduced incidents of challenging behaviour;
  - increased staff confidence in managing difficult behaviour through work with families and outside agencies; and
  - a reduction in the risk factors that can lead to school absence/refusal including teenage conception and offending behaviour.
- Children experiencing parental conflict and separation have also been helped through the £60 million Targeted Mental Health in Schools programme.



"I am in Year 7 at the moment and I started to see someone from Targeted Mental Health in Schools in January 2009. I was hitting out at staff, shouting and kicking furniture before Targeted Mental Health in Schools was involved. I attended 20 sessions, and Mum had some sessions too. I spoke about my feelings and I did a booklet about my dad when he died. My behaviour got better and I was much calmer and able to think before I reacted to something. I worked in a group to look at transition to secondary school and my mum even went to look around the secondary school with the Targeted Mental Health in Schools worker. I would recommend young people to see their Targeted Mental Health in Schools worker if they need help in school."

*Year 7 pupil, Swindon*

## Play

Playing isn't just what makes childhood fun, it's how children develop, learn and grow. Children and families have told us that they want to see more and better local play facilities. The Children's Plan announced a new agenda on supporting play with the biggest ever investment in play by Government. The first **national play strategy** for England invested £235 million in 3,500 new and refurbished play sites. All local authorities in England are now receiving funding.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 850 new play sites are now open for business across the 152 local authorities in England.

"The new playground has already made a huge difference to the local community. It has also provided a community focus with the playing fields being used more than ever before. Children are down there playing football, riding their bikes and families are socialising together. We are absolutely delighted at how successful this project has been."

*Nicola Gibson, Trewint playing field committee member*

## Places to go

**myplace** was launched to give young people more local opportunities and activities, and to be designed by them and for them. The first project – 'OPEN' in Norwich – opened its doors in October. In addition, the Youth Capital Fund invested in 100 new and refurbished youth facilities in the 50 most deprived local authorities, especially on Friday and Saturday nights when young people value them most.

"It's been very exciting to go so quickly from nothing to opening a world class youth centre. **myplace** has helped us deliver a wonderful and versatile venue for the young people of Norfolk that gives them a safe place to go and a wide range of things to do. We're delighted to be blazing the trail for all the other **myplace** centres that will be delivered across the country."

*Russ Dacre, Project Director of OPEN*

## Staying safe

Lord Laming published his progress report of child protection in March 2009. We accepted all of his recommendations in full and published a detailed action plan in response in May 2009. We have begun to implement this. In particular, we have:

- appointed a new Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children and established a National Safeguarding Delivery Unit to help drive and support improvement in frontline practice;
- introduced unannounced Ofsted inspections and a new three year rolling inspection programme;

- appointed a new Director of Children's Services Leadership Programme and issued updated guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Member and Director of Children's Services;
- legislated to require the appointment of two lay members to every Local Safeguarding Children Board and the publication by Local Safeguarding Children Boards of an annual report; and a power for the Secretary of State to set safeguarding targets;
- launched a new *Action on Health Visiting Programme* to improve health visitor capacity and capability; and
- completed a Care Quality Commission review of safeguarding in the NHS and commissioned a Police Protective Service Delivery Plan.

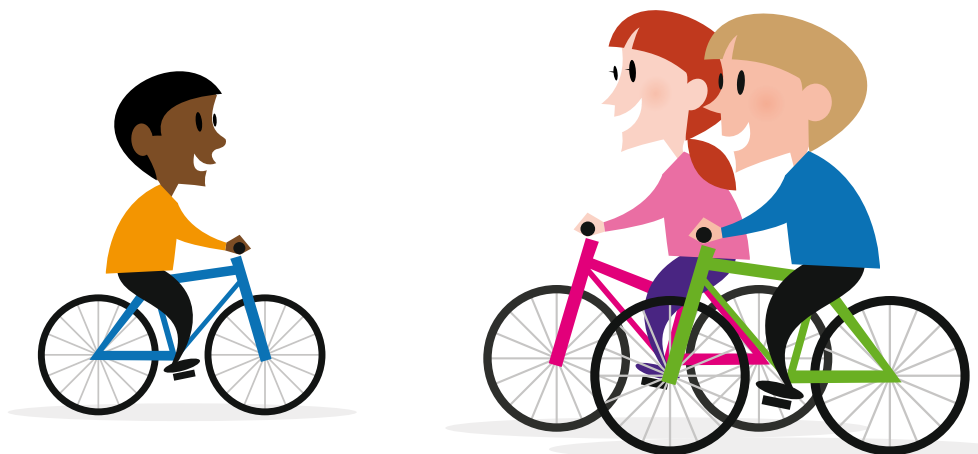
The first phase of the introduction of the new **Vetting and Barring Scheme** began in October 2009 with the implementation of the new barred lists, managed by the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Children are now protected in a wider range of settings from individuals who have been barred because they pose a risk of harm.

The **Social Work Task Force** was established in December 2008 to work with social workers, families and academics to identify how best to reform the social work profession. The task force published their final report in December 2009 and the Government accepted all its recommendations.

We have announced an additional £58 million of funding to support children and families' social workers. Activity underway includes the roll-out of the Newly Qualified Social Worker programme, the launch of the new Return to Social Work programme and the extension of the social worker Graduate Recruitment Scheme. We launched the *Help Give Them a Voice* and *Be The Difference* social worker recruitment campaigns to attract more people to the profession and improve public understanding about the role of social workers.

The **Byron Review** was published in March 2008 and laid out recommendations on how to keep children and young people safe in digital environments. In December 2009, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety, established in response to the recommendations of the review, launched the first UK Child Internet Safety Strategy outlining how government, industry and charities will work together to keep children and young people safe online.

Bullying can have a devastating effect on children and families, preventing them from succeeding in education, and living happy and fulfilled lives. We intend to legislate to introduce a new statutory requirement, supported by guidance, for schools to record serious and persistent incidents of bullying between pupils, and all incidents of verbal and physical abuse against school staff. By co-ordinating, recording and reporting procedures so they are consistent across schools, local authorities will be better placed to support schools in developing and managing anti-bullying strategies, as they will have more information about the prevalence and nature of bullying in schools.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

- The UK internet safety strategy includes a new Green Cross Code for internet safety, 'Zip It, Block It, Flag It' which will be adopted by retailers, social networking sites, schools and charities and displayed where appropriate.
- 82 per cent of children now say that their school has taught them how to use the internet safely.
- Sir Roger Singleton reported to Ministers on 14 December 2009 on the Vetting & Barring Scheme. The Government response accepting all his recommendations was published on the same day.
- In 2009, we launched Safe at Home, a national home safety equipment scheme. We aim to provide 25,000 disadvantaged families with free home safety equipment through the scheme next year.
- In June, we published new guidance on safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation, to help local authorities develop prevention strategies and identify and protect those at risk.





# Working better, together

We believe public services are at their best when they consider the needs of children, young people and families and respond effectively and seamlessly.

Schools are able to offer more to their pupils and the wider community by working closer together. Technology is helping professionals join up their work with other professionals, and Children's Trusts are bringing together services that focus on children and young people.

## Schools and the community

The *Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future* White Paper explained the changing role of schools at the centre of a community working together to support all children.

Over 20,000 schools (93 per cent) are offering **extended services** based on the needs of their local community. Extended services can include study support, before and after school activities, childcare, parenting and family support, access to specialist health and social care services, and community facilities such as adult and family learning.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 58 per cent of parents say their child has attended activities or used childcare provided at or through their child's school in the past term.
- Extended services can have significant positive effects on children, parents and families and benefits for schools such as improvements on performance measures such as pupil attainment and exclusion rates. An evaluation by Ofsted and the Universities of Manchester and Newcastle showed that pupils' level of self-confidence, motivation, aspiration and achievement are raised when they are involved in after school activities.

“It is the best holiday club I have been to. There are brilliant activities and you are seeing life from a different point of view of special needs children.” – *Jake, mainstream pupil*

“The opportunity for children who attend mainstream school to play and bond with special needs children, and vice versa, is invaluable.” – *Parent*

Kirkham Pear Tree School in Lancashire encourages greater participation between its pupils, who all have severe and profound learning disabilities, and the families of pupils attending mainstream schools within the cluster of seven schools. All the children play together, helping to challenge perceptions and prejudices about people with disabilities.

## Sharing places and spaces

Our 2009 £200 million Co-location Fund supports joined up services for children, young people and families, and by June this year 101 bids for funding had been successful. This includes £3.1 million to roll out adiZones across the country. These are local community multi-sports zones designed around the 2012 logo, established in the Olympic Boroughs, that are already enabling all members of the community easier access to sport and leisure activities and providing an innovative space for outreach work with young people.

The Building Schools for the Future programme – which is rebuilding or renewing every state secondary school in England and the Primary Capital Programme – which is renewing at least half of all primary schools in England by 2022/23 – are bringing our schools up to 21st century standards, positioning schools at the heart of their communities and providing wider services for children and families.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- By September 2009, 13 new schools and 14 refurbished schools have opened under the Primary Capital Programme
- By September 2009, 120 secondary schools across the country had benefitted from investment through Building Schools for the Future.

### ContactPoint and information sharing

Building understanding and confidence in information sharing is essential to support early intervention and preventative work as well as for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

The national directory of basic information and contact details about all children in England is now operating. More than 1,700 professionals already have access to a tool which helps them quickly identify other professionals who are working with a child, so they can make contact. This means they spend less time on bureaucracy and more time helping children.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Feedback from those using the ContactPoint system has been positive. Quick and easy access to key information supports effective and early intervention. Overall, we estimate that ContactPoint will save at least five million hours a year, to be invested back into direct support for children, young people and families.

"A child came into A&E recently. He lied about his address and phone number as he had run away from home. I went onto ContactPoint and was able to find his correct contact details, enabling us to quickly contact his social worker and let them know he was safe."

*Anita, Staff Nurse, A&E Department*

## Children's Trusts

Children's Trusts have continued to improve the lives of local children and young people, bringing services together and providing leadership with a shared purpose. We have strengthened their impact by making Children's Trust Boards statutory with responsibility for developing a local strategy for co-operation between local partners and developing a Children and Young People's Plan which sets out the roles of each partner. We have also extended the formal membership of the Boards to include schools, colleges and Jobcentre Plus as relevant partners.

We have also directly supported Children's Trusts, across the country, through the Commissioning Support Programme and the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes, which aim to support more effective commissioning of services and embed a better local understanding of what works.

### DID YOU KNOW?

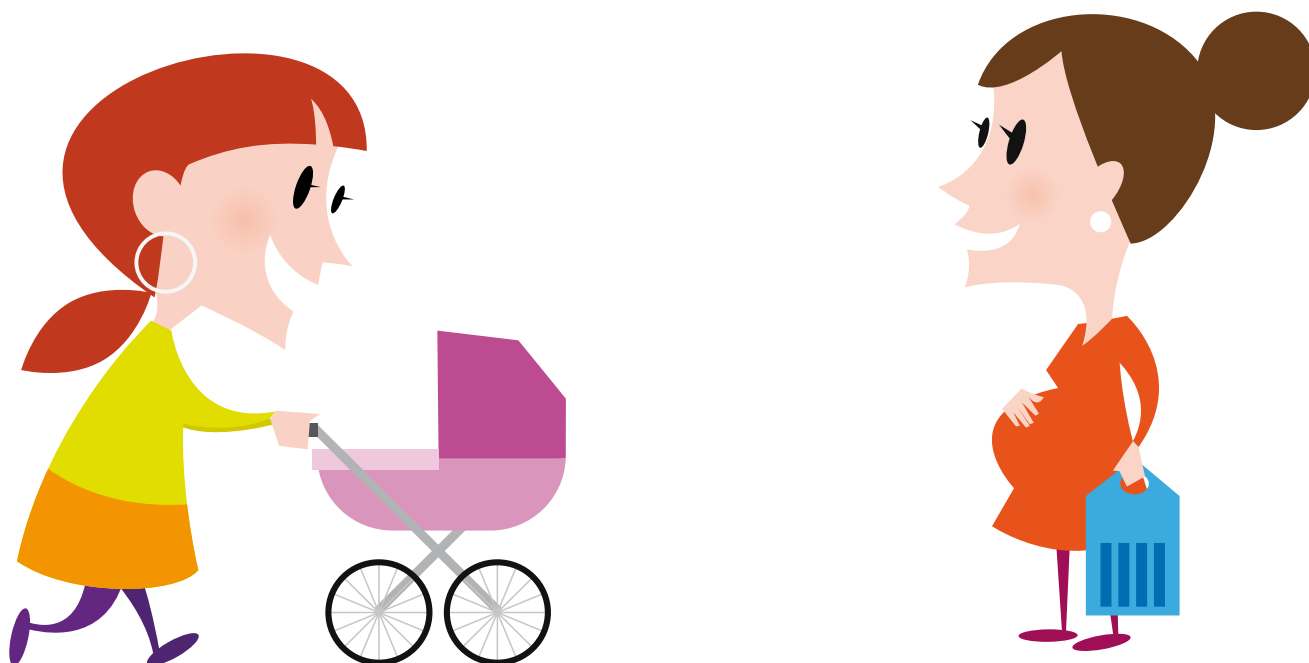
- In November 2008 the Audit Commission found that:
  - Children's Trusts were increasing the numbers of multi-agency teams at the frontline, which "provide a one-stop access to a wider range of services for children, young people and their families"; and
  - Primary Care Trusts were involved in 100 per cent of Children's Trust Boards, improving integration of health, education and social services.
- Every local area has nominated a senior official as a Commissioning Champion and 150 Children's Trusts have already been engaged with the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes.



"As a Senior Practitioner within a social care assessment and referral team, it is obvious to me that no one agency can safeguard and protect children alone. Our arrangements in Southend help professionals to work together with families to address concerns.

These joined-up, multi-agency approaches enable families to access the services they need, prevent family breakdown and ensure that they feel fully involved in the decision making process. With the implementation of integrated working, families don't have to try to divide to fit the services. Whatever the agency, we all have a common goal: we want the best outcomes."

*Mandy Leeman, Senior Practitioner, First Contact (assessment and referral team), Southend-on-Sea*



# It is always better to prevent a failure than tackle a crisis later

We know that parents and young people want services that recognise issues quickly and deal with them before problems grow. This makes sense for individuals and families, and is the best use of available resources.

That means helping parents when it looks like they might struggle, ensuring children have access to trusted adults in whom they can confide if they have a problem, providing children in care with the best possible support, and tackling the causes of youth crime.

## A healthy start

The **Family Nurse Partnership** programme supports vulnerable, first time young parents. Specially trained nurses work with families from early pregnancy until their children are two, and extensive evidence points to short and long term benefits to children and families.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The second year evaluation of Family Nurse Partnerships tells us that the programme is efficient and effective, popular with parents and nurses, involving dads, and having an impact, such as reducing smoking in pregnancy and increasing breastfeeding.



"I think generally my Family Nurse has helped me become a better parent, I think that is the main thing, the biggest thing, that's the biggest gift she would have given me."

"Education and learning things I wouldn't have been able to learn before I met my Family Nurse. I didn't even know you could talk to a baby when it was a few weeks old, but you do and they like it, and books and things!"

*Mothers who have had a Family Nurse*

## Support for the most vulnerable

A minority of mothers and fathers struggle with the responsibilities of parenthood. It is vital that public services act promptly and sensitively to support these families as a way of helping their children, preventing them, in some cases, from turning to crime and anti-social behaviour, thereby reducing the harm caused both to the children and to the communities around them.

Over the last two years, **Family Intervention Projects** have been providing intensive support to the most challenging families, and tackling issues like substance misuse, domestic violence, poverty, anti-social behaviour, crime and truancy.

The Government is providing over £170 million in 2009-11 for all local authorities to provide *Think Family* targeted parenting and family interventions which help improve parenting skills, support families at risk, and offer intensive practical support.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- As of March 2009, 2,225 families have been supported through Family Intervention Projects since 2006/7. Independent evaluation published in November 2009 shows that at the end of the intervention, families made overwhelmingly positive improvements across a wide range of measures, in particular:

- education and learning problems dropped from 76 per cent to 47 per cent;
- truancy, exclusion and bad behaviour at school dropped from 56 per cent to 25 per cent;
- child protection issues decreased from 23 per cent to 13 per cent;
- families facing housing enforcement actions dropped from 47 per cent to 15 per cent; and
- families with multiple anti-social behaviours dropped from 46 per cent to six per cent.

“Prior to the Family Intervention Project involvement with family W, Mum was finding it difficult to cope with her children who were involved in crime including burglaries, robberies and assaults and making the local residents lives a misery. Police visits to the address were almost a daily occurrence.

Mum asked ourselves (the police) and Sandwell Homes for help. Over the next nine months or so, whilst the Family Intervention Project key worker was working with the family, things began to change. Calls to the address by the Police were reduced, and reports of anti-social behaviour had almost ceased.

The impact that the Family Intervention Project has had on the family is tremendous. [The teenage boys] have newfound respect for authority, their Mother and most of all, themselves.”

*PC Dakin, West Midlands Police, talking about Sandwell Family Intervention Project*





## Care Matters

More children in care are in stable care placements and achieving stronger GCSE results and more care-leavers than ever before are in suitable accommodation.

The *Care Matters Ministerial Stocktake Report 2009* highlights achievements during the past two years, and identifies what more needs to be done. A children's version of the report was produced as it is essential that children in care are well-informed of issues affecting their care. To this end, the Secretary of State wrote to every child and young person in care letting them know what to expect in the future.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Placement stability has improved with the proportion of children having three or more care placements during the year falling from 13.7 per cent in 2005 to 10.7 per cent in 2009. The range of placement options includes fostering, special guardianship, and adoption.
- In 2008, 14 per cent of looked after children achieved 5 A\*-C at GCSE – double the figure of seven per cent in 2000.
- Between 2004 and 2008 the proportion of care leavers in education, employment and training has risen from 55.4 per cent to 64.9 per cent.



"The Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership has proven successful in increasing working together across a full range of agencies in relation to looked after services. Some of its success include: innovative participation with young people and families, working with young people to inform and participate in the training of staff and foster carers, working toward improvements in relation to placement stability and developing effective educational support with staff and foster carers."

*Elaine Devaney – Acting Strategic Manager for Children Looked After for Durham County Council*

## Youth Crime Action Plan

The vast majority of young people make a positive contribution. The small minority involved in crime and anti-social behaviour make everyone's lives worse.

The Youth Crime Action Plan was published in July 2008, to tackle the immediate and long term causes of youth crime. We have:

- introduced street-based teams to deter young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour in 69 areas;
- expanded Operation Staysafe which uses existing child protection legislation to remove children and young people from the street late at night for their and other's safety in 69 areas;
- increased after-school police patrols to tackle anti-social behaviour in 69 areas;
- provided Youth Offending Team workers in police custody suites so that there is action to tackle young people's offending at the point of arrest;

- established 173 Family Intervention Projects across England; and
- expanded Safer Schools Partnerships so that there are now over 5,300 Safer Schools Partnerships with a dedicated police officer allocated to a school.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The number of young people entering the criminal justice system reduced by 21.6 per cent from 2007/08 to 2008/09 meeting the target set in the Youth Crime Action Plan for 2020 of reducing first time entrants by one fifth.
- The rate of reoffending reduced by six per cent between 2006 and 2007.
- Perceptions of young people hanging around being a problem has reduced by four percentage points between June 2007 and 2009 (33 per cent to 29 per cent).
- 80 per cent of the Youth Crime Action Plan priority areas achieved a reduction in calls to the police regarding youth crime and anti-social behaviour between July to September 2009 compared to the same time last year.

### Next steps for early intervention

Our challenge now is to improve the quality and consistency of early intervention so that every child, young person or family who is struggling gets the help they need at the earliest possible opportunity. This is vital to improving children and young people's development across all five of the *Every Child Matters* outcomes and to the efficient operation of the children's services system in the coming years. We will shortly be publishing a document to:

- help local leaders make the case for sustained investment in early intervention and develop a more coherent set of programmes;

- support professionals to focus on what works;
- promote a clearer message to vulnerable children and families about what they can expect from local services; and
- continue a dialogue with the sector that builds on this from the considerable experience that exists.



# Children's Plan Expert Groups Two Years On

## Background

As part of the development of the Children's Plan in 2007, three Expert Groups were established by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. They were set up across three age ranges – 0-7, 8-13 and 14-19. The groups each produced a report to feed into the Children's Plan and contributed to the development of the Children's Plan One Year On in December 2008.

The Expert Groups met in December 2009 to review progress against Children's Plan commitments and identify areas for future focus.



## Views from the Expert Group Chairs

"There have been major developments in the 0-7 sector in the two years following the introduction of the Children's Plan. The introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been warmly welcomed by the sector. Its four principles and related commitments have articulated the aspirations we have for all children for a happy childhood and the best start in life. But however good a framework it is, it depends on the quality of the practitioners who work with children and families to make its ambitions a reality. The Children's Plan recognises this and we have seen increased investment in the qualifications of the 0-7 workforce which is leading to better outcomes for our youngest children. The development of Children's Centres and Extended Schools offering an integrated approach to early education, care, health and family support has transformed the way we think about provision for our youngest children, and emphasised the importance of working together to ensure the best for every child."

*Bernadette Duffy, Head of Thomas Coram Children's Centre, Chair of 0-7 Expert Group*

"A great deal has been achieved since the publication of the Children's Plan in December 2007. A framework of support is being established which will enrich the lives of children and families for many years to come. Among those who work with children new working practices are being developed and real partnership is taking place. Much remains to be done if we are to meet our aspiration of making our country the best place in the world in which to grow up, but that journey has not only begun but is well on its way."

*Sir Alan Steer, Chair of 8-13 Expert Group*

"The 14-19 sector has benefited from the clear commitments in the Children's Plan to place the young person and their needs at the heart of the system. The safeguarding arrangements make a real difference to young people and are based on new working practices and increasingly effective integrated working between schools and colleges, local authorities and agencies. Giving young people a stronger voice and capacity to influence the delivery of services is adding value to all partners. We look forward to the challenges of the next year to make even more of a difference to young people and families."

*Jackie Fisher, Chief Executive, Newcastle College Group, Chair of 14-19 Expert Group*

### Progress against Children's Plan commitments

Members of each Expert Group identified areas where they felt good progress had been made over the past two years.

Group members felt that the **language and emphasis** in the Children's Plan on this country being the best place in the world for our children and young people to grow up was a positive step forward in itself, and that this ambition was the right one. The focus on enjoyment *and* achievement was welcomed by the Group, as was the emphasis on children being children now as well as future adults.

Better **partnership working** is emerging across the country in a number of ways: better partnerships between schools, stronger Children's Trusts acting as commissioners of local children's services, improved co-operation on safeguarding and child protection, and better multi-agency working at the frontline, including the use of tools such as the Common Assessment Framework. There has been increased **co-production of services**, with children being treated as service users, and better recognition of children's rights.

In the **early years** the Group felt increased investment had really paid off, particularly the increased number of Sure Start Children's Centres and improvements in the early years workforce. The Early Years Foundation Stage was seen as a positive framework for early years' settings which had had a positive impact on outcomes for children. The emphasis on the importance of **play** and investment in improved play facilities was welcomed by the Group.

In schools, the **National Challenge** had brought focus to improving standards, raised expectations and seen more radical approaches and the sharing of good practice.

In schools and colleges, children and young people are benefiting from increased **personalisation** through greater emphasis on the individual learner, one-to-one tuition, Diplomas, Apprenticeships, the Foundation Learning Tier, and primary and secondary curriculum reforms.

The Children's Plan has had a significant impact already on provision of better **support for families** including through better inclusion of fathers. The Group felt that these reforms had given a clear structure to services for parents and removed the stigma for parents in seeking advice.



### Areas for future focus

Whilst excellent progress has been made in the past two years on Children's Plan commitments, the Expert Groups felt there were certain areas which needed increased or renewed emphasis if the original aims of the Plan were to be realised.



The Group felt it was important to have a robust **evidence base** to be clear about which interventions have the most positive impacts on children and young people's lives. Rather than pockets of good practice, there needs to be a more reliable way of replicating the most effective interventions across the country. This was felt to be particularly important in the current fiscal environment. Existing resources would need to be used more effectively according to evidence about the most effective programmes of work.

Despite improved co-operation across Government on children's policy, the Expert Group felt there is still tension between **national and local policies and funding** which should continue to be enhanced. Examples were given of this impacting on frontline providers, for example in Children's Centres.

Improved **partnership working** was a strength, but Group members felt that this needed to be further consolidated and formalised. For example, some members felt that Children's Trusts should be encouraged to hold budgets and have a stronger role in commissioning local services. Schools needed to be clearer about the relationships they have with one another, and move towards more meaningful partnerships. Some Group members felt that more work was needed to improve health engagement and the impact this was having on services in Children's Centres and schools. By strengthening partnerships, particularly in education, many of these issues would be addressed.

The focus on **safeguarding and vulnerable groups** in the Children's Plan was welcomed, but Group members felt there was still further to go. Some groups of children, such as asylum-seeking children, were not covered adequately by current work. Although gaps in attainment for vulnerable groups have been narrowed, the rate of improvement has not been the same in all areas, so a continued focus on this area is necessary.

Equally the Group felt that there had been improvements in the area of **Child and Adolescent Mental Health**, but despite the Targeted Mental Health in Schools programme, headteachers could still find it very difficult to access mental health services. Some members reported significant local shortages of mental health workers and a lack of preventative work in this area.

Although investment in activities for young people had improved, the Group felt that **negative perceptions of young people** remained. A culture change in how children and young people are viewed is needed to ensure they are not demonised in the media. Members of the Group highlighted how difficult it can be to secure positive press coverage of young people's achievements.

Finally, the Expert Group felt that the Children's Plan emphasis on **reducing child poverty** was vital, but that poverty still has a huge effect on children's life chances which is not linked to their innate ability.



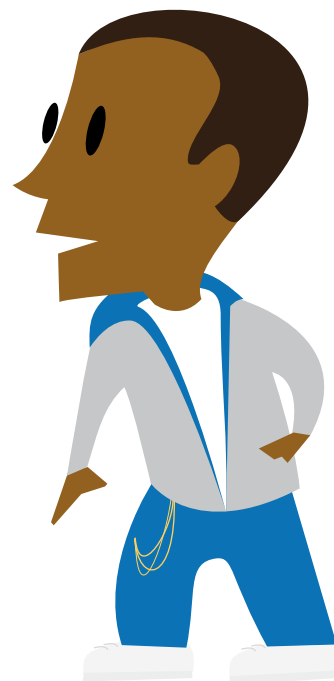
# Children's Plan: What Next?

We have made excellent progress over the past two years towards the original Children's Plan ambition to make this the best place in the world for our children and young people to grow up. Thanks to the effort of people working with children and families up and down the country, we are now seeing real improvements in children and young people's lives.

The Children's Plan presented a long-term vision to put the needs of families, children and young people at the centre of everything we do. It is vital to hold on to these ambitions. The world has changed since the publication of the original Children's Plan in 2007 and the tightening fiscal climate in coming years will present new challenges. So it is more important than ever to work together to ensure that children can enjoy their childhood and be prepared for the future.

We listened to parents, teachers and other professionals, and children and young people themselves in drawing up the aims of the Children's Plan. We want to continue working together towards the achievement of our ambitious goals for 2020.

The Children's Plan is a vision for all age groups – children, young people and families. Here we set out specific next steps for each age group, as well as future developments which will apply across the age range.



## 0-7 age group

Families often need support in the period leading up to and immediately after their child's birth. The **new ante-natal programme** for expectant and new parents, *Preparing for Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond*, will include relationship support. The **Family Nurse Partnership**, supporting vulnerable first-time parents, will have reached 7,000 families by April 2011, with over 350 nurses working in the programme.

**Sure Start Children's Centres** provide vital integrated services for the under-fives and their families. By 2010, there will be at least 3,500 Sure Start Children's Centres, one for every community. To ensure high quality experiences for families, Ofsted will start inspecting the effectiveness of each Sure Start Children's Centre from early 2010. Training will be delivered to 5,000 practitioners engaged in outreach from Children's Centres, so that all families in the local area can benefit from the services offered. We will consult on emerging core principles and standards for outreach work led by Sure Start Children's Centres.

Parents rely on being able to access **high quality, affordable childcare**. By September 2010, we will ensure that all three and four-year-olds, in every local authority, are able to access their free entitlement of 15 hours of childcare a week. We will also encourage more disadvantaged families to take up the free childcare offer for two-year-olds in every part of the country.

From 2011, all parents will be able to choose to start their child in schools from the September after their fourth birthday or take-up a full time place in another early years setting. Parents will be given clear information about this new entitlement. To ensure that children are able to benefit from early education, from April 2010, the **Every Child a Talker** programme will be available in all local authorities, providing professional development for early years practitioners in improving young children's speaking and listening skills.

## 8-13 age group

**One-to-one tuition** can have a real and lasting impact on children's progress, help improve behaviour and boost confidence. By the end of academic year 2009/2010, up to 300,000 one-to-one mathematics and English tuition places will be available in Key Stages 2 and 3 (and in National Challenge schools Key Stage 4). This will rise to 600,000 tuition places in 2010/11. The Pupil Guarantee includes two entitlements to tuition which will apply from September 2010:

- every pupil, aged seven to 11 who has fallen behind national expectations and who is not making good progress will receive one-to-one tuition in English and/or mathematics to get them back on track; and
- every pupil beginning secondary school behind national expectations in English and/or mathematics will receive one-to-one or small group tuition.

We want all parents to be fully involved in their child's education. We will introduce legislation to ensure that every parent has a **Home School Agreement** that makes clear the particular expectations and responsibilities around their child.

We have set out the £900 million support that local authorities and schools will receive for primary school improvement as part of our **World Class Primaries programme**. This includes:

- £379 million to deliver the entitlement to one to one tuition to pupils who are falling behind at primary school;
- £10 million to support the early delivery of the Accredited Schools policy to enable our best schools to become accredited in order to partner and support others; and

- £50 million to underpin the wider roll-out of tried and tested programmes such as Leading Teachers and the Improving Schools Programme to support even more primary schools to improve.

All children and young people should have **access to PE and sport** as part of the national curriculum. By 2011, all five to 16-year-olds will be offered five hours of sport a week – this is part of the new Pupil Guarantee.

Children and families who experience difficulties with their mental health can now access support through the **Targeted Mental Health in Schools** programme. From 2010, a further 72 local authorities will join, and all 152 English local authorities will be implementing the programme from 2010. We will also be trialling the same approach with children identified as at risk of falling into the criminal justice system.

## 14-19 age group

The **National Challenge** programme aims to secure higher standards in all secondary schools. When the GCSE results are announced in January 2010, we are expecting fewer than 270 schools to be below the programme's benchmark of 30 per cent of pupils achieving five or more A\*-C GCSEs, including both English and mathematics. This would be a reduction from half of secondary schools in 1997 to one in 12. By 2011, around 250 schools will have become Academies and National Challenge Trusts, creating new partnerships and bringing in new sponsors.

From 2013, **all young people will be required to continue in education or training post-16**. We will publish our delivery plan for raising the participation age to 18 shortly. This will set out what local authorities need to do to by 2013 to successfully engage all young people in education and training; and what we will do nationally to support them. Our 14-19 qualifications strategy sets out four routes which will be available from 2013: Apprenticeships, Diplomas, Foundation Learning and A levels/GCSEs. We have announced £7 million to support new Group Training models of Apprenticeship delivery, which could deliver up to 15,000 new

places within the next five years. By 2013, all suitably qualified young people will be offered an Apprenticeship place, if they want one. From September 2010, all areas will be offering Foundation Learning – all 16-19 courses at this level will be delivered as Foundation Learning and £20 million distributed across all local authorities will help embed this at Key Stage 4 as well. New Diplomas, combining theoretical study with practical experience, will be offered by over 97 per cent of local authorities by September 2010. All 17 Diplomas will be available from 2013/2014.

The proportion of 16-17 year olds who were **not in education, employment or training (NEET)** fell for the third consecutive year, but it remains a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, depression and poor physical health. In 2010, we will deliver an extended January Guarantee so that all 16-17 year olds who are NEET in January will receive an offer of an Entry to Employment place and will be able to apply for an Education Maintenance Allowance. They will be guaranteed extra time with their personal adviser and a personalised back-to-work place offering access to a job, training or work experience.

There is a clear demand from young people, their parents and communities for more and better places for young people to go. By June 2010, ten **myplace** projects will be open, with a total of 17 open by the end of next year. Working towards the Prime Minister's aspiration for all young people to **contribute 50 hours of time to their community** by age 19, we're piloting work with schools in five local authorities and ensuring 20,000 16-18 year olds, this year and next, participate as part of their learning programmes.

To help parents who are worried about their children's drinking habits, a major campaign will be launched in January 2010 to give parents and young people better information and support on **alcohol misuse**. To inform young people about alcohol and healthy choices, Personal, Social, Health and Economic education will become a statutory requirement in all schools (subject to legislation). We are providing more than £400,000 for voluntary organisations including Adfam and Addaction to improve support available to families on alcohol misuse.

We are determined to tackle the small minority of young people who are involved in **anti-social behaviour and crime**. We will crack down on young people who breach their ASBOs by requiring more parents to undergo parenting courses and provide more help to victims. Extra investment will be provided to tackle serious youth violence, and we will give local people more say in the reparation carried out by young offenders.

## All age groups

**Staying safe** is a fundamental part of the Children's Plan. We will further strengthen safeguarding arrangements by launching a new national framework for safeguarding and child protection indicators. In March 2010, we will report on progress against Lord Laming's recommendations, alongside publication of the revised statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. The Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children will make his first annual report to Parliament in April 2010. New guidance on the **Vetting and Barring Scheme** will be published in early 2010.

In tandem with the launch of the multi-channel **Parent Know How** Directory in January 2010, we will be introducing three innovative new 'Parent Know How' digital services to support grandparents; family relationships; and offer a parental video service. This will bring the total number of Parent Know How telephone helpline and digital services to 18. These services will improve outcomes for children and empower parents by driving greater efficiency, innovation and reach in the information and support services available.

A **well led, highly skilled children's workforce** is the key to delivering the Children's Plan. We have committed to raising the quality and status of the teaching profession still further. We will introduce a licence to teach – linked to entitlements to professional development and training – and look to establish new and stronger expectations for the development of support staff.



Parents and national stakeholders asked for expanded **short breaks provision** for disabled children in the review which informed the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme. There will be a continued national expansion in short breaks provision in 2010-2011.

**Children in care** will benefit from a new employment support programme, From Care2Work, which was launched in July 2009. 30 national employers are providing work opportunities for care leavers across the country. By September 2010, all local authorities will have a Virtual School Headteacher in place who will oversee the education of all children in care in the area.

For families in need of extra support, **Family Intervention Projects** will be expanded to reach a new target of 10,000 families a year from 2012-2013, with 56,000 families reached by 2015. New partnerships with social housing providers and youth offending teams will be created to expand Family Intervention Projects in the future.

**Play** is at the heart of the Children's Plan ambitions. By April 2010, 1,500 more play areas and 20 adventure playgrounds will be completed, with a final 1,500 play areas and ten more adventure playgrounds to be completed by April 2011. A further 57 existing adventure playgrounds managed by voluntary sector organisations have also been funded for improvements to their sites, all of which will be complete by April 2011. We will provide local areas with guidance, training and support to ensure that Children's Trusts can better plan for play provision and child-friendly public space.

We are committed to improving provision for **children with special educational needs**. We are strengthening the position and status of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators in schools. Approximately 700 Co-ordinators started new approved courses in September 2009 and around 2,000 more are due to start in January 2010.

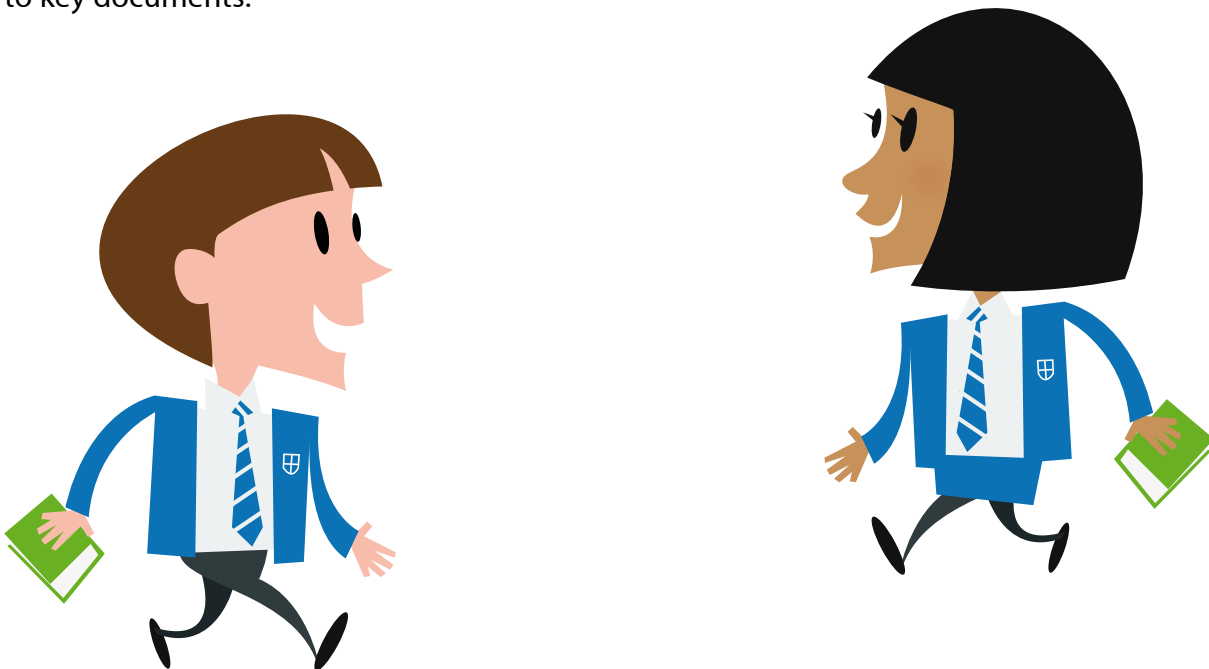
**Children's Trusts** in each local area have a key role in improving outcomes for children and young people. From April 2010, each new statutory Children's Trust Board will be drawing up its

joint strategy – which will need to be in place by April 2011 – for working together to improve children's lives. This strategy will need to be developed and agreed by all the key local agencies, including the local authority, schools, colleges, the police and the health service.

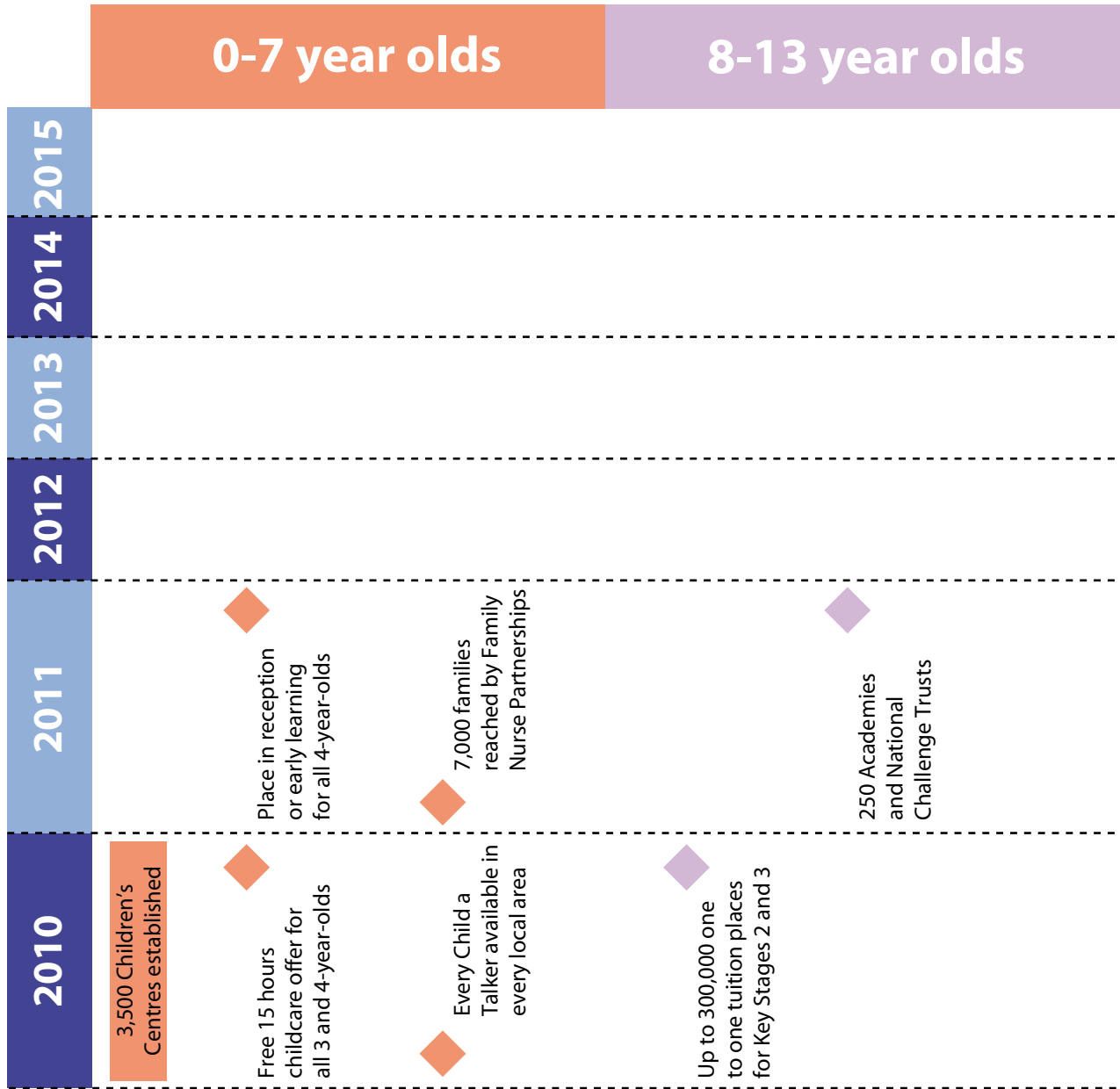
## Conclusion

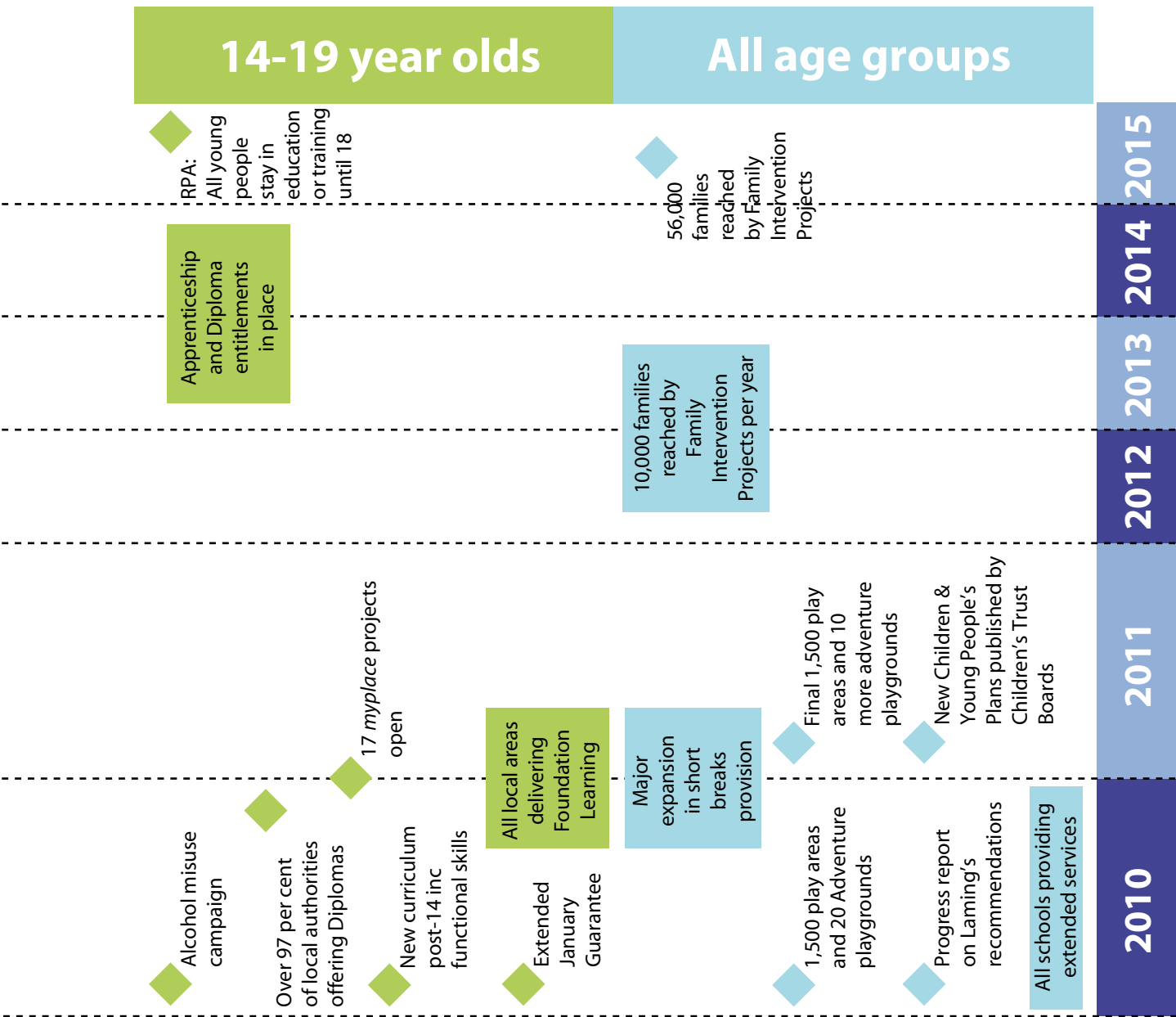
We will continue to work with children, young people, parents and professionals to deliver the Children's Plan commitments. This is a consultative process and we want to make sure that we continue to involve others in delivering improvements, particularly children and young people themselves.

A timeline is included below showing the Children's Plan milestones between now and 2015. The Children's Plan Two Years On website ([www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan)) will include testimonials about the impact of the Children's Plan on children and families lives and links to key documents.



# Children's Plan: What next? Timeline









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