

Inspiring leaders;  
improving children's lives



**National College**  
for Leadership of Schools  
and Children's Services

# The National College and Children's Workforce Network

Building effective integrated leadership

**Resource**

# Contents

In January 2009, the National College for School Leadership (now named National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services) and the Children's Workforce Network held a multi-agency symposium at the National College Learning and Conference Centre. This report is a summary of the materials that informed the discussions, the learning that took place and the findings that emerged.

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## Foreword

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We are delighted to introduce this publication, *Building effective integrated leadership*, which is part of our joint work and commitment to improving the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for children, young people and families.

Following the publication by the Department for Children, Schools and Families of the Children's Plan in December 2007, National College and the Children's Workforce Network agreed to work together to explore the effective leadership of integrated working.

The project has been running for a year and has engaged the expertise of school leaders and other professionals working across the full range of children's services. The work has focused on how:

- leadership at all levels can be both integrated and effective for the children's workforce
- we can develop leaders for the future

In the Children's Plan, Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, said that the single most important factor in achieving the ambitions for children and young people was developing a world-class workforce. This publication is one contribution to this goal. Drawn from a two-day symposium with leaders of schools and children's centres and their multi-agency partners, it captures the experiences, knowledge and expertise of the leaders who attended and illustrates their ideas about how we can build effective integrated leadership.

At the heart of the work is a focus on how to improve the five ECM outcomes for children and young people. Effective integrated leadership will help all members of the children's workforce to meet the ECM outcomes and to find new ways of working together to continue to improve the lives of children and young people.

This publication may also promote some reflection and stimulus for leaders across children's agencies who are facing the challenge of integrated leadership.

This work links closely with the publication of the 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy and will offer National College, the Children's Workforce Development Council and the Association of Directors of Children's Services a steer for the task of developing further new programmes for leaders.

Maggie Farrar / Owen Davies  
National College  
Children's Workforce Network

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## Executive summary

In January 2009, the National College and the Children's Workforce Network (CWN) held a multi-agency symposium. Its aim was to:

- promote and improve the leadership of integrated working
- provide an opportunity for leaders from across the workforce to engage in leadership development together
- provide a particular opportunity for leaders of schools and children's centres to develop their understanding and skills in collaborative and integrated leadership
- share best practice and knowledge

The following key findings and recommendations emerged from the day's discussions.

### General

- Effective integrated leadership is essential to meet and exceed the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes.
- The development of local training and development programmes for leaders is a major responsibility for local area children's trusts.
- New ways of leading at all levels need to be developed so that professionals are confident to lead and respond to situations that ultimately protect children and young people.
- Aspiring leaders – including children, young people and adults in local communities – must be identified, nurtured and supported so that they can develop appropriately into senior leadership roles.

### Policy context

- The 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy (DCSF, 2008a) makes it clear that an integrated, world-class workforce for children and young people is critical to the achievement of improved outcomes for all children and young people.
- Leaders will increasingly be required to manage integrated provision and people from a range of different professional and occupational backgrounds.
- At a national level, measures are developing to strengthen the impact of the common core of skills and knowledge and to ensure clearer qualification, training and progression routes for leaders and all other parts of the workforce.
- A national framework for leaders and aspiring

leaders with a common core of skills, knowledge and behaviours based on competencies is being drawn up by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and is being trialled with children's trusts. The symposium welcomed this move and called for the framework to be widely promoted when it is complete.

- The extended remit of National College includes the development of a new leadership programme for directors of children's services (DCSs) and work with aspirant DCSs, and is significant for the success of integrated working.

### Characteristics of integrated leadership

- As more is being learnt about effective integrated leadership, some specific characteristics are emerging.
- Integrated leaders promote a no-blame culture in which accountability is shared among the partners.
- They build relationships by fostering an atmosphere of trust and belief.
- They use data well to pinpoint duplication and ensure resources are deployed to improve outcomes for children and families.
- They see the big picture and understand how agencies and partners connect.
- They encourage others to lead and innovate.
- They help to develop new leaders.

### Barriers to integrated working

- People – This covers problems with staff, poor relationships between partners/agencies or people unwilling to change their way of working or thinking. Measures to address these include greater effort to bring key players on board and to understand the perspective of others; focusing on the issues, rather than personalities; building resilience in communities and people; and more effective strategies for collaboration.
- Processes – This covers using policy as an excuse for not taking action, neglecting deadlines or ignoring confusion over how strategy is to be carried out. Measures to address these include ensuring that the views of all those involved are taken into account; pilot projects to show the potential benefits

of working together; and ensuring a focus on outcomes, rather than process.

- Purposes – This relates to an absence of vision, lack of clarity over each partner's contribution or targets and conflict between the objectives of different agencies/partners. Measures to address this include identifying the common threads from the child to the DCS; better understanding of the link between action and targets; setting realistic expectations and having a clear vision for the future.
- Power – This covers lines of responsibility that are unclear, managers holding on to power and information, and competition between agencies. Measures to address these barriers include simplifying paperwork and processes; being willing to relinquish power, decision-making and resources; and involving people who can act now. Recommendations on training and development to overcome barriers.
- The training and development of future leaders should be based on a common framework but reflect the local context.
- Strategically, leaders should work with their partnerships and children's trusts to look at how they can:
  - create a common induction programme at local level that has core elements for professionals and general elements that reflect the local context
  - build the ECM outcomes and integrated leadership into all basic and advanced training courses
  - make self-assessment the basis of all training and development activity with people taking responsibility for their own learning
  - introduce elements of the models to children, young people and communities to help grow leaders
- On the management and leadership side, leaders should consider how they can:
  - clarify performance management processes
  - build in time for creative thinking about the future
  - capitalise on any opportunity for people to share their experiences so that a common language can develop
  - support the internship model so that professionals can learn alongside each other
- Leaders should strive to include some of the following in a development programme:
  - skills workshops
  - work-shadowing
  - learning logs of practice and experience
  - mentoring, coaching and critical friend approaches for aspiring leaders
  - simulations and scenarios to solve problems together
  - a case review approach to develop the learning from real experience
  - action learning, where people can share practice or research different approaches



## Background to the project

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Effective integrated leadership across agencies is now recognised as fundamentally important. It features in a string of strategy and policy initiatives from the Children Act 2004 to more recent publications including the 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy (DCSF, 2008a), the child health strategy (DoH, 2009), the 21st century schools white paper (DCSF, 2008b) and the Children's Plan (DCSF, 2007b).

In 2007, DCSF carried out a consultation on leadership in children's services. It was agreed that what was needed were:

resilient, well-informed, creative and innovative leaders with the requisite skills, knowledge and experience to ensure the effective delivery of integrated provision for children, young people and families at the local level.

DCSF, 2007a

Following the publication of the Children's Plan in December 2007, National College launched this project in collaboration with the Children's Workforce Network.

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## Aim

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The overarching aim of the project was to enable members of the children's workforce to articulate what effective integrated leadership means, what it looks like in practice and how it can be fostered and supported.

Key themes were:

- promoting and improve the leadership of integrated working
- providing an opportunity for leaders from across the workforce to engage in leadership development together
- providing a particular opportunity for leaders of schools and children's centres to develop their understanding and skills in collaborative and integrated leadership
- sharing best practice and knowledge

The ECM agenda and improving the outcomes for children, young people and families are the context for all of this work.

The five ECM outcomes are:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic well-being



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## Methodology

As part of the remit of children's services and children's trusts, more than 35 senior leaders came together in January 2009 for two days to consider the role of integrated leadership. They were drawn from schools, primary care trusts, social care agencies, local authorities, police, Connexions, the Virtual Staff College, youth offending services, school improvement services, children's centres, National College, CWN, and CWDC.

They were asked to:

- identify good practice in the leadership of effective integrated working
- identify barriers and obstacles that hinder effective integrated leadership
- identify and collate the lessons learnt
- clarify the requirements for the training and development of new leaders into the future

Four think pieces were commissioned to provide a framework for discussion, to challenge people's thinking and generally stimulate debate. Themes for the four texts were identified by National College as being some of the key components of effective integration, though the list is not exhaustive.

The think pieces were:

- Outcomes and resourcing – Christine Davies, Director, Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

The outcomes that are being sought for children and young people and how professionals, agencies and communities set about improving them together, is central to the work of this agenda. This think piece argued that being clear about the kind of outcome required is the starting point and that the alignment of resources must follow if outcomes are to be maximised.

- Power and advocacy – Russell Hobby, Associate Director, Hay Group

This think piece questioned the way leaders are developed today. Inequality will not be removed from children's services, Hobby says, as long as individual leaders are trained and rewarded only in their own area of responsibility.

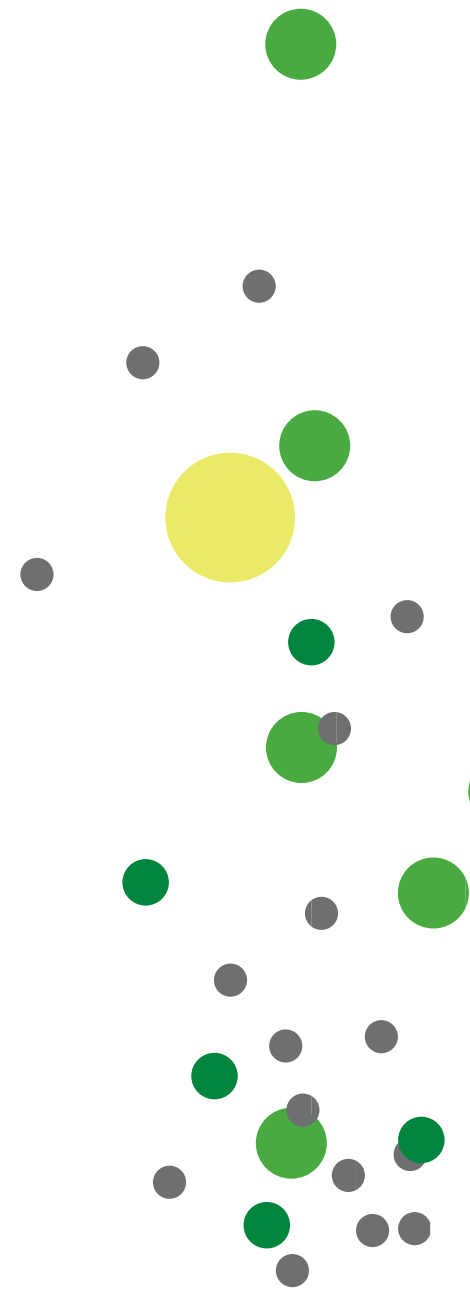
- Roles, responsibility and accountability – Russell Hobby, Associate Director, Hay Group

What are the challenges involved in ensuring clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities within collaborations? This think piece suggested that most people are more likely to take responsibility and reach out if they clearly understand their roles and the roles of those around them.

- Trust and belief – Professor John West-Burnham, Director of Professional Research and Development, London Leadership Centre, University of London

How important is trust? Are leadership and trust symbiotic? The role and significance of trust in developing effective and integrated leadership are explored here, along with the three Cs of confidence, consistency and competence, the characteristics of people who are trusted.

See Appendix 1 for the full texts.





Delegates were also asked to try to agree a definition of 'integration'. Language, in terms of the different terminology used by professionals in different sectors, is one of the biggest challenges for those working in children's services. Definitions help establish a common understanding from which professional dialogue can develop.

Delegates offered six working definitions:

'Integration' is:

- organisations or agencies making changes in working practices, having shared values and genuine collective responsibility for shared intended outcomes
- all hands on deck to bring individual skills and knowledge to work with children and families and provide effective tailored solutions for the child
- shared belief that children and young people should be at the heart of all collaborative and integrated working at all levels
- working effectively with a shared vision, commitment, empowerment and strong relationships with all individuals and private, voluntary and children's agencies for the purpose of making a difference with improved outcomes for children and families

jointly commissioned, accountable, joined-up thinking and structures with all agencies working together for the child and family with the appropriate agency taking the lead where necessary

starting with the child and family and their point of view: sharing information without barriers, making integrated decisions, taking a collaborative approach through co-location of services with schools and being aware of the reality on the front line

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## Starting point

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Using the four think pieces and the definitions as a starting point, four delegates from a variety of backgrounds gave their perspectives and experiences of one of the themes.

### Outcomes and resourcing

Matching them to need

**John Hardy, Headteacher, St John Vianney RC Primary School, Hartlepool**

We might expect everyone to share the same aspirations for the ECM outcomes: happy, safe, healthy young people who contribute to society and realise their potential academically and economically.

Yet different agencies of the children's workforce may well have a different set of priorities by which they measure desirable outcomes. And children themselves may have aspirations that we don't expect or appreciate. The reality may lie somewhere in between.

For example, every agency aims to reduce teenage pregnancy rates. However, we need an understanding of why this is our expectation for some young people. For them, pregnancy and childbirth could well be an aspiration because it is linked to love: a teenager may regard a baby as both the recipient and the donor of unconditional love. Thus, pregnancy is not an unwanted accident. It is a life choice.

In this scenario, we can soon begin to see that better sex education alone is not the answer but that there is a need to change hearts and minds in order to help potential teenage parents to see the reality of the situation. Once this is understood, it becomes easier for different agencies to see the part they can play in working with young people to arrive at a solution. We also have to acknowledge that the timescale here may cover generations.

By engaging with a young mother, we can help her to complete her education and learn to be a good parent. The hope is that this would lead to training and then employment, enabling the family to gain economic independence and so avoid some of the conditions that can lead to crime.

Most significantly, it could lead to different aspirations for the young mother's children who may well complete their education before starting their own family.

Instead of simply reacting in a deficit model – ie, to correct a problem, where each agency reacts to the problem as it affects its own circumstances – we can pool our resources to target together the gap between the aspirations of our young people and the expectations we have, so that a positive reality can be achieved – an altogether different place that neither we nor they have visited before.

## Power and advocacy

Overcoming barriers to common language

**Paul Duckworth, Senior Adviser, School Leadership and Management Development, Lancashire School Effectiveness Service**

As the networks adviser in Lancashire, I was actively involved with National College's Networked Learning Communities initiative. The move to shared responsibility by schools for children's outcomes was a powerful driver for many heads.

Recently in Lancashire we have been looking at the leadership and management competencies that leaders of integrated services for children and young people need to demonstrate. The list is based on existing professional leadership models and frameworks from health, headship, the National Youth Association, police, fire and rescue service, Skills for Care and the private sector. It is divided into three key aspects:

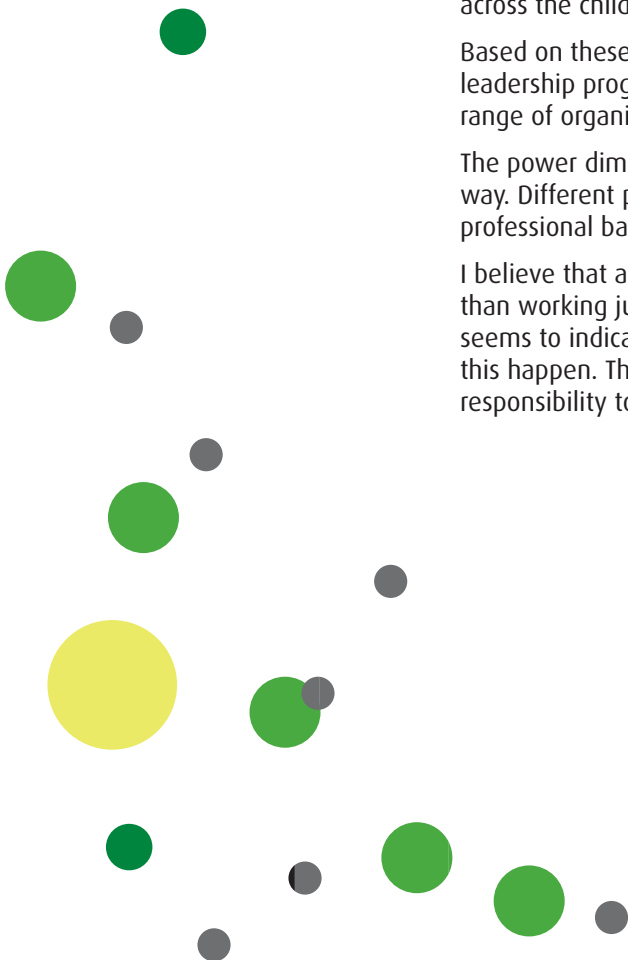
- personal qualities and attributes
- tactical/operational leadership skills
- strategic leadership skills

We are exploring their possible use with partners in appointments, appraisal, self-evaluation, professional development and in assembling multi-agency task groups. This work will also provide a common set of expectations and standards for leaders in different teams and organisations across the children's workforce.

Based on these competencies, we are also developing our multi-agency leadership programme for joint leadership learning by senior staff from a range of organisations within the children's trust.

The power dimension is evident when leaders learn together in this way. Different professional language can become a barrier and there is professional baggage that needs to be acknowledged and left at the door.

I believe that as advocates for children we can be more powerful together than working just as individual organisations. My recent work in Lancashire seems to indicate that there is a strong will among professionals to make this happen. The challenge is to adapt the system to enable such sharing of responsibility to become a reality.



## **Roles, responsibility and accountability**

Through clarity of purpose and trust

**Bob Mitchell, Vice Principal  
(Extended Services), Beauchamp  
College, Leicester**

For roles, responsibility and accountability to flourish, we need to encourage open-minded leadership that will embrace creativity and innovation. Creativity and innovation work best when people have a clear understanding of their own and other people's position or standing in an organisation and feel valued. It creates security and encourages people to get involved.

We must start from the top to create openness, trust and a no-blame culture, one in which people are willing to take risks, try new approaches and not be inhibited by the fear of making mistakes. There may be policies in place but they need to be flexible, rather than acting as barriers to new thinking and ideas. We also need to encourage the leadership of innovation and creativity that may need to challenge the status quo.

We need clear accountability but we also need to encourage collaboration. Specifically, we need collaboration between agencies, even though the accountability can shift. What we don't want is collaboration that restricts thinking.

Is there an argument for a return to hierarchical reporting within defined boundaries where those boundaries are not limiting, but encourage and support innovation? Hierarchy per se is not the issue, and the function of the hierarchy must be to empower people.

Experience in developing local extended services has shown how effective a bottom-up approach can be. This has worked well here at Beauchamp College, for example, where we undertook a student-led inspection, including lesson observations by students, in March 2009. They appreciated the responsibility and the opportunity to 'see the other side of the process', as one student governor put it. They have said it is already having a positive impact in the college. The report they produced has been evaluated and its recommendations are being incorporated in the 2009-10 corporate plan.

I believe we can have a hierarchy that acts as a critical friend but also allows for collaboration and encourages the engagement of people who know how to solve issues by being proactive and not just reactive. We need people and organisations who feel free to lead and to act with authority. This kind of approach would be tested to the limit, if, for example, students were given the opportunity to take part in whole-school inspections instead of Ofsted, where their findings were taken seriously, informed future school policy and practice and contributed to improving learning and teaching.

## Trust

**Kath Nelson, Assistant Director,  
Children and Young People's  
Services, Wigan Council**

I have a deeply held conviction that the well-being of children cannot be promoted or safeguarded without trust between the many professionals who work with children and their families.

I recently led a serious case review which illustrates the point. Such a review is carried out when a child dies or suffers significant injury due to abuse or neglect and questions have been raised about the practice of the agencies involved.

The child in question was a six-month-old girl who suffered serious injuries including a fractured skull. Her parents were teenagers who were known to be violent and to misuse alcohol. Clearly this family required extensive support, which had been provided by professionals from many different agencies.

Could the baby's injuries have been prevented? The review panel comprising the relevant agencies had to answer this question by openly sharing findings about practice. In a situation like this, the importance of trust between those involved is clear. Trust and openness were modelled by all panel members, even when this was painful and difficult.

These circumstances were very serious but, fortunately, this baby has fully recovered. If we concentrate on creating trusting working relationships, we can increase our effectiveness in our joint approaches to working with children, young people and their families and all will benefit as a result. We know that the price of failing to do this will be high.



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# Characteristics of effective integrated leadership

Identifying how effective integrated leadership happens and what it looks like are complex tasks. The symposium delegates worked through a series of activities and exercises based on their own experience and expertise and came up with seven key leadership behaviours that contribute significantly to effective integrated leadership. The key behaviours they identified link to the four think-piece themes.

## Leaders ensure senior leadership sponsorship

(Linked to Power and advocacy.)

'Sponsorship' here indicates that leaders take overall responsibility, freeing their staff to act in the knowledge that they have the leader's support and backing.

A no-blame culture – one in which shared accountability is the norm – is critical to effective integrated leadership. Once this is established by leaders, it enables others to work around them confidently, knowing they are in a trusting environment. Risk-taking, where appropriate, is accepted and ways of working are agreed as a result of real debate and collaboration.

### What does this look like in practice?

First, the emphasis needs always to be on 'our' children and not 'your' children. Leaders should model behaviours that inspire confidence and trust and develop others to lead in the same way.

On the front line, teams know they are supported and valued; their leaders are visible to them and understand the issues that worry staff.

Staff know how and when they have to lead to find solutions and they relish the opportunity to do so.

Learning from mistakes, evaluation and review are priorities. There is a professional generosity in sharing ideas and successes, and space to reflect and learn from challenges.

Leaders demonstrate their ability to manage ambiguity and provide support as well as challenge. Typically, they invite ideas and feedback by asking questions such as: 'This isn't working – has anyone got an idea for a way forward?'

Other characteristics:

- commitment and enthusiasm in the initial stages of new projects
- ability to see the greater good, regardless of short-term disadvantages
- engaging and gaining the understanding of other senior leaders
- ensuring that leadership is supportive and not judgemental
- supporting independent choices for children, based on informed decision making
- sound professional knowledge
- personal courage and willingness to step up to new challenges
- flexibility, creativity and responsiveness

### Leaders create and sustain relationships

(Linked to Trust and belief.)

Where trust and belief have been established, a common language is used that has been built up over time.

The leader's personal and professional contribution and function are clear to all. They seek the views of others and understand their perspectives.

#### What does this look like in practice?

Common ground has been established and territories have been given up, where appropriate, to make things work without duplication of effort and without the risk of omission.

Leaders have ensured that the priorities and drivers for each organisation involved with families are clear and that everyone can work to the same end.

Other characteristics:

- creating a network built on agreed principles
- building relationships that will open doors
- working with critical friends to support development
- creating equity in conversations
- making communication systems robust
- getting to know people well and gaining mutual respect
- reflecting on how they interact with others

### Leaders focus on outcomes

(Linked to Outcomes and resourcing.)

Effective leaders use data well. They gather as much knowledge and information as possible and interrogate these to understand how they influence outcomes for children and young people.

#### What does this mean in practice?

Clear links are made between strategic plans. Where there is duplication, activities are streamlined so that everything is focused on achieving the required outcomes.

The leader is clear about what will make a tangible and immediate difference for a child.

Leaders drill right down to the core of the issue, asking the right questions and making sure they understand the context.

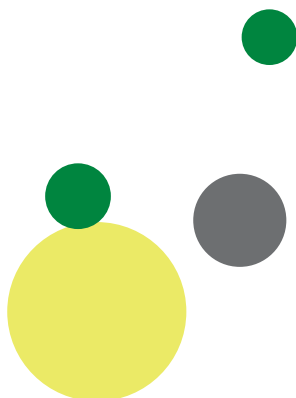
They play to the strengths of the people involved but the child is always at the centre of their enquiry.

They ask questions such as: 'Are the right people around the table?'; 'Can we make sure this action is not blocked elsewhere?' and 'What could we do differently for this family?'

They use resources and harness support creatively to provide rapid solutions to challenges.

Other characteristics:

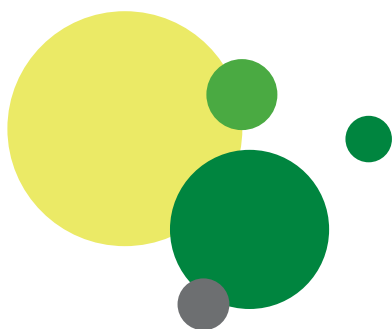
- joint decision-making on the allocation of resources across a locality by the agencies making up the children's trust
- leaders with limited resources are encouraged to work with others



- testing models of working and being aware of how to bridge the gaps and build strengths
- looking for opportunities to join up services, for example by co-location
- basing projects on the priorities identified in a detailed needs analysis
- ensuring that a child's needs are responded to immediately

### Leaders create interdependence and see the big picture

(Linked to Roles, responsibilities and accountability.)



The big picture is very clear to leaders who operate and lead in an integrated way. As a result, they have an ambitious vision supported by a sound strategic plan that has been developed in partnership with others. The connections between all the agencies and partners are recognised so that better outcomes are met for children and young people. Leaders see the whole picture and know exactly how they and their services contribute both at the collective level and at the individual level. They spend time ensuring that this strategic vision is shared and owned by others.

#### What does this look like in practice?

Win win situations are a real possibility for these leaders and they are keen to support projects that will benefit as many agencies and partners as possible. They seek out such opportunities specifically as a way of making the best possible use of resources. They are happy to take the lead in these situations but, equally, they are happy to let others lead and will give their support. They are able to adopt new styles of working, where necessary.

Other characteristics:

- creating one vision to which all partners are committed
- considering the needs of the whole family, not just those of the child
- producing effective strategic plans and using these to monitor and evaluate outcomes and progress
- establishing robust frameworks with a constant view to any possible future political and funding changes
- setting high expectations for teams

Effective leaders work to grow new leaders. They understand the need to identify aspiring leaders and for them to be mentored and supported to develop their leadership abilities.

#### What does this look like in practice?

Leaders create a common culture. They welcome and value new ideas, particularly those that differ from their own. They do not close down creative thinking, and nor do they reinvent the wheel. Consequently, emerging leaders feel supported and valued and they aspire to take on new leadership roles. The succession plan is known and understood by all the key players.



Other characteristics:

- genuine commitment to developing people through mentoring and coaching
- shared principles and protocols used across the whole community

### Leaders facilitate others

(Linked to Roles, responsibilities and accountability.)

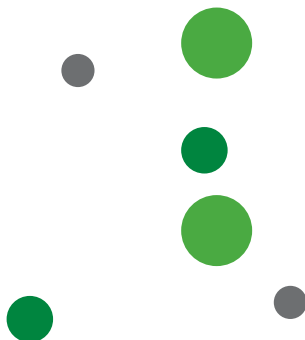
Effective leaders work in an integrated way to make space and time for people to come together to plan. When working with others, they take on a facilitative role.

#### What does this look like in practice?

Leaders actively listen to children, young people and families as well as to partners and staff members and allow time for reflection and evaluation. They create equity in their conversations and show respect and understanding to orchestrate support and challenge. They encourage others to take a lead. They encourage partners and staff teams to innovate and they welcome and value these contributions. The groups they work with act quickly. Reporting and accountability processes are clear and simple and distributed to individuals.

Other characteristics:

- an enquiry-group approach
- shared understanding of how operational staff work
- respect for others
- delegation of work while providing good support



### Leaders show courage and commitment to the people they lead and serve and build trust between themselves and others.

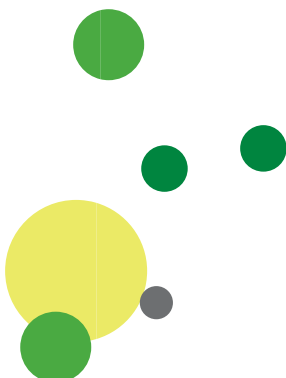
Leaders show courage and commitment to the people they lead and serve.

#### What does this look like in practice?

Integrated leaders are honest, open and willing to acknowledge their own mistakes or areas for learning. They know who to ask for advice. They know and understand themselves well and have huge resilience. They demonstrate empathy with all partners regardless of their background, experience or status. They model these attributes to others and demonstrate patience and tolerance. They understand the integrated environment in which they operate. They lead and inspire people, and deal with issues not personalities. They value people and take time to get to know them and create a personalised ethos.

They ask questions such as:

- are we creating a shared culture here?
- can we work together and support each other?
- how can I be less defensive about this?



# Barriers to effective integrated leadership

A variety of barriers – real and perceived – stand in the way of effective, integrated leadership from time to time. The symposium felt that these could be grouped under four themes:

- people
- processes
- purposes
- power

These themes align with the four key leadership challenges set out in the think pieces. Some of the more common barriers were pinpointed by delegates and are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Possible barriers to integrated leadership**

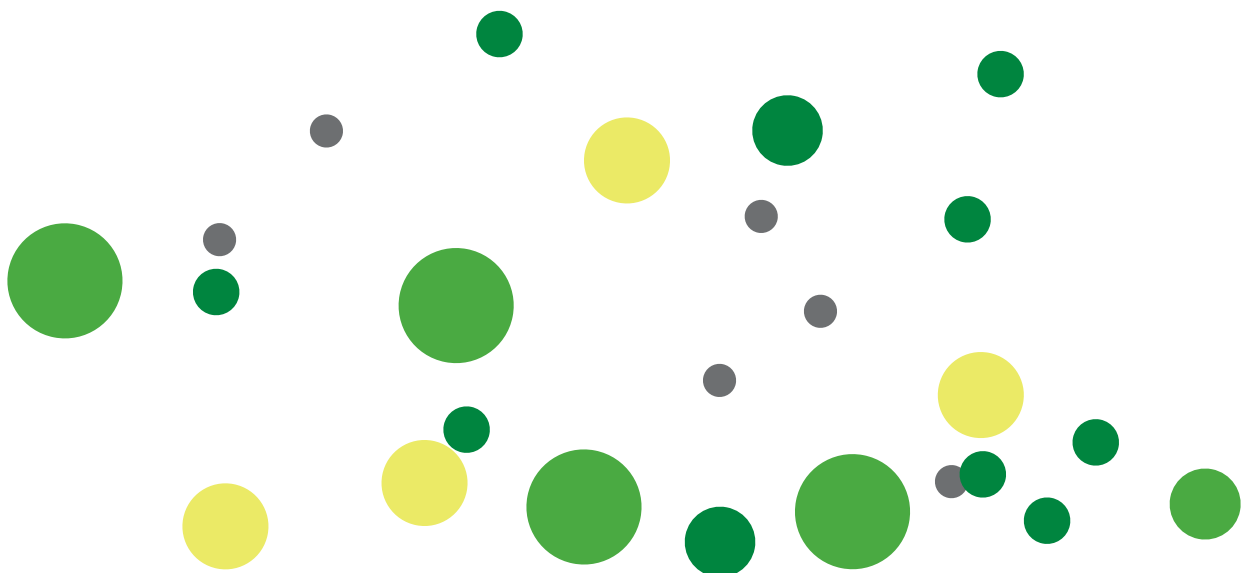
<b>People</b> Trust and belief	<b>Processes</b> Roles, responsibilities and accountability	<b>Purpose</b> Outcomes and resourcing	<b>Power</b> Power and advocacy
Lack of staff commitment	Timescales too tight	Unsure about future shape and direction	Lines of responsibility unclear
Relationships not secure or established	Hiding behind policies and procedures	Unsure how each agency can contribute	Managers not lowering the drawbridge to let others in
Silos exist everywhere	Body of evidence does not exist yet	Lack of vision	Poor co-ordination of budgets
Lack of trust and understanding	Actions not followed up	No clarity about targets	Element of competition between agencies
Individual responses are not followed through	Deadlines missed or ignored	Boundaries of personal judgement not clear	Influential people not convinced by the message
People staying purely in role and not stepping up	Balance between strategic, operational and tactical actions not known	Conflicting objectives slow or stall activity	Information and knowledge are not shared

# Overcoming the barriers

Table 2 shows examples of approaches used to overcome some of these barriers.

**Table 2: Solutions for achieving integrated leadership**

<b>People</b> Trust and belief	<b>Processes</b> Roles, responsibilities and accountability	<b>Purpose</b> Outcomes and resourcing	<b>Power</b> Power and advocacy
Ensure key players are on board and understand their contributions	Build meeting structures to ensure efficiency and effectiveness	Explain thresholds and show what these mean in practice	Remove bureaucracy from the system and make things simple
Take personalities out of the picture	Consider the views of all, especially children and young people	See the bigger picture and take a holistic view	Be willing to let go, and don’t be precious about individual roles or resources
Build resilience in people and their communities so they can tackle problems	Pilot some projects to show potential outcomes using joint funding/pooled resources	Define what the common threads are from the child all the way to DCS leadership	Match resources to risk
Understand and recognise the transition stresses for all staff when change is happening	Define roles and be clear about who is doing what, when and with whom	Understand the connectivity across targets	Use distributed leadership models
Build bridges and understand the perspectives of others	Focus more on outcomes and less on process	Set realistic expectations and be clear about the future	Involve people who can act now



# Training and developing future leaders in children's services: the wider context

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At the symposium, Maggie Farrar, Strategic Director of Policy, Research and Development from National College, gave an overview of the factors likely to influence how leaders in children's services are developed in the years ahead.

In December 2008, the government published the 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy (DCSF, 2008a). The strategy is clear that an integrated, world-class workforce is critical to the achievement of improved outcomes for all children and young people.

It outlines, for both the present and future, the respective roles of central government and its national partners, and local government and partners through children's trust arrangements. It also provides a framework for action and integrated working at both a strategic and operational level based on four simple principles. Everyone who works with children and young people in whatever capacity or at whatever level should be:

- ambitious for every child and young person
- excellent in their practice
- committed to partnership and integrated working
- respected and valued as professionals

In this complex and evolving context, leaders will increasingly be required to manage integrated provision and people from a range of different professional and occupational backgrounds. Much has already been achieved and it will be important to build from this position of strength, while recognising that significant tensions remain in some parts of the workforce and that there are some things that need to improve and improve quickly.

Partnership work, both nationally and locally, is growing stronger and much of the foundation is now in place. Most local authorities have a workforce lead officer with responsibility for bringing local partners together to create a shared and coherent workforce strategy, for example. Many children's trusts have also identified integrated workforce issues and leadership as key drivers in their annual children and young people's plan.

At a national level, measures are developing to strengthen the impact of the common core of skills and knowledge and to ensure clearer qualification, training and

progression routes for leaders and all other parts of the workforce. National College's extended remit, which includes development of a new leadership programme, offering structured development and personalised support to every DCS and consideration of the needs of aspirant DCSs, marks a particular moment in time and is significant for the success of integrated working.

Proposals are also being developed for a more coherent package of support for middle managers across the workforce, building on existing models and recognised good practice.

Some resounding messages for integrated leadership are emerging from professional conversations across the children's services system, inspiring new opportunities and actions:

- Current leaders must find multi-faceted ways to attract and encourage talented and committed future leaders, supporting them well from the start with common induction processes and procedures.
- There needs to be a stronger focus on the quality of leadership (a quality driver) alongside the commitment to encourage more people to become leaders (a quantity driver).
- There should be encouragement to innovate and experiment with what works in integrated leadership from a platform of shared knowledge, co-construction, robust professional dialogue and consistent feedback loops.
- Existing systems and leadership expertise can be used to drive and accelerate change. Examples include the national/local leader of education (NLE/LLE) models, and other models where mentoring and leading are strong.
- Leaders should be willing to explore more effective ways to use shared data and evidence from a range of local sources to set priorities, track progress, evaluate impact and plan the next steps.

Perhaps what is required above all is a shared belief, supported by strong evidence and clearly articulated, that integrated whole-system reform will make a difference to the everyday experiences and achievements of children and young people, or what might be termed leadership by shared voice.

# Effective integrated leadership in practice: case studies

These case studies begin to show how effective integrated leadership can work in practice and how the local context shapes the solutions chosen.

## Case study 1: Delivering a school-based NHS health mentoring service

Leaders: Judith Grigg, Head of Children's Strategy and Partnerships, NHS Associate Director for young people and John Rogers, Headteacher, Greenside Primary School and Children's Centre, Droylsden

### Background

Based in Greater Manchester, all three leaders are members of the local authority's children and young people's strategic partnership and share what they describe as open, honest, respectful and trusting leadership interactions.

### Actions

The opportunity arose to set up a one-year health mentor project. The NHS associate director and the headteacher had both worked on project-based initiatives before and knew their impact was often only short term. Here, their aim was for the project to become mainstream as a school-based service, with a specific focus on children's health and well-being.

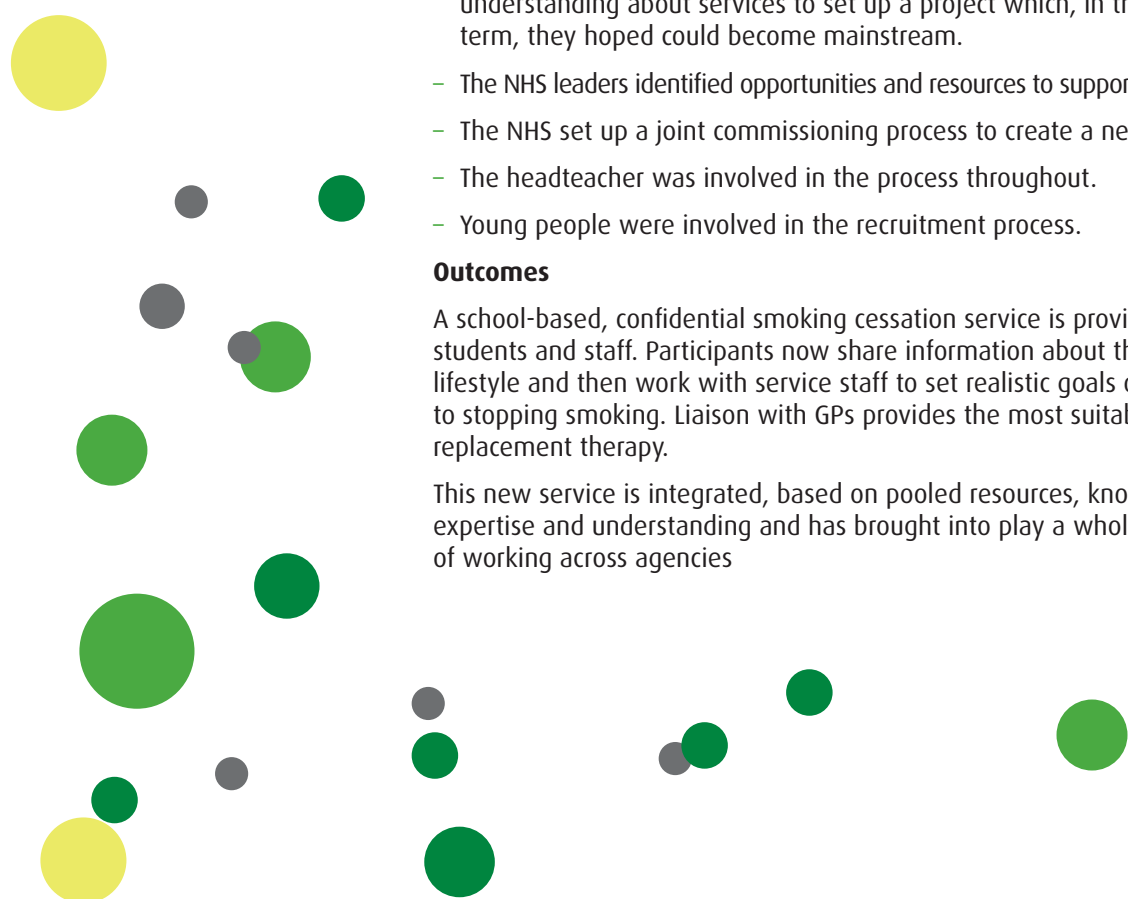
### What they did to build sustainability

- The headteacher and the associate director shared their knowledge and understanding about services to set up a project which, in the longer term, they hoped could become mainstream.
- The NHS leaders identified opportunities and resources to support the service.
- The NHS set up a joint commissioning process to create a new service.
- The headteacher was involved in the process throughout.
- Young people were involved in the recruitment process.

### Outcomes

A school-based, confidential smoking cessation service is provided for students and staff. Participants now share information about their general lifestyle and then work with service staff to set realistic goals on their way to stopping smoking. Liaison with GPs provides the most suitable nicotine replacement therapy.

This new service is integrated, based on pooled resources, knowledge, expertise and understanding and has brought into play a whole new way of working across agencies



## Case study 2: The partners in prevention (PIP) project

Project leader: Sharon Bond, Youth Offending Manager, Wigan Council

### Background

In 2005, the government introduced a challenging new target to reduce the number of young people entering the criminal justice system. In Wigan, there was already a very successful youth inclusion and support programme (YISP) targeted at children and young people aged 8 and 13 who were considered to present a significant risk of becoming involved in offending.

Wigan had introduced safer schools partnerships in all its secondary schools. This was welcomed by the schools, and the presence of a police officer in the school was having a positive impact on school discipline with fewer reported incidents at school-leaving time and on the school buses. But were some young people being unnecessarily criminalised in the process? After all, the police also had a target to increase detections and bring more offences to justice. What impact was this having on the first-time entrants to the youth justice system?

### Actions

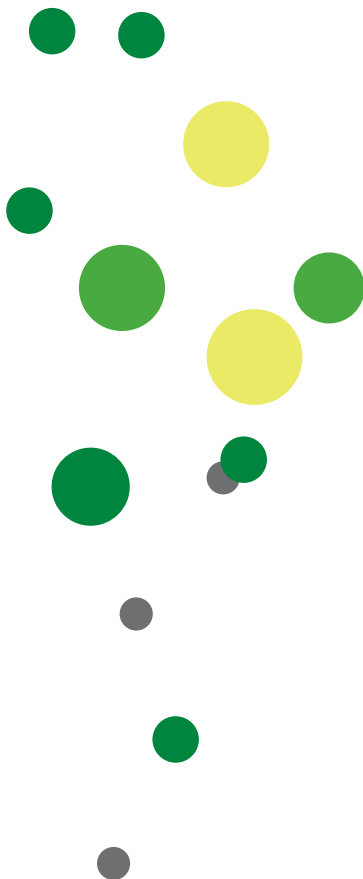
Analysis of the data showed an increasing trend in first-time offending among young people. Further analysis by the community safety team looked at offending and anti-social behaviour within a 500-metre radius of each of the secondary schools and produced an overall ranking. This identified which schools would be approached to take part in a pilot initiative. It was critically important that the headteachers were keen to be involved.

The pilot initiative involved targeting year 8 pupils with a three-tiered approach:

- Tier 1: This involved developing a programme to improve young people's awareness of anti-social behaviour and the consequences for themselves and local communities. Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE & C) staff in the school were trained to deliver the six-week programme to all year 8 pupils as part of the PSHE & C curriculum.
- Tier 2: Work was led by the youth service and involved a group of young people identified by the school who were known to be involved in anti-social behaviour. A group-work approach was used to address the anti-social behaviour and also involve young people in positive activities via the positive activities for young people (PAYP) programme.
- Tier 3: Work was led by the youth offending team (YOT) and youth inclusion and support programme (YISP) and was targeted at young people from the school presenting with significant problems at home, in school and in the local community. Following an assessment, a family group meeting with representation from all the agencies would be held to develop an individual integrated support plan.

### Outcomes

The approach was piloted initially in three secondary schools and is now being rolled out across the borough. A multi-agency steering group, with representation from community safety, police, fire and rescue service, the YOT, the youth service and education/schools oversees the development of the project.



The initiative was part of the strategy for reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system. In 2007–08 this resulted in an 11.6 per cent reduction in first-time entrants.

Perhaps one of the most beneficial outcomes of this initiative has been partnership working and the chance for each agency or organisation to gain an understanding of the issues from the perspective of others. A higher level of trust is developing between the various agencies and there is a greater willingness to engage with restorative justice approaches to resolve issues, rather than taking the formal criminal justice route.

### Case study 3: A school-based police officer

Project leader: Neil Wilson,  
Headteacher, Newall Green High

#### Background

Neil Wilson has been running a school-based multi-agency team for several years. Social care, health and educational welfare have all been co-located in the school, which includes a multi-agency wing within the newly built school under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. It has been immensely successful and the sharing of intelligence about families has brought what he describes as amazing results.

#### Actions

The opportunity arose to employ a police officer shared with another school. It would cost only 30 per cent of the police officer's salary and the school would have access to him for half the week. Neil saw this as a good chance to add to his team as part of the inclusion strategy. His emphasis is on prevention and early intervention, keeping children and young people out of trouble and offering them additional, different support.

#### Outcomes

Newall Green is a high-performing school in a challenging urban area and Neil Wilson considers the presence of the police officer to be important and effective. The officer has had a significant impact already. There is what is described as a seamless continuum with other staff and many students speak regularly to the officer, who is affectionately known as Macca. The presence of a police officer in school has helped overcome the taboo that exists among many teenagers of being seen to talk to the police. In addition, crime rates have substantially reduced and local residents feel more optimistic about their neighbourhoods.

Neil also believes that this has resulted in a high feel-good factor and points to the fact that Macca gets more Christmas cards than other members of the leadership team!



## Conclusion and key findings

In summary, the symposium produced the following conclusions.

Effective integrated leadership is essential to meeting and exceeding the ECM outcomes. Developing local training and development programmes for leaders is a major responsibility for local area children's trusts.

There are barriers to successful integrated working which training and development will need to address.

Training and development should be based on a common framework but reflect the local context. ECM and integrated leadership should be incorporated in programmes and activities for every level. Self-assessment should be the main assessment method. There should be opportunities for sharing experiences, learning from each other, on-the-job

learning, research and reflection. Mentoring and other forms of personal support are also important.

The management of staff development across integrated services needs to be aligned so that there are common approaches to performance management, supervision, use of feedback from partners and users, and appraisal.

New ways of leading at all levels need to be developed so that professionals are confident to lead and respond to situations that ultimately protect children and young people.

Bibliographic references appear at the end of this publication.





## Appendix 1: Think pieces

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### **Outcomes and resourcing**

**Christine Davies**

**Director, Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services**

The outcomes we are seeking for children and young people and how we, as professionals, agencies and communities set about improving them, are central to the work of the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO). We need to make the distinction between 'population' outcomes, eg being healthy, staying safe and so on which we want for all children, and 'service' or 'programme' outcomes, eg reducing teenage pregnancy or reducing exclusions from school, which are for a particular cohort of children. They are not the same but are clearly linked. This difference must be clear in any performance framework that is trying to measure improvements in outcomes.

There will never be enough money to do everything we want to do, but we need to be smarter in the way we decide how to spend the money we do have. C4EO will offer clear, evidence-based examples of what does work to help commissioners use their resources wisely. The recently published *Narrowing the Gap* (C4EO, 2009) contains examples of what works when local partners work together and share resources with an agreed common outcome. Many of the solutions that really improve our families' lives will come from, and be based in, communities themselves. We need to use this resource to listen to people and support them to help themselves.

When we think about the resources available to us, particularly in the

children's trust arrangements, we should not be limited to education, social care and health, but look at what is available through all the partners and those who work with children and families, so this includes schools, the police, and housing, regeneration and leisure services. Much good joint work is already happening, but we all need to be more ambitious, whether we are pooling, matching or aligning resources. Schools are in the most fortunate position with public support underpinning their funding and this funding being ring-fenced and, therefore, protected. Schools, with other partners, need to agree the critical priorities, based on clear analysis of need, for their local communities, and proactively commit some of their funds to working with other partners in meeting these needs.

The *Narrowing the Gap* report (C4EO, 2009) reinforces the fact that there are a number of golden threads common to all activity in improving outcomes which are essentially around the way we behave, and which is not primarily to do with resources. Professionals who work with children from whatever agency – schools, social care, health, police, the voluntary sector – need to be trained together to overcome cultural barriers which are often the key blocks. A culture that develops leaders in its workforce, invests time in developing an ethos that values the views of children and their families and, therefore, becomes the focus of how we develop services, will go on to improve the lives of all children and young people.

Finally, the government policy drive in relation to devolving budgets to families, giving them the power to have a say in what support they need, is relatively new. As part of the common assessment process, some resource will increasingly be devolved to the lead professional role to work with the family in order to provide the services they want or need. There are some key challenges here for all children's service commissioners.

In conclusion, being clear about population outcomes or service outcomes is the starting point and the resources must follow what needs to be done to achieve these outcomes. If we take the view that services, including schools, are a means to an end and not an end in themselves, it will make us all more ambitious for the children and families in our communities.

- Do we really know which services or programmes really work?
- Are we clear about what outcomes we want for these services and what the measures of success will be?
- If we are not providing the services that people say they want and need, how do we feed this into the commissioning process?
- How do you weigh up professional judgement and evidence-based solutions against listening and taking on board what our customers tell us?

## **Power and advocacy**

**Russell Hobby**

**Associate Director, Hay Group**

The way we develop leaders today may be wrong.

We won't remove inequality from children's services for as long as we train and reward leaders for succeeding in their own area of responsibility. It doesn't matter how much funding we provide, or how creative our ideas, it will always degenerate into uneven outcomes.

Much of management today is about getting people to take responsibility for something. We design organisations to give people a piece of territory to look after – a team, a department, a service or an area they will be held accountable for. We look for dedicated people who want to do a good job and tell them that doing a good job means delivering the results for their territory. If they do this, we promote them to a bigger piece of territory. If we really want to whip up energy, we set them up in competition with similar territories by comparing results or limiting resources.

We therefore have a generation of leaders focused on delivering the results for their territory during their tenure. From the perspective of the system, this can be devastating. Take the meltdown of the global financial system, for example. This was driven in part by managers aggressively pursuing results for their departments, goaded on by individual rewards which took no account of long-term value creation, collaboration or even risk.

This issue of sustainability concerns both private and public sectors. In both, we want leaders to care not

only about their time in office, but about what happens when they're gone – their legacy. But there is another threat to the public sector from managerial over-achievement.

Leadership talent is not evenly distributed. In any system, some leaders will achieve better results than others, whether through experience or raw ability. If this talent is focused only on a single institution, and this person is satisfied only when they are doing well when others around them are struggling, then we have inequity and waste.

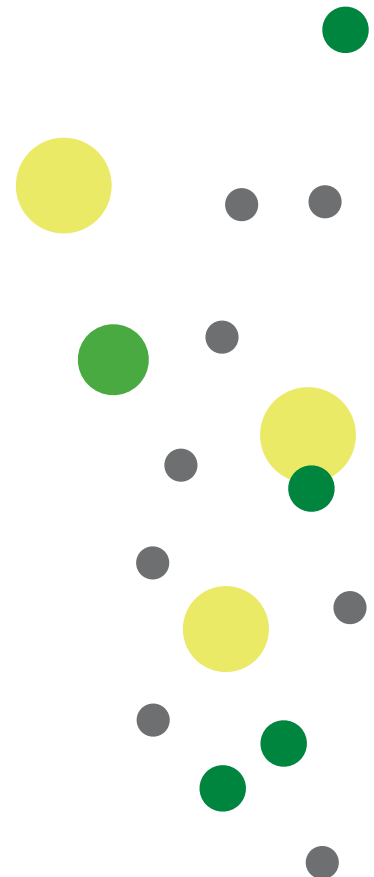
Sustainability and equity will come from a leadership mindset that takes responsibility for something other than its own territory, that sees a bigger picture (thus, not my school, but my town, or all schools, not my pupils, but children) and is willing to take responsibility for that.

Where does this come from? There are many sources: it can be based in politics, faith or community for example, but it is rooted in intrinsic values rather than external goals. It is the seeming contradiction of humble ambition: the leader with a goal more important than their personal success but fierce and uncompromising in pursuit of it. They are ambitious for something, rather than just ambitious; they would even be willing to sacrifice their own position to achieve it. This humble ambition is disconcerting and subversive: it doesn't shy from conflict where it is justified, it doesn't respect authority where it is not justified and it cares little for organisational boundaries.

It is also electrifying: it is found in the makeup of all truly inspiring

leaders. It creates loyalty because it connects people to something bigger than their own careers.

Such humble ambition is more common than we might fear. It may even be our default state. The worry is that we weed it out with systems focused on individual accountability. We must ask some hard questions about our traditional approaches. What, for example, would a leadership development system based on humble ambition look like? What rewards and performance measures would appeal to someone like that? How could we spot them at a job interview?



### **Roles, responsibility and accountability**

**Russell Hobby**

**Associate Director, Hay Group**

There is a belief that creativity and innovation flourish without boundaries. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We suggest that most people are more likely to take responsibility – to reach out, take risks, make suggestions and get involved – when they clearly see where they stand and where other people stand. Where there is doubt, they fear conflict and retreat.

In this sense, clarity is like poetry. It is sometimes the strictest forms that bring out the greatest work.

The more witnesses there are to a crime, the less likely it is to be reported. People assume that someone else will take responsibility.

These thoughts suggest great danger for collaboration. A danger that becomes real whenever we read of another young life lost or blighted. Where large groups of people collaborate in conditions of ambiguity, the tendency is towards inaction. Is shared accountability therefore a contradiction?

Is this an argument for the return of the hierarchy? Clear reporting lines coming together in a single person at the top; precise separations between functions and departments, without unnecessary sideways movement. Information goes up, orders come down; conflicts are sorted out at the next layer up in the hierarchy where a single person oversees both strands.

There are some who argue that, however unfashionable, we haven't given hierarchy its due. That we just didn't know how to use it properly. This is a timely challenge

to collaboration, but there are uncomfortable facts for the fans of hierarchies. The people at the bottom tend to know most about how to solve problems, while having the least freedom, and the pace of information in the modern world moves far too fast for a linear chain of command to process. And, anyway, they are not very inspiring or attractive.

So, three thoughts on blending clarity with collaboration:

- Most people hate to be seen to break a promise. Accountability becomes stronger if people expressly, publicly and voluntarily make a commitment to act. The group must then create rituals to follow up on those commitments and see if they have been met. This can often be intensely uncomfortable. But it is, for example, one of the forces that made New York safe again. Every precinct police commander had to report on progress against his or her commitments at a meeting attended by all the other precinct commanders.
- How do we visualise responsibility across a group? There is a collective task, which breaks down into many different responsibilities. If we consider responsibility only role-by-role, we risk duplication and conflict. Worse, we risk missing out a vital part of the group task – everybody will correctly meet their individual accountabilities and still we will miss something vital.
- We often talk a lot about accountability while forgetting its partner, authority. As well as holding people responsible, we need to give them commensurate freedom to act. What decisions belong to

them? And do we have the self-discipline not to undermine that authority? Unless people really believe they have it, all the accountability in the world is just a burden, not a direction.

### **Trust and belief**

**Professor John West-Burnham**

**Director of Professional Research and Development, London Leadership Centre, University of London**

Trust is fundamental to every human relationship – it is the basis of every marriage, partnership, friendship, professional collaboration and business. Trust means we work and our salaries are paid in arrears; we drive our cars on busy roads, fly in aircraft, eat in restaurants, send our children to school and take the medicines prescribed by the doctor. In all of these cases, we are only able to function because of trust. In fact it could be argued that the higher the level of trust, the more effective we are:

In a company, high trust materially improves communication, collaboration, execution, innovation . . . In your personal life, high trust significantly improves your excitement, energy, passion, creativity and joy in your relationships.

### **Covey, 2006:19**

Trust is a key social lubricant – it is like WD40; it makes living in community possible. It is also the basis for any human relationship (just reflect on the power of a trusting relationship and the corrosive nature of a relationship where trust has been lost). The power of trust is a fundamental resource:

Trust . . . creates and consolidates energy, commitment, and relationships. When trust is broken,

people lessen their commitment and withdraw from relationships, and entropy abounds.

**Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:213-14**

Trust is an elusive quality in any relationship or organisation and we often think of it intuitively but in most cases it is possible to provide clear criteria:

- respect – recognising the integrity of all of those involved in a child's well-being and their mutual interdependence
- competence – professional capability and the effective discharge of role and responsibility
- personal regard for other – mutual dependence and caring, leading to a sense of interdependence and reciprocity
- integrity – consistency, reliability and a clear sense of moral purpose

**Bryk & Schneider, 2002: pg 34.**

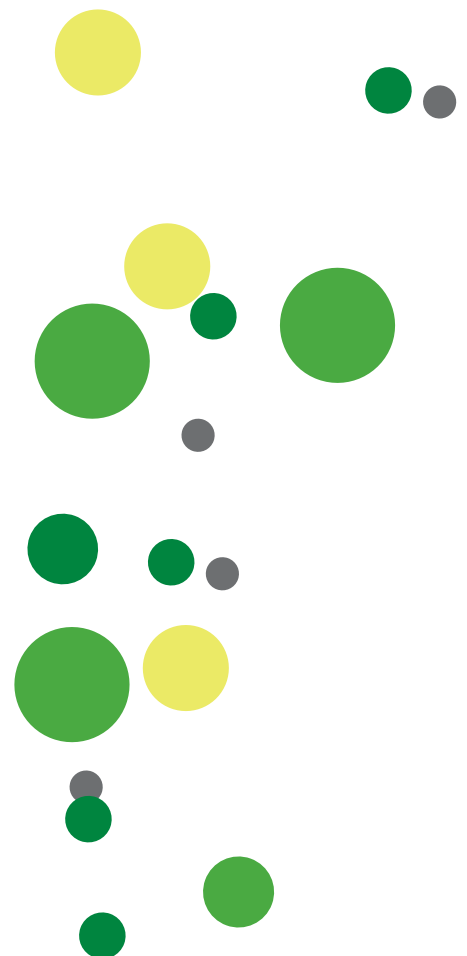
A simpler version of this would be to see trust as the combination of three Cs: confidence, consistency and competence. We trust people who display these qualities and are reluctant to give our trust to those who do not. We work best when:

- partnerships are open and honest and commitments are kept
- networks are interdependent and based on equality
- leaders are credible and consistent and model trust
- relationships with clients start with trust
- trust is constantly reviewed and discussed

An unexpected source of ideas about trust can be found in the world of traffic engineering and in particular in the work of Hans Monderman (who died in 2008). He pioneered the application of the concept of shared space, which involves the removal of the traditional separation between motor vehicles and pedestrians and other road users, and the removal of traditional road priority management devices such as kerbs, lines, signs and signals. The removal of road signs etc humanises the road as a space, thus increasing mutual awareness and interdependence. When all the road signs were removed from Kensington high street in London there was a 60 per cent fall in deaths and serious injuries.

The reasoning behind the idea is that it would result in improved road safety by forcing users to negotiate their way through shared areas at appropriate speeds and with due consideration for the other users of the space, or in other words create a system that works on trust and reciprocity.

- Is trust just the product of personal relationships or can we create systems and structures to support its development?
- Is trust always fundamental to successful relationships or might there be other factors?
- Are leadership and trust symbiotic?
- How does trust manifest itself in personal relationships, professional relationships and relationships with clients?
- What would you do to build trust with a child, a parent, a colleague?



## Appendix 2: Key to acronyms used

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The following acronyms have been used in this publication.

BSF: Building Schools for the Future

C4EO : Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

CWDC: Children's Workforce Development Council

CWN: Children's Workforce Network

DCSF: Department for Children, Schools and Families

DCS: director of children's services

ECM: Every Child Matters

GP: general practitioner

LLE: local leader of education

NLE: national leader of education

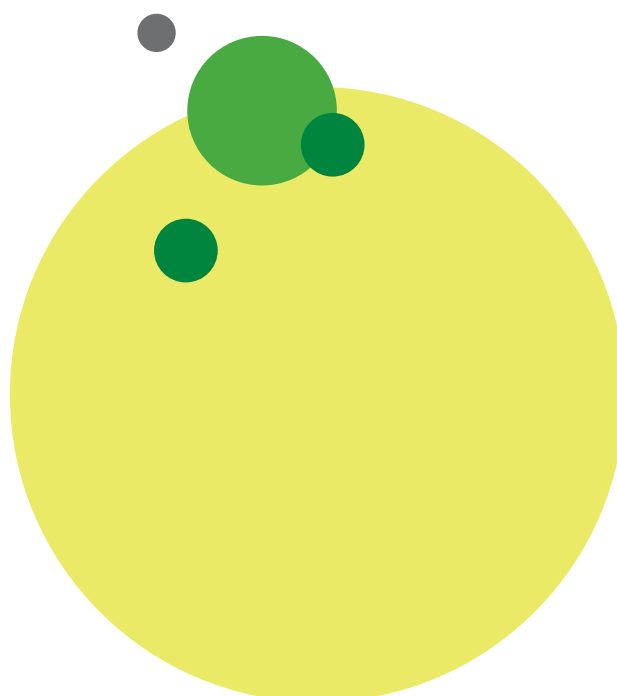
PAYP: positive activities for young people

PIP: partners in prevention

PSHE & C: personal, social and health education and citizenship

YISP: youth inclusion and support programme

YOT: youth offending team



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