

# Making a Difference Report Summary

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## Every Child Matters

Reducing Bureaucracy in  
Children, Young People  
and Family Services

## SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

The table below is a compendium of agreed actions to remove unnecessary bureaucracy and to improve the service delivery to children, young people and families. Various actions are already in progress or under development as part of the major *Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme*. Further details of the issues identified by front line staff and stakeholders that led to these actions can be found in the main report.

Action		Implementation Date
<b>Key Outcome 1 – To clarify roles and responsibilities and implement common standards in children’s services.</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	Department for Education and Skills and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will work with local authorities to introduce in every local area an on-line “directory of children services” that would enable practitioners to easily identify services, their location, contact details, criteria and procedures for referral.	<b>March 2006</b>
<b>1.2</b>	Ministers have now approved proposals to move to a design stage for a network of local indexes. The Government will announce the timescale for implementation of the index approach in autumn 2005, subject to approval of a business case and the identification of the necessary resources.	<b>November 2005</b>
<b>1.3</b>	Department for Education and Skills is currently developing the specification for common core sets of skills, knowledge and competence for people working with children and families.	<b>April 2005</b>
<b>1.4</b>	Department for Education and Skills will develop implementation tools for employers and employer organisations to help them deliver appropriate training, support and systems for staff working towards the necessary competence in the common core.	<b>October 2006</b>

### Benefits

- Making contact with the right practitioner to refer to, or to obtain specialist services from would be much quicker; thus reducing the amount of time spent in trying to find out whom to contact in the first instance;
- Access to the information already collected about the child would greatly help focus attention on identifying the most appropriate support for the child, by concentrating on the support that are not already provided by other services;
- Practitioners would co-operate more across the different agencies as practitioners are trained to a common level of competency on the core set of skills;
- Better understanding and use of standard terminology by all practitioners will increase the acceptability of assessment reports written by others.

Action		Implementation Date
<b>Key Outcome 2 – To clarify legislation and information sharing laws and develop core sets of information.</b>		
<b>2.1</b>	Department for Education and Skills will issue statutory guidance on what arrangements organisations should make to share information in discharging their duties to collaborate to promote the well-being of children and to safeguard children and promote their welfare.	<b>May 2005</b>
<b>2.2</b>	The Department of Education and Skills will work with other Government Departments and practitioners' representatives to draw up usable, comprehensive good practice guidance on sharing information in relation to children and young people. This will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• education;</li> <li>• health;</li> <li>• social care; and</li> <li>• youth services.</li> </ul>	<b>September 2005</b>

### Benefits

- This will ensure that similar information is collected and shared without duplication and minimise the fear of litigation without additional bureaucracy;
- Through its work with other Government departments, Department for Education and Skills 's good practice guidance will also provide practitioners with greater clarity on when and how information should be shared;
- Services should be improved and be provided in a timely manner with fewer delays due to disagreements over information sharing.

Action		Implementation Date
<b>Key Outcome 3 – To develop and introduce reforms in a coherent way.</b>		
<b>3.1</b>	Department for Education and Skills will introduce policy impact assessment procedures to assess the impact of policies and initiatives from central government to local partners (local government, schools and the voluntary sector) and alignment with procedures in other government departments dealing with children services.	<b>Completed</b>

Action		Implementation Date
3.2	Department for Education and Skills is currently working with other government departments through the <i>Every Child Matters: Change for Children</i> Programme to ensure that government services develop policies and initiatives in a coherent and efficient manner. Implementation of this will help achieve better outcomes for children.	Completed
3.3	Department for Education and Skills is currently working with other government departments to identify existing gateways for communicating new policies and initiatives with stakeholders and the public to ensure that messages are delivered efficiently to the relevant audience.	Completed

### Benefits

- A systematic approach to policy development through the use of gateways should enable departments and agencies to move towards a cross-government approach in supporting continuous improvement of children's services;
- Assessing the impact of implementing new initiatives would engender better workforce planning and enable time for planning preventative actions for children services.

Action		Implementation Date
<b>Key Outcome 4 – To develop shared objectives for providers of children services.</b>		
4.1	Department for Education and Skills is currently developing shared programme objectives for Government, statutory and non-statutory organisations that underpin the five outcomes set out in the Green Paper "Every Child Matters".	Completed

### Benefits

- Practitioners across the services will be able to work together more effectively in meeting the child's needs, by working to shared targets that underpin the five outcomes;
- Cross-departmental consultation will ensure alignment of targets across the services and this should reduce the conflicting priorities that are currently preventing practitioners from co-operating with each other;
- The delivery of children services would improve as different professionals work closely in co-operation, with fewer conflicts, to achieve the shared outcomes.

Action	Implementation Date	
<b>Key Outcome 5 – Ensuring information is collected once only and used many times.</b>		
5.1	Department for Education and Skills will explore with other government departments the development of a data collection protocol encompassing the key Government Departments and external agencies providing services for children, young people and families.	<b>December 2005</b>
5.2	Department for Education and Skills will unify its own gateway processes for vetting new Department for Education and Skills -led data collection and research to reduce duplication and ensure that its data collection is appropriate, proportionate and meaningful. It will work with other government departments and the inspectorates to identify the best means for controlling wider data demands relating to children's services.	<b>April 2006</b>
5.3	The remit of the Department for Education and Skills unified data gateway (Action 5.2) will include assessing the implication of the timing of all future requests for reports/ data collections to ensure a co-ordinated approach and limit duplications	<b>April 2006</b>
5.4	Prior to the establishment of the unified data gateway (Action 5.2), Department for Education and Skills will review the timing of current data requests/returns to ensure a more co-ordinated and streamlined approach to data collection, reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.	<b>April 2005</b>
5.5	Commission for Social Care Inspection will make proposals for further proportional reductions on the reporting exemptions, on children services, for three-star authorities.	<b>April 2005</b>
5.6	Commission for Social Care Inspection will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the volume of policy monitoring information for the Development and Improvement Statement, by at least 20% for the 2005 Development and Improvement Statement requirement.</li> <li>• Negotiate overall reductions in the 2005 requirements, by working with the Department of Health and the Department of Education and Skills to limit the number of <i>ad hoc</i> data requests incorporated into the Development and Improvement Statement.</li> </ul>	<b>April 2005</b>

Action		Implementation Date
5.7	Commission for Social Care Inspection will review and remove duplication in the production and handling of performance data, on Children Young People and Families services, for national statistical and assessment purposes.	March 2006

### Benefits

- Reduce the volume, duplication and frequency of data requests that need to be sent to agencies. This should free up time for staff and management, and reduce the frustrations caused by unnecessary burdens;
- Ensure both data and information management staff and central government have a clearer understanding of how the various demands fit together;
- Require reviewing agencies to share knowledge and expertise and to identify where overlaps could be eliminated;
- A more consistent approach to data collection across government.

Action		Implementation Date
<b>Key Outcome 6 – Ensuring clarity, consistency and proportionality in the collection, interpretation and reporting of data.</b>		
6.1	Department for Education and Skills will lead on the development of common cross-departmental definitions for data requirements for Children, Young People and Families services, based on the performance measures falling out of the five key outcomes from <i>Every Child Matters</i> Green Paper.	Completed
6.2	Department for Education and Skills and Commission for Social Care Inspection will consult with local authorities and other agencies prior to issuing new performance indicators or making changes to existing definitions to ensure that the views and concerns of those responsible for collecting and supplying data are taken into account.	Completed

### Benefits

- Improve transparency, clarity and consistency of data requirements across Government and over time ensure that they are more targeted and proportional to the organisation and dovetail into local planning and delivery;
- Ensure that the data collected is more targeted and useful in improving service delivery;
- Improve the quality and accuracy of the data collected.

Action		Implementation Date
<b>Key Outcome 7 – A standard framework and approach for the development and implementation of the Common Assessment Framework.</b>		
<b>7.1</b>	Department for Education and Skills will introduce and make available for use, a Common Assessment Framework across all children’s services to ensure practitioners from different professional disciplines and agencies have a common set of terminology, concept and tools to assess the needs of children.	<b>April 2005</b>
<b>7.2</b>	Department for Education and Skills will use the feedback from existing Integrated Children’s System pilots and from implementation to revise where needed, the current children social care records to ensure the appropriateness of the information collected for children social care processes.	<b>June 2005</b>
<b>7.3</b>	Department for Education and Skills will further develop Integrated Children’s System to reflect the development of integrated services and multi-disciplinary work.	<b>January 2007</b>
<b>7.4</b>	Department for Education and Skills will provide to local authorities a functionality statement and process and data model to support the commissioning of systems.	<b>Completed</b>

### Benefits

- A common assessment should improve working relationships across agencies and enable efficient and targeted service delivery;
- A common assessment should also enable the holistic assessment of a child’s needs to be determined which is understood by all agencies involved;
- A standard approach to the Integrated Children’s System will encourage flexibility in the workforce and ease transfer of information on children and young people between local authorities.

<b>Action</b>		<b>Implementation Date</b>
<b>Key Outcome 8 – Review and streamline Assessment records</b>		
<b>8.1</b>	<p>Department for Education and Skills will review the use of assessment records in response to findings from the current development work being undertaken by the Council for Disabled Children, and a report of this review will be produced.</p> <p>Appropriate changes, based on the recommendations from the review report, will be implemented to meet the needs of children with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>September 2006</b></p> <p><b>January 2007</b></p>
<b>8.2</b>	<p>Department for Education and Skills will update the Integrated Children’s System training materials, following the Council for Disabled Children review, to ensure that practitioners understand how to record their assessments of disabled children.</p>	<b>January 2007</b>
<b>8.3</b>	<p>Department for Constitutional Affairs and Department for Education and Skills will work together to agree a single set of documents (for example, chronology, care plan and assessments) that is acceptable to both.</p> <p>Department for Education and Skills will include the agreed single set of documents into the Integrated Children’s System model.</p>	<p><b>April 2006</b></p> <p><b>January 2007</b></p>

### **Benefits**

- A review of the assessment records specifically for children with disabilities would the delivery of more appropriate services;
- A single set of documents for local authority and judicial purposes would provide a single point of reference relating to a child for all involved.



Action		Implementation Date
Key Outcome 9 - Review and consolidate the Care and Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children.		
9.1	<p>Department for Education and Skills has developed a single 'Child's Care Plan' that integrates the different elements of care and support for children in need as part of the development of the Integrated Children's System and will be piloted in four English local authorities.</p> <p>Department for Education and Skills will ensure the successful implementation of the single 'Child's Care Plan'.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>January 2006</b></p>
9.2	<p>Department for Education and Skills will work with Department for Constitutional Affairs to ensure that the single 'Child's Care Plan' fulfils the requirements of the Family Justice System.</p>	<p><b>April 2006</b></p>
9.3	<p>Department for Education and Skills will reinforce existing guidance on the roles and responsibilities of practitioners of children's services in planning education requirements for Children Looked After.</p>	<p><b>April 2005</b></p>

### Benefits

- A single Child's Care Plan would minimise duplication in collecting similar information but in different formats and speedy access to other agencies' input;
- Implementation of a single format should also contribute to cutting down on the overall bureaucracy of children's records;
- Reinforcing guidance should help clarify the roles and responsibilities of practitioners in planning education requirements for children and young people.