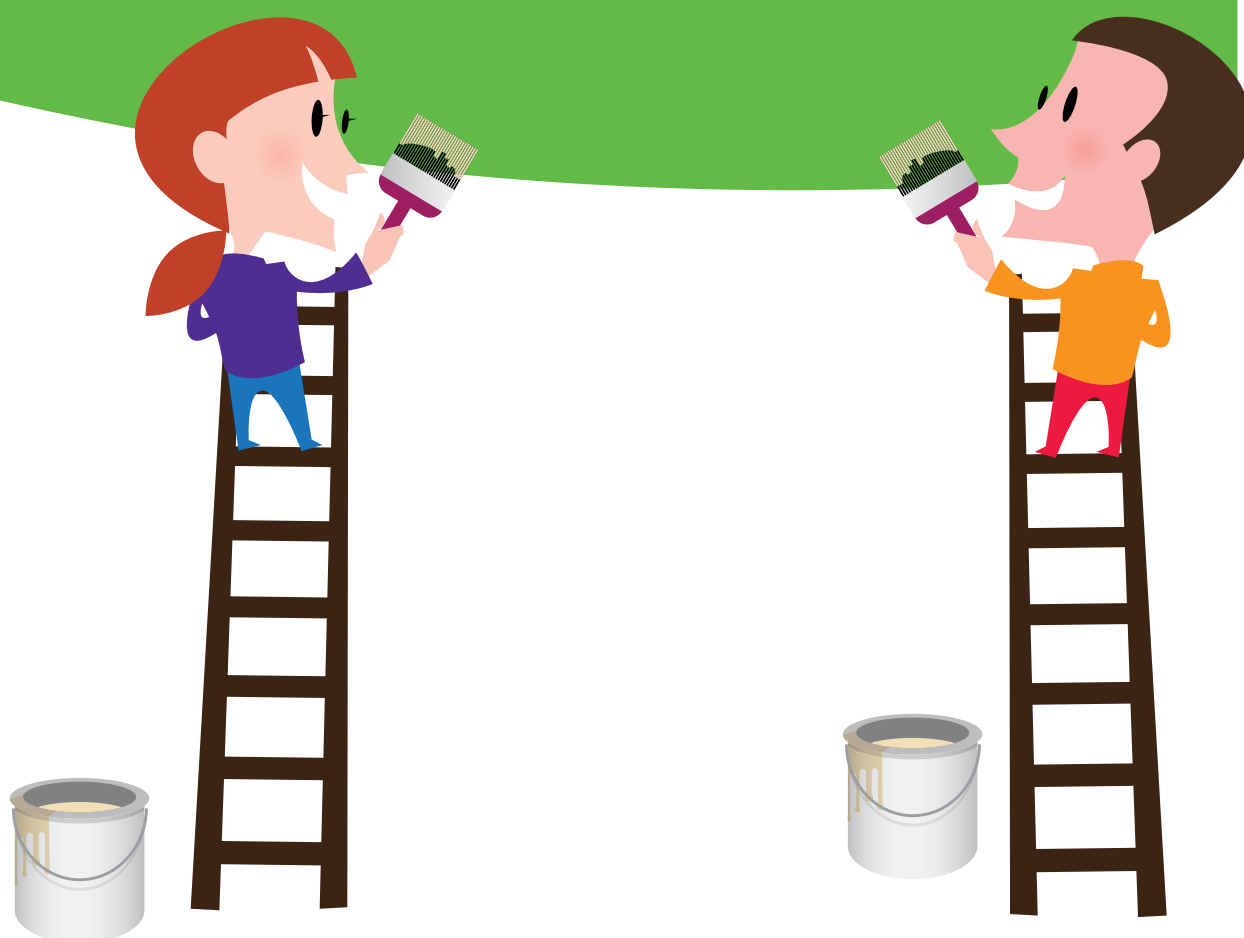


Statutory Guidance

Children's Trusts:

Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families



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Introduction

Summary box

- The Government is committed to working with local agencies to improve the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes for every child and young person in every area in the country. This means improving the prospects for all children but taking determined action to address the inequalities between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.
- The *Children's Plan* commits us to strengthening Children's Trusts so that they continue to improve their performance, delivering measurable improvements for all children and young people year on year; and have in place by 2010 consistent high quality arrangements to identify and provide early intervention for all children who need additional help.

- 0.1** This guidance, issued under section 10 of the Children Act 2004 and to which all local authorities and "relevant partners" must have regard, replaces the *Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve wellbeing of children: children's trusts (2005)* and the consultation document *Children's Trusts: statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families* published in April 2008.
- 0.2** It reflects the lessons learned since the publication of *Every Child Matters*, progress in the implementation of the vision *ECM* contained and the development of new policies and programmes to support the drive for better outcomes for young people. In particular, it stresses the importance of robust and effective arrangements under the section 10 "duty to cooperate" in implementing the vision of *The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures*.
- 0.3** The 2005 guidance explained that acting in accordance with the duty, and with the spirit and intention of *Every Child Matters*, implied putting in place "children's trust arrangements" which put improved outcomes for children and young people at the centre of all activity. That vision of Children's

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Trusts won wide acceptance, as did the recognition that, although progress needed to be made in all areas across all aspects of Children's Trust development, local authorities and their partners should have the flexibility to tailor local arrangements to local circumstances and priorities, in ways which enabled them to respond most effectively to the needs of children, young people and families in their areas.

- 0.4** More recently, the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has put in place a local performance framework based on new statutory Local Area Agreements, and next year will include a new monitoring and inspection system (Comprehensive Area Assessment). The Local Strategic Partnership – of which the Children's Trust is a thematic partnership – sits at the heart of this framework, with collective responsibility for agreeing the improvement priorities set out in the LAA.
- 0.5** In the past few years local partners in many areas have made significant improvements in the extent and impact of partnership working through Children's Trusts. Real progress has been made in implementing the structural and systemic changes needed to drive improved outcomes. This has been variable across the country, however, and the cultural changes needed to drive through to demonstrable improvements in outcomes have yet to be sufficiently embedded.
- 0.6** If proposed legislative changes to strengthen Children's Trusts go ahead as planned the statutory "relevant partners" will be extended to include maintained schools (and Academies), Sixth Form and Further Education Colleges and Job Centre Plus. The Board of the Children's Trust will be placed on a statutory footing and it will be responsible for developing, publishing and monitoring the Children and Young People's Plan. This guidance focuses on the next 18 months after which it will be updated to reflect any legislative changes that have been made. In the interim these proposals are recommended as good practice.

At the end of this period each Children's Trust should:

- routinely include schools, colleges and Job Centre Plus as key partners in the Children's Trust;
- have a Children's Trust Board in place; and

- have a Children and Young People's Plan in place to which key partners have committed to provide, and made public, the level of resources needed for its delivery.

0.7 Section 1 of this guidance clarifies what a Children's Trust is, what it does and how it relates to other local partnerships. Section 2 discusses in more detail the vision and priorities in the *Children's Plan* as they relate to Children's Trusts and the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Section 3 discusses the progress of Children's Trusts against each of the five "essential features" of a Children's Trust, identifies the challenges that now need to be addressed and gives guidance on how the priorities in the *Children's Plan* can be driven forward across the whole system of the Children's Trust.

Section 1: Children's Trusts: Step Changes in Delivery

Summary box

- The purpose of a Children's Trust is to improve the well-being of all children: improving their prospects for the future and redressing inequalities between the most disadvantaged children and their peers.
- A Children's Trust is a local area partnership led by the local authority bringing together the key local agencies – some of which are under a statutory "duty to co-operate" – to improve children's well-being through integrated services focused on delivering the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes.
- The Children's Trust is a thematic partnership within the Local Strategic Partnership – the multi-agency partnership operating at local level and bringing together public, private, community and voluntary sectors to work together more effectively to promote better outcomes for local people.
- Our vision is of 21st century schools, delivering excellent personalised education; contributing to all aspects of well-being; operating at the centre of the Children's Trust and their communities and at the front-line of a preventative system by looking to identify early the needs of children; committed to multi-agency and partnership working to meet those needs, including working in partnership with other schools and colleges and with parents; and fully engaged with the Children's Trust.
- To deliver on the *Children's Plan* commitment the Government is planning to legislate to:
 - extend the number of "relevant partners" under a duty to cooperate to include all schools, sixth form and FE colleges, and Job Centre Plus;
 - make the Children's Trust Board a statutory body;
 - Give the Board responsibility for producing the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), which will then be "owned" by the full Children's Trust partnership.

What is a Children's Trust and what does it do?

- 1.1** The local Children's Trust is the embodiment of the local partnership between all commissioners and current and potential providers of services for children, young people and their families. It exists to help make a reality of our commitment to make Britain the best place in the world for children to grow up – improving their prospects for the future and redressing inequalities between the most disadvantaged children and their peers.
- 1.2** The Children's Trust is in part a planning body which informs commissioning decisions and ensures, (through a range of sometimes agency-specific approaches) that front line services work together to improve outcomes. It is underpinned by the duties in section 10 (1) and (5) of the Children Act 2004 on local authorities and their 'relevant partners' to cooperate in the making of arrangements to improve well-being for local children. Well-being is defined as the five Every Child Matters outcomes: that all children should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and enjoy economic well-being.
- 1.3** In practice this means better integrated and outcome focused ways of working on a whole range of issues. These are some examples.
 - Having a specialist early intervention and prevention service organised around a central hub which both enables information to be shared and acts as the central referral point for all children and young people identified as having additional needs.
 - Having a strategy in place to reduce child poverty which includes targeting the most marginalised families and, through local schools, raising aspirations and attainment of the whole family.
 - Using a multi-agency team, working through the local Children's Centre, to address the needs of children underachieving at the Early Years Foundation Stage.

There are many variations but the aim is the same – to work across professional and agency boundaries to tackle complex problems proactively to make a real difference to the experience and life chances of children, young people and their families.

The Children's Trust Board

- 1.4** Most areas with effective Children's Trusts already have a Children's Trust Board. The Government proposes to strengthen the role of Children's Trusts by providing a legal basis for the Children's Trust Board, which will have responsibility for setting the strategic vision and direction for services for children in the local area via the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The CYPP also includes policies on key strategic issues such as joint commissioning, budget pooling and aligning and developing other integrated systems and processes, including workforce development. The expectation is that these should be agreed with, and implemented, by all partner agencies and include appropriate commitments of funding and other resources.
- 1.5** The role of the Children's Trust Board is to put in place the five 'essential features' of the Children's Trust. This means:
- developing and promulgating a child and family-centred, outcome-led vision for all children and young people via the CYPP, clearly informed by their views and those of their parents and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;
 - putting in place robust arrangements for inter-agency governance (through the Children's Trust Board);
 - developing integrated strategy: joint planning and commissioning; pooled and aligned budgets; and the Children and Young People's Plan;
 - supporting this via integrated processes: effective joint working sustained by a shared language and shared processes; and
 - developing and promoting integrated front line delivery organised around the child, young person or family rather than professional or institutional boundaries.

Local Strategic Partnerships

- 1.6** As a key thematic partner it is vital that the Children's Trust is firmly positioned within the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP provides the forum for setting and reviewing the strategic vision for a local area (contained in the Sustainable Community Strategy) and for agreeing the

priorities for improvement in the Local Area Agreement and associated targets. It provides the means through which children and young people's issues can be fully integrated into those of the wider community.

- 1.7 The Children's Trust should inform and influence the work of the LSP as it relates to children, young people and families, and identify and champion children and young people's interests as part of the process of agreeing and implementing targets in the Local Area Agreement. It should ensure that the Children and Young People's Plan is consistent with the strategic vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy and helps drive its delivery. For example, a broader coalition is required to tackle child poverty. The Children's Trust also has a key role in influencing infrastructure planning at local and regional level to embed facilities for children, young people and their families in local housing, regeneration and transport plans. This includes influencing new models of more integrated service delivery (e.g. multi-agency teams) and co-location of services, as they are developed locally. Work is currently underway to join up capital programmes across Government at local level to facilitate such co-location more easily.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

- 1.8 The Children's Trust should engage with other thematic partnerships in the LSP especially the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). This is another local partnership with a duty on its members to work together to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder, anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment; and the misuse of drugs in their area. The partners ('responsible authorities'¹) are under a statutory duty to ensure that the key agencies work together to carry out an audit of local crime, disorder and misuse of drugs every three years. Using this information and the results of a consultation with local communities, they formulate a strategy for combating crime, disorder and the misuse of drugs in the area. CDRPs may also be leading local partnership work on preventing violent extremism.
- 1.9 The Youth Crime Action Plan highlights the need for local partnerships to work together to prevent and reduce youth offending; specifically the Children's Trust and local CDRP need to work together to address this.

1 The 'responsible authorities' as set out in s 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 are the police, police authorities, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities and primary care trusts.

Although the two partnerships play different roles in the local area, promoting positive outcomes for young people is an objective shared by both. Some bodies will belong to both partnerships (for example Youth Offending Teams, police and probation services) and are well placed to make the links to create a common agenda. The two partnerships should have clear and recognised communication channels to ensure that local plans are properly aligned and any potentially conflicting policies addressed. Effective partnership working can help to ensure that young people who are, for example, identified as being at risk of committing crime or anti social behaviour, are offered the services they need to help prevent their antisocial behaviour becoming entrenched.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards

1.10 The work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) contributes to the wider goals of the Children's Trust to improve the well-being of all children, but has a particular focus on the "staying safe" outcome. The Children's Trust should consult the LSCB on issues that affect how children are safeguarded and the LSCB must be consulted during the development of the Children and Young People's Plan. The LSCB works within the framework established by the CYPP and any additions to its core function should be agreed as part of that planning process. The Children's Trust may wish to take an overview of the LSCB's work as part of its local monitoring arrangements. There should be ongoing communication between the LSCB and the Children's Trust to avoid duplication of work or gaps in policies and services. The majority of LSCB member organisations will also be Children's Trust partners. The LSCB coordinates and ensures the effectiveness of what its member organisations do individually and together. This includes challenging local partners and ensuring that lessons are learnt from Serious Case Reviews. The DCSF's stocktake on LSCBs which is now under way, will consider the relationship between Children's Trusts and LSCBs further and will make recommendations in spring 2009. This will include consideration of whether it remains appropriate for the local authority to decide to appoint the Director of Children's Services or local authority Chief Executive, or a senior employee of one of the Board partners, to chair the LSCB. The Government has already said, in *Local Safeguarding Children Boards: A Review of Progress (2007)*, that it believes that appointing

independent chairs to LSCBs is important to avoid conflicts of interest and provide independent scrutiny.

Locality or neighbourhood Children's Trusts

- 1.11** In some of the larger local authority areas smaller locality or neighbourhood Children's Trusts have been set up. They can be organised around a cluster of schools, such as a secondary school and its feeder primaries, and involve other local partners, including the General Practitioner or other health workers in the area. These smaller local partnerships are well placed to engage with local people and advise the Children's Trust Board about needs specific to that neighbourhood and disseminate information about services to them. They may also commission services in their own right. It is important that local Children's Trusts are fully integrated with, and clear about, accountability to the larger set of partnership arrangements.
- 1.12** Within its own broad framework the Children's Trust may have internal partnerships with a specific focus on children of a particular age or living in a specific locality. These need to be clearly positioned in relation to the Children's Trust Board, influencing board decisions and the overall direction of travel, but in turn operating within the framework set by the Board.

14-19 Partnerships

- 1.13** Local collaboration is essential to deliver the 14-19 reform priorities including the Diploma entitlement from 2013 and raising of the participation age to 17 from 2013 and 18 from 2015. The 14-19 Partnership is central to facilitating this collaboration. It is the strategic body in the local area that agrees and reviews the local vision for 14-19 until 2013/15, and develops and articulates local strategies and plans to deliver the full range of 14-19 priorities, including 14-19 learning. This will enable the local authority and its partners on the Children's Trust to ensure that the local area has the right education and training provision in place for its 14-19 learners.
- 1.14** 14-19 Partnerships will be organised to suit local circumstances but it is good practice to include representatives of key local decision makers and providers in developing its strategy. This should include representation from the local authority, Learning and Skills Council, Information, Advice

and Guidance providers, secondary schools, colleges, work-based learning providers, Higher Education Institutions, employers and the third sector. It is also important that all local providers including Academies, City Learning Centres, faith schools, pupil referral units, special schools and the independent sector, engage with their local 14-19 Partnership, to inform its work. Each 14-19 Partnership will produce a 14-19 Plan, which must be an integral element of the Children and Young People's Plan, and a key driver for local collaboration and delivery of the Diploma entitlement.

- 1.15** Employers also play a wider role in supporting leadership, management and governance in schools and colleges and in the professional development of teachers. 14-19 partnerships should include education business brokers to create effective links between employers and the education system. When, Parliament permitting, the Education and Skills Bill receives Royal Assent, we will publish further guidance on 14-19 Partnerships and their Plans.

Schools partnerships

- 1.16** Children's Trusts should work with and, where appropriate, support other partnerships and programmes relating to children, young people and their families. Most schools work routinely in partnership with other schools and partners; Children's Trusts should seek to engage and build on these partnerships. Many schools are working in partnership with each other and external partners to deliver services on behalf of their local authority – for example, working together in a shared Trust with external partners as members of their charitable foundation or Trust. The Children's Trust should support the School Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships through which secondary schools collaborate with one another and their local authority to plan, commission and manage provision for pupils with challenging behaviour. (Nearly all secondary schools are now working together in this way and we are planning to legislate to make them mandatory.) Extended schools provide access to extended services in partnership with other local schools and providers. Other partnerships and agencies with which Children's Trusts need to connect include City Challenge, National Strategies, the National Secondary Challenge, Building Schools for the Future and Partnerships for Schools.

Children's Trusts: the next ten years

- 1.17** *The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures* set the aim of making this country the best place in the world for our children and young people to grow up, and sets out the Government's plans for the next ten years. In recognition that parents not governments bring up children, services need to be shaped by and responsive to children, young people and their families. This requires a strong leadership role for the Children's Trusts in every local area. *The Children's Plan* sets high expectations for Children's Trusts – to deliver measurable improvements for all children and young people and, in support of this, to have in place by 2010 “consistent, high quality arrangements to provide identification and early intervention for all children and young people who need additional help”.
- 1.18** This is not simply a matter of bringing the operation and effectiveness of all Children's Trusts up to the standards of the best. It implies, rather, a step change in aspiration and impact, so that Children's Trusts in every area are visibly and demonstrably continuously improving outcomes and, as a result, the lives and prospects of children, young people, parents and families in their local area. Children's Trusts must be central to the redoubled efforts of all partners (and the service providers they may contract with) to improve outcomes and narrow gaps.
- 1.19** This means that the arrangements established under section 10 of the *Children Act 2004* need to drive and sustain Children's Trusts and in doing so:
- place a clear and measurably effective emphasis on narrowing the outcome gaps between children from disadvantaged backgrounds (for example looked after children) and their peers, while improving outcomes for all;
 - focus rigorously on prevention and early identification, including for those children and young people at risk of being harmed or falling into anti-social behaviour or crime;
 - involve and empower parents, and become more responsive to children and young people themselves;

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- ensure effective planning and commissioning of services and the flexible use of pooled budgets (or greater alignment) where that is the best answer locally;
- lead to more integrated and strategic infrastructure planning, making best use of all available assets and funding streams to deliver facilities for children and young people's services, including through greater co-location;
- drive effective integrated working between all professionals working with children and young people;
- support families in securing world class health and well-being outcomes for their children; and
- tackle the problem of child poverty.

1.20 The discussion document *Strengthening Children's Trusts: legislative options*, issued on 3 July 2008, set out proposals for legislative change to help strengthen the legislative framework to empower and encourage local partners within a broadly permissive framework. The proposals were:

- extending the section 10 'duty to co-operate' to schools and Schools Forums, as well as Sixth Form and Further Education Colleges;
- requiring all local areas to have a Children and Young People's Plan and extending ownership of the plan to all statutory 'relevant partners' represented on the Children's Trust Board;
- strengthening the statutory framework for Children and Young People's Plans; and
- establishing a statutory basis for Children's Trust Boards.

But the acid test must be whether outcomes for children young people and their families are improving across the piece, that gaps between vulnerable groups and their peers are being narrowed and that a significant move has been made towards early intervention and prevention.

Children's Trusts and the 21st Century School

- 1.21** The extra challenge to Children's Trusts must include a step change in their involvement with schools². All schools, including Academies, and colleges should contribute to and in turn be strongly supported by the local Children's Trust leading to shared ownership of all outcomes for all children in an area. The model of the 21st century school means a significant change for many schools and Children's Trusts. The key difference for the school is that it needs to operate as part of a local system of schools and service providers, in partnership within the Children's Trust, to promote the well-being of all children, young people and families in the area. This means that a 21st century school is committed to both excellence in teaching and learning and to working with other service providers to address children's needs in the round through the provision of extended services. The school also shares a commitment with others to promote the well-being (including educational achievement) of all children and young people in the area, not only its own pupils. In return schools and colleges should receive the services they need through the Children's Trust to support their pupils.
- 1.22** The government is proposing to legislate to include schools and colleges among the statutory 'relevant partners' of the Children's Trust. The effect would be to place them under the section 10 'duty to co-operate', to give them the power to pool funds and share resources and to place them under a requirement to 'have regard' to this guidance. They would also have joint responsibility in the preparation and ownership of the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

² Schools are not yet 'relevant partners' section 10(1)(b) but 'other bodies' section 10(1)(c) Children Act 04. 'Relevant partners' are District Councils, Police and Police Authorities, Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts, National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Probation Service, Youth Offending Teams, Agencies responsible for providing services under section 114 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 the (Connexions partnerships) and the Learning and Skills Council.

Section 2: Children's Trusts and Improving Outcomes through the Children's Plan

Summary Box

- Primary Care Trusts and local authorities must work together to achieve their common goals. Working through the Children's Trust, partners should address the type and level of need and ensure appropriate action is included in the Children and Young people's Plan and PCT commissioning plans.
- Our vision is of a system of children's services focused on the well-being of children and young people. Schools, as a universal service, engaging with children, young people and families on a daily basis, must be at the heart of this system.
- The Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020 requires a multi-faceted approach by Children's Trust partners across all five outcomes.

2.1 *The Children's Plan* puts Children's Trusts at the forefront of delivering the high ambition of making this country the best place in the world for children to grow up. They have been given a clear leadership role in every area to drive through the necessary reforms. Links with the wider Local Strategic Partnership and wider adult services are important, for example enabling partners to focus on issues which impact on child poverty, such as economic development and job creation, especially for the hard to reach; securing sufficient childcare for working parents; skills and training and community regeneration.

Be Healthy

- 2.2** Good physical, mental and emotional health is not only a central outcome in its own right, but has a crucial influence on each child's future across the whole age spectrum. A good start in life helps children's physical and mental development in the early years and allows them to arrive at school ready to learn and make the most of their opportunities. The neighbourhoods in which children live should be accessible to them by foot and bike, and provide a range of high quality opportunities for play and recreation. Older young people need the advice and support to help prevent them engaging in behaviours that may be harmful to their health, such as drug or alcohol abuse, and to ensure that they have the knowledge they need to prevent early pregnancy and to look after their sexual health. Acquiring healthy lifestyle habits helps minimise the risk of acute and chronic conditions in adulthood. Tackling childhood obesity, for instance, helps head off later problems such as asthma, diabetes, cardio-vascular disease and some cancers.
- 2.3** It is, therefore, essential that all partners³ in the Children's Trust, including schools, work together to promote healthy living, including sensible eating and physical activity. It is essential to intervene early where health problems do arise and provide the support and services required by those children and young people who have acute or additional health needs. Support for vulnerable groups such as looked after children or disabled children is particularly important.
- 2.4** Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and local authorities must work together to achieve their common goals, including delivering on Public Service Agreement targets. The NHS Operating Framework 2008-09 identifies child health as a priority and PCTs can only address this if they work in concert with local authorities. Working through the Children's Trust, partners should assess the type and level of need (as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment⁴). Based on this evidence, partners should ensure that appropriate action is included in the Children and Young People's Plan, PCT commissioning plans, the Sustainable Community Strategy and, where appropriate, the Local Area Agreement. PCT performance for activities

3 Partners here includes the named 'relevant partners' and the 'other bodies' in section 10(1)(c) Children Act 2004.

4 See also Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment at www.dh.gov.uk/publications.

which it carries out alone will be assessed against a set of indicators – the Vital Signs – which comprehensively cover children's health. This complements the National Indicator Set against which the performance of the local authority and its partners, including the PCT, will be judged through the new local performance framework outlined in the 2006 local government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*.

2.5 Children's Trusts play an important part in improving children and young people's health outcomes. The forthcoming Child Health Strategy will set out the Government's plans for universal, targeted and specialist support across children's life stages from early years and pregnancy onwards, including for children and young people in need of acute or ongoing healthcare. The strategy will be underpinned by system-level changes that will help the range of services in contact with children and young people to work together better and, with the families, to achieve their common aims. This guidance supports those improvements required for:

- effective local leadership and joint working and clear, transparent planning;
- building on the strengths and expertise of GPs; and
- stronger joint commissioning to improve children's health and well-being.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

2.6 The psychological well-being and mental health of children and young people is a key element of good health and a good childhood, as emphasised in the Government's response to the final report of the independent *Review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services*, which has now been published. It shows that considerable improvements have been made, but there is still a lot more to do, at all levels of the system, to provide the support and delivery of services needed, organised around children and young people's needs. Children's Trusts should consider the psychological well-being and mental health needs of children and young people in their area as part of their wider Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and respond to this through effective joint-working between Primary Care Trusts, local authorities and other partners.

2.7 Children's Trusts should develop services that provide holistic support for child and family needs, with clear information for parents on what local support is available. Staff in the universal services should be trained and supported to provide effective mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention work and where necessary have the knowledge and skills that are needed to refer children and young people swiftly through to specialist services. When children's needs are more serious, staff in the specialist services need to have the appropriate range of skills and competences to deliver support that is easy to access, readily available and based on the best evidence of what works. Transition to adult services should be effectively managed.

Opportunities for Outdoor Play

2.8 The first national play strategy for England will shortly be published, in response to an extensive national consultation. Evidence suggests that play can drive improvements across all five Every Child Matters outcomes. All local authorities will be receiving new dedicated capital funding from the Government to improve local play offers. This will require a strategic approach to play across the local area, with the full involvement of children, local communities and the third sector in decision-making. Delivering excellent outdoor play opportunities for all children will require working closely with the broader Local Strategic Partnership on issues such as town and highways planning and the management and maintenance of public space, in order to promote communities that are more child-friendly.

Reducing young people's substance misuse

2.9 Evidence shows that the young people most at risk of misusing substances are often from vulnerable groups, such as looked after children, those who truant from school, or come from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. These young people have a number of characteristics in common with groups of young people who suffer other poor outcomes, so the best way to address these problems is to unify the management of different programmes by pooling resources through Targeted Youth Support provision. Funding⁵ from the former Young People's Substance Misuse Partnership Grant now goes to all local authorities through the area-based

5 For 2008-09 to 2010-11.

grant, to the PCT through the Pooled Treatment Budget, and to Youth Offending Teams.

- 2.10** The Government's drug strategy, *Drugs: protecting families and communities*, and the *Youth Alcohol Action Plan* says that this problem must be tackled through an integrated children's services delivery approach to working with families at risk, identification and early intervention and specialist support. This is a departure from previous practice where the Drug Action Team would take the lead. The Children's Trust has a powerful role in coordinating the work of different agencies under the strategic framework of the Children and Young People's Plan and facilitating better partnership working across the piece. Children's Services Mapping will support this endeavour and local authorities are encouraged to participate in the process.

Stay Safe

- 2.11** All children and young people should feel safe and protected and be allowed to develop their independence, but ensuring the safety of the most vulnerable children is paramount. We want them to enjoy their childhoods, to stay safe and have the freedom to grow and embrace their potential. Children's Trust partners should consider children's safeguarding needs across the whole spectrum and champion child safety in the wider Local Strategic Partnership, including not only traditional child protection, but wider issues such as bullying, preventing accidents, traffic calming measures, access to quality green spaces and providing sufficient opportunities for safe outdoor play and safe places for teenagers to meet. It is particularly important that the Children's Trust champions safety for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.
- 2.12** Safeguarding children depends on effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. In order to achieve this joint working, the Children's Trust needs to take a strong lead in emphasising to all partners the importance of universal, targeted and responsive safeguarding. It has a key role to play in ensuring that planning and commissioning of services takes account of the need to safeguard and promote children's welfare. The Children's Trust should consult the Local Safeguarding Children Board on coverage and performance of services that contribute to the "staying safe" outcome.

This is particularly important for vulnerable children, such as those with disabilities, as research suggests that they are more liable to be abused and many will have greater difficulty in developing their independence.

- 2.13** Children's Trusts should take responsibility for ensuring that all local partners are prepared for and implement correctly the new Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS), when it begins operation in October 2009. The VBS requires all those working with children, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority; any employer or organiser of voluntary activity must check their workers are registered. Failure to comply with the scheme's requirements will be a criminal offence.

Enjoy and Achieve

- 2.14** Schools must be at the heart of the Children's Trust, as partners at the strategic level and as drivers of front line delivery if we are to meet the 2020 goal for Early Years⁶ and the 2011 goals for educational achievement⁷. To achieve them the attainment of some specific groups who are currently underperforming must be improved, and this involves responding effectively to the schools' duty to promote well-being. The focus should be on reducing educational inequalities between the most disadvantaged children and their peers in order to improve substantially the prospects for the future, particularly those from impoverished backgrounds and looked after children.
- 2.15** Schools and Sure Start Children's Centres must have the timely support of specialist services, including mental health, or speech and language therapy. And schools have to be active partners in the strategic planning and delivery arrangements within the Children's Trust, helping to define the priorities for their local area and agreeing the best means of organising local services to address local needs. It may be more appropriate for clusters of schools, building on existing partnership arrangements such as hard federation arrangements, clusters of extended schools, or a group of Trust schools working together in a shared Trust, to work with the local authority and other partners through the Children's Trust. They need to

6 By 2020 every child should be ready for success in school with at least 90% developing well across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile by age 5.

7 No secondary school in the country should have less than 30% of pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and maths by 2011.

explore how to address specific issues across the area and help tailor their education provision to the needs of the local community, but however this is secured, it is essential that schools are fully engaged as partners in the Children's Trust.

- 2.16** Local authorities must take swift and decisive action to prevent schools from failing and reverse failure quickly when it happens. We also expect local authorities to challenge schools who are not sufficiently improving their pupils' performance including schools which are coasting. Children's Trusts have a role by, for example, commissioning integrated services that remove barriers to an individual's learning. Raising standards of attainment and preventing and tackling school failure has to be seen as a shared responsibility of all Children's Trust partners, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, including looked after children and those with special educational needs.
- 2.17** Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure young people's access to positive activities which is supported by statutory guidance⁸. As set out in *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for young people*, key partners in the Children's Trust, such as district councils, have an important role in helping them meet that duty and ensuring that all young people have access to sufficient positive activities, and to safe places where they can meet friends and socialise in safety. Children's Trusts partners, including schools and third sector organisations, need to work together to ensure that there is a local youth offer that makes best use of all available resources and, in particular, reduces the barriers experienced by disadvantaged young people. Children's Trusts should make a reality of the Government's ambition that all young people participate in positive activities by 2020, and that by 2011 all young people will have access to three hours of sport in addition to the two hours they have during the school day.
- 2.18** As corporate parents for looked after children local authorities should work with their partners, especially district councils, to consider how to improve access to positive activities for the children they look after, including free access to their leisure facilities.

Make a positive contribution

- 2.19** Through the teenage years, young people continue to develop attitudes and skills that will have a significant impact on their learning and future life chances. All young people should feel valued members of their communities and have their achievements recognised and celebrated. Children's Trusts need to empower young people: increasing their influence over the design and delivery of services; building on the experience of Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds (YOF & YCF) and local youth councils or forums; and offer them opportunities to contribute to their communities. When young people are involved in the design and delivery of services, they are more likely to access them and sustain their participation. Giving teenagers genuine influence is a crucial first step to increasing participation in positive activities, voluntary action and improving access to wider public services, especially for groups that are hard-to-reach. *Aiming High* committed to celebrate young people's achievements and willingness to volunteer.
- 2.20** The Youth Crime Action Plan, published in July 2008, sets out the cross-government approach to tackling and reducing youth crime. Its proposals are designed to provide a clearer accountability structure for tackling youth offending. We believe this will enable youth justice services to work more effectively in partnership with commissioners and providers of wider services for children and young people, so that children in the youth justice system receive the support they need. Each Children's Trust should embed preventing youth crime and re-offending into their work to improve outcomes for all local children. The Children's Trust working with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (through the Youth Offending Team (YOT)) is ideally placed to coordinate the effective provision of services for young people who are at risk of offending or re-offending. This includes a particular focus on the needs and access to services required by young people who enter and leave custody.
- 2.21** In most cases, the Youth Offending Team will be responsible for planning and supervising a young person who is serving a court ordered sentence. However, these young people will still need access to mainstream services during their sentence, and especially when their sentence ends. The transition from custody to the community and/or the end of the period of the Youth Offending Team's statutory supervision is an important time for a young person who has offended and we expect the Children's Trust to take

a lead in ensuring that they have the right support. The Children's Trust should also ensure that these issues are properly incorporated into the development of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and that the CYPP and YOT Youth Justice Plan are fully aligned.

2.22 The Children's Trust has an important contribution to make to help create more cohesive and safer communities. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a statutory duty for schools to promote community cohesion which came into force in September 2007 and is now included in Ofsted inspections. Local authorities should recognise the contribution schools can make and support them in fulfilling this duty, for example through helping schools understand issues facing their local communities, facilitating links with community partners, or encouraging schools to make their facilities available to the community. The Children's Trust can also promote interaction between children and families from different backgrounds in a number of ways including through children's centres, play facilities, or positive activities for young people.

2.23 An important part of building safer communities is challenging the small minority who encourage hatred and division. The greatest threat we currently face is from violent extremist groups influenced by Al Qaida, but other forms of extremism and race or hate based prejudice are also affecting individuals and communities across the country and can be a catalyst for alienation. Working with today's children and young people is a key part of ensuring all communities are more resilient to those who advocate hatred or violence. As set out in *The Prevent Strategy: a guide for local partners* published in June 2008, Children's Trusts should be involved in work to prevent violent extremism at a strategic level and should ensure that all universal and targeted support services for children and young people are integrated to have the capacity to support young people vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism. Practical advice for schools and local partners is available in *Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism* published in October 2008⁹.

Achieve Economic Well-being

- 2.24** By 2015 all young people should be in education or training to age 18 and beyond, entering employment or further learning with the right skills to enable them to prosper. *Delivering 14-19 Reform: Next Steps* sets out the four qualification routes of General Qualifications, Diplomas, Apprenticeships and the Foundation Learning Tier that will be available to all young people. The functional skills and personal learning and thinking skills that Higher Education institutions and employers identify as being important will be embedded in the new secondary curriculum. Responsibility for securing education and training for 16-19 learning will be transferred from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities, supported by the Young People's Learning Agency. Local authorities should work closely through their Children's Trust, including the 14-19 partnership, to embed commissioning of 16-18 education and training within the wider strategic commissioning of services which affect children young people and families. The aim is to enable young people to receive an integrated offer and increase the chances that they will continue with learning and gain the skills they need to succeed.
- 2.25** Access to good quality, comprehensive and impartial information advice and guidance is key to helping young people stay in learning and succeed. The Education and Skills Bill 2008¹⁰ provides for the transfer of responsibility for commissioning information, advice and guidance (IAG) services for young people (the Connexions Service) to local authorities. *Quality Standards for Young People's Information Advice and Guidance*, issued in October 2007, defines the services that local authorities, working with their Children's Trust partners, are expected to commission and manage. Young people also need good IAG to help them tackle issues that can arise in their personal lives. Local authorities are expected to integrate IAG services with the wider youth support services they manage and to ensure that all young people receive the IAG they need on personal well-being and financial capability. Children's Trusts should provide oversight and support and help ensure that IAG services are well integrated with careers and personal education in schools and colleges.

¹⁰ Subject to the agreement of Parliament this Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent by December 2008

2.26 Work related learning, including work experience and learning about working practices and the skills required in the workplace, has a strong positive impact on children's well-being. It is essential that employers of all types are engaged through the Children's Trust to advise at both strategic and operational levels.

Tackling child poverty

2.27 Growing up in poverty blights children's lives and has wide and far-reaching effects on their present and future well-being. Children growing up in poverty are, for example, more likely to fall behind their peers at school, suffer health inequalities and experience accidents. That is why the Government is committed to halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020. Tackling the causes and consequences of poverty requires action across all of the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

2.28 Action supporting parents and their children is required across all local services. For example: economic regeneration; housing; financial advice and information; and the provision of training to help parents enter and progress in work, all have a vital role to play. Children's Trust partners have a central role in tackling the causes and consequences of child poverty by helping to raise family incomes, including helping families access tax-credits and benefits; helping parents to enter employment; and narrowing the gap in outcomes between children growing up in poverty and their peers. Eradicating child poverty requires a multi-faceted approach by the Children's Trust partners, tackling poverty in the short term and breaking inter-generational cycles of disadvantage.

2.29 The partnership arrangements necessary to take a strategic approach to tackling this wide range of issues should be embedded within the Children's Trust, as part of the wider work of services in the local area. Children's Trust partners should assess the contribution that each of their services could make to tackle child poverty. Early years education and care, schools, family support, health services, Jobcentre Plus and skills and training providers all make important contributions. However, it is also important that Children's Trust partners consider the contribution of other factors including social care, child care (an important enabler of parental employment) housing support – including financial support and access to decent housing, transport and the quality of the local amenities, including

cultural and leisure facilities. Children's Trusts partners should also consider how these services will be delivered in conjunction with services for adults to ensure that support for parents and low income families is maximised.

2.30 The Government intends to include Job Centre Plus as a statutory 'relevant partner' in the Children's Trust to help ensure that partners consider their contribution to tackling child poverty within each of the five outcomes. Jobcentre Plus makes an important local contribution to tackling child poverty. It is important that, at a local level, their services are delivered in conjunction with wider children's services, helping to reach families in need of greater support. The Government is also considering how the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) could be used to enable Children's Trusts partners plan the joint action they will take to tackle child poverty in their area.

Section 3: Driving Change through Children's Trusts

Summary box

- Every Children's Trust should have a Board on which the partners and the local community are represented; specific governance and management structures may vary according to local circumstances.
- Subject to the necessary legislation, the Children's Trust will have a statutory Board with responsibility for producing a Children and Young People's Plan for the local area, informed by a full consultation including with children, young people and their families. This should set out how better ECM outcomes will be delivered through services that genuinely address the needs and interests of the local community.
- As part of the wider local accountability arrangements the Children's Trust Board will be held to account by its member bodies and the local community for delivering the CYPP and related LAA targets. The Board should hold its individual members to account for delivering their agreed part of the shared plan and should publish a review of progress against the Children and Young People's Plan every year¹¹.
- As well as working operationally with providers of services to children and young people, schools, colleges and work based learning providers should have a strong voice and be able to influence the strategic planning and commissioning of children's services so that they can agree the part that they will play in delivering the CYPP and ensure that they will receive the support they need to deliver it.
- Children's Trusts should structure themselves in such a way that they secure effective representation from local communities, front line staff and clusters of schools and colleges. Local structures will vary from place to place, recognising very different local situations.

11 This is non statutory advice at present, but the Government is considering further legislation to make publishing an annual report a requirement on the Children's Trust Board

- 3.1** The Children's Trust will improve outcomes for children young people and families – maximising their prospects for the future and redressing inequalities between the most disadvantaged children and their peers – by focusing on the child, young person, or family. Evidence and experience suggest that a model of integration at every organisational level is the right one. An effective Children's Trust will have in place robust governance arrangements (the Children's Trust Board) to ensure that improved outcomes are delivered; it will set and regularly review the strategic vision for children in the local area. The vision will be underpinned by integrated strategies and processes which will be regularly tested to make sure they continue to support integrated front line delivery to address the needs of the whole child or family.
- 3.2** We now have a good understanding of what works and where the challenges are. Evidence from a range of sources shows steady progress, but some areas are making better progress than others. Advances in data and intelligence collecting, increasingly through the National Indicator Set, is sharpening focus on measuring improvement in outcomes. But to deliver the results necessary for a world class system a step change in progress is needed, including consistent, high quality arrangements for identifying children needing extra help and early intervention.
- 3.3** It is time for a major drive to improve delivery, not simply bringing all areas to the level of Children's Trusts at their current best, but to set and achieve new benchmarks of success. In particular Children's Trusts must begin to show relatively faster rates of improvement in the outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as looked after children, against a background of improved outcomes for all, and to close the gap between the most vulnerable and the majority of children.
- 3.4** There are some real challenges to making change happen. The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) has been set up to help local authorities and their partners¹² take forward their plans. The C4EO's key aim is to identify coordinate and disseminate 'what works', in order to improve significantly the outcomes for children young people and their families. The development of a single Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in children's services should align with the

¹² This means all partners engaged in local children's services delivery not just the statutory 'relevant partners'.

National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy in a way that complements activity and builds capacity rather than adding burdens. Feeding into the work of the C4EO is work from the *Narrowing the Gap* project, hosted by the Local Government Association (LGA) and supported by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The project draws on the outcomes of rigorous evaluations of available research and data, and on the expertise of key individuals and organisations to generate information about what works in reducing inequalities between disadvantaged children and their peers. This data is being 'reality checked' by Children's Trust partners, who will add their own insights.

- 3.5** This section looks in more detail at the 'essential features' of a Children's Trust through which these changes will be delivered, identifies key challenges and gives guidance on how national priorities can be driven forward.

Child, Parent and Family Focused

- 3.6** Parents, not governments, bring up children, although sometimes parents and other carers can feel overwhelmed. Children's Trust partners should engage with parents, as well as children and young people, in ways that reach each family and each family member, including fathers. Parents, who need information, advice or help to do the best for their children, may be reluctant to ask for it. The Children's Trust should undertake high quality consultation with parents¹³ and consider innovative ways of identifying and speaking to hard-to-reach or hard-to-help parents, involving community groups and community assets to support outreach as necessary. This work should involve and empower children, young people and their families and be integrated into ongoing work to empower and engage the wider community.
- 3.7** Specifically, parents and carers should be consulted during the preparation of the local Children and Young People's Plan¹⁴. This should not be a "one-off" event but regular ongoing engagement to help evaluate progress and seek advice on what services are needed as well as the quality of those already offered. The Children's Trust needs to understand what the

¹³ This is underpinned by section 10(3) of the Children Act 2004, which requires local authorities to 'have regard' to the importance of parents and other carers.

¹⁴ The Children and Young People's Plan (England) Regulations 2005.

experience of being a service user feels like. There should also be a clear framework for helping families know where to find the support and information they need and to ensure they are treated as partners whenever they engage with professionals. This means partners in each Children's Trust providing accessible and comprehensive information about what services are available to young people and parents in their area.

- 3.8** Local authorities are the corporate parent for looked after children, responsible for the care placement and for improving all outcomes for these children, including their education and their health. All partners involved in the Children's Trust should ensure that their strategy and practice takes particular account of how they work with the local authority to improve the prospects of these vulnerable children.

Inter-Agency Governance

- 3.9** A strong integrated governing board is the cornerstone of a Children's Trust. It should include representatives of all key partners at senior level, determined to drive whole-system change through clear leadership and effective action, and have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the voices of children, young people, parents and front line workers are heard. This requires sophisticated leadership of a high order to secure agreement to a genuinely joint, outcome-focused vision, full engagement of all key partners and stakeholders, and clear lines of accountability. This is certainly not currently the case in all or indeed most Children's Trusts. Where existing arrangements fall short of this – admittedly very challenging – goal, strengthening of governance arrangements should be an urgent priority. For this reason the Government is proposing to make Children's Trust Boards a statutory requirement.
- 3.10** A Children's Trust cannot be effective overall unless its Board continues to give clear strategic direction, is prepared to take hard decisions to see them through – collectively and as the leaders of individual services – and is genuinely attuned and responsive to the ongoing needs of children and young people and parents. An effective Children's Trust Board will systematically and regularly monitor and evaluate results, challenge itself and others where progress is slow and be sensitive and responsive to the practicalities of front line delivery. The Children's Trust comprises:

- the local authority – including all constituent services that impact on children and families, such as housing;
- named statutory 'relevant partners'; and
- any other partners the local authority considers appropriate.

3.11 The 'relevant partners' are currently: district councils, the police, the probation board; the youth offending team; the Strategic Health Authority and Primary Care Trusts, Connexions partnerships and the Learning and Skills Council. The relevant partners are placed under a 'duty to cooperate in the making of arrangements to improve well-being' and have a power to pool budgets and share other resources. The Government is intending to add to this list of relevant partners other bodies including maintained schools, Academies, FE and sixth form colleges and Job Centre Plus, to bring key delivery partners into the strategic planning role of the Children's Trust. Children's Trusts should take action immediately to ensure these partners are fully engaged in advance of any legislative requirements (by inviting them to take part in the Children's Trust as in section 10(1)(c) 'such other bodies the authority considers appropriate'). The partners which are not statutory are nonetheless essential to the effective governance of the Children's Trust and should be represented at Board level as appropriate. These partners are often drawn from the private and third sectors and should include representatives of local children, young people and parents.

Health Partners

3.12 The partnership between the local authority and the Primary Care Trust is **the** driving relationship for the Children's Trust. The PCT is a major 'relevant partner' and will have a key role to play, as good health is essential to securing the full spectrum of positive outcomes for children and young people. Along side Sure Start Children's Centres, the NHS is the main provider of universal services for families with pre-school children and a major contributor to services which deal with a wide range of issues central to family life and childhood.

3.13 Professionals such as health visitors and GPs are key players, so it is essential that representatives of local NHS bodies actively participate in the Children's Trust governance arrangements. PCT commissioners must work to ensure that they have in place a range of services to meet the needs of

children in their area and their contracts specify proper levels of engagement between providers and Children's Trust partners more widely. Children's Trust partners, working with service providers, will identify gaps and explore ways of responding to unmet needs. They will work with providers to develop services in the light of new evidence and in response to gaps between services and needs. This may include training and capacity building rather than new services, as well as decommissioning where appropriate. It is increasingly the case that neither a PCT nor a local authority will be able to deliver its own priorities without the active cooperation of the other. The strengthening relationship between these two major partners is the engine which will drive the Children's Trust Board to where it needs to be to secure world class provision in the local area.

3.14 The step change to the performance of Children's Trusts should facilitate greater consistency in the level of engagement between local authorities and PCTs in every area. In order to deliver this, we expect senior-level representation from the PCT on every Children's Trust Board – a representative with the experience of and accountability for children's health. In addition, Directors of Children's Services are expected to consult PCTs to secure a lead GP on the Children's Trust Board to provide their professional expertise and offer advice on how to involve the wider community of GPs in developing and delivering the CYPP. Depending on local circumstances, good practice would be for the Children's Trust to include individual GPs, members of the Professional Executive Committee of the PCT, or representation from a practice-based commissioning group.

3.15 In order to make a reality of this partnership local authorities and PCTs should adopt the following good practice that we can see emerging across the country:

- a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment that is a full and accurate reflection of children and young people's needs in the area and takes account of other partners' views;
- joint development and sign-off of local Children and Young People's Plans and relevant LA and PCT commissioning plans, ensuring each is informed by and consistent with the other;

- budget transparency, setting out the contribution of the PCT to implementing the CYPP and an agreed process in each locality for aligning or pooling budgets¹⁵;
- an agreed local approach to joint commissioning at the local authority/PCT level which provides a framework for practice-based commissioning, or commissioning by schools. The precise models might vary to suit local circumstances but would be likely to involve a joint commissioning body of some sort;
- joint focus leading to further action, as part of the Local Area Agreement process, about progress on key children's health issues in the area – with joint scrutiny of feedback from children, young people and parents; and
- Government Offices and Strategic Health Authorities taking joint responsibility for ensuring those processes are working in every area.

More advice will be available in the joint DH and DCS *Child Health Strategy Healthy Lives and Brighter Futures* which is to be published before the end of the year.

- 3.16** In 2009, revised guidance will be published on the health of looked after children. For the first time PCTs will be required to have regard to it when discharging their functions and in particular in relation to the arrangements to co-operate with local authorities to ensure the health of looked after children is ascertained, monitored and improved.

District Councils

- 3.17** In two-tier areas district councils, which are 'relevant partners', have a very large part to play in delivery, particularly in respect of community-based facilities in dispersed areas. District Councils have important responsibilities including housing and leisure, which impact significantly on the well-being of children, young people and families. It is important that district councils are fully engaged and are fully accountable for services in which they have an interest. Children's Trusts should engage effectively with all the district councils in their area and not assume that one district represents the others.

¹⁵ To support progress and to promote greater transparency over the use of local resources, as a foundation for better integrated planning and commissioning, DH and DCSF will work to identify best practice and will develop guidance to set out in more detail how the new arrangements should work.

Youth Offending Teams, Police and Probation

- 3.18** The Youth Offending Team is able to provide a bridge between the criminal justice system and the wider services for children and young people, being a key partner in both the Children's Trust and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Each YOT is itself a partnership comprising representatives from the police, Probation Service, children's social services, health and education. YOTs may also have representatives from drugs and alcohol misuse teams and housing departments. The YOT establishes the needs of each young offender and identifies suitable programmes to address them. YOTs are one of the statutory 'relevant partners' in Children's Trusts and should have formalised accountability arrangements with them and whichever body has community safety responsibilities.
- 3.19** Children's Trusts have a key role in helping deliver the Youth Crime Action Plan to prevent offending and re-offending, and to help children and young people in the criminal justice system gain access to the full range of support services they need. It recognises the importance of early identification, assessment and intervention in preventing offending behaviour becoming entrenched. The Police Service, which is also a statutory 'relevant partner' in the Children's Trust, must play an active role, together with agencies such as schools and colleges, to identify young people at risk of offending, or who have committed low level crime or antisocial behaviour. Similarly the Probation Service, also a 'relevant partner' must be actively engaged with the Children's Trust. The Probation Service, for example, supervises 16-17 year olds undertaking unpaid work as an element of their community sentence and will need to work with other partners through the Children's Trust to ensure these young people get all the services they need.

Front line providers, including schools colleges and work-based learning providers

- 3.20** The Children's Trust Board should ensure that the voice of front line providers is clearly heard by, and directly influences, those taking decisions about strategic direction, the content of the Children and Young People's Plan and Local Area Agreement, commissioning and the resource allocation these then drive. This is particularly true of schools and colleges. Just as individual institutions need to work together and with other local agencies

within their own neighbourhoods, so at the strategic level they should have real involvement in the process of agreeing priorities and commissioning services. There has to be strong accountability in both directions.

3.21 At present the involvement of schools and colleges at the strategic level in Children's Trusts is clearly patchy. The local authority and its strategic partners will need to think creatively about how to fix the engagement and influence of schools and colleges in the system. Direct representation on the Board is one obvious approach, but systems need to be found for ensuring that the concerns and contributions of all schools and colleges are properly channelled. Most are already involved in varieties of area collaborative arrangements (such as Schools Clusters, Neighbourhood Forums, 14-19 partnerships) and it would be fruitful to position such bodies clearly within a Children's Trust "family tree". Some schools work in more formal collaborative arrangements, for example working with a shared charitable foundation (or Trust) or in a federation. As they move towards the shared accountability, shared leadership, and partnership models of the 21st century school these sorts of formal arrangements will become increasingly common, so it may be useful for schools or colleges to be represented through these. At present schools and colleges are not statutory 'relevant partners' but the Government is proposing to legislate to include them as such, together with Job Centre Plus.

The Third and Private Sectors

3.22 Although governance arrangements and budget pooling will need to have close engagement from the main statutory agencies, Children's Trusts are also about including a wide range of other agencies with an interest in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. Only the local authority's strategic 'relevant partners' are under a statutory duty to cooperate, but this does not mean that 'other bodies', should be excluded from strategic decision making and governance arrangements. On the contrary, third sector organisations and private sector bodies should be closely engaged.

3.23 Many third sector organisations have the capacity to engage but others, for a variety of reasons, may struggle. The local authority needs to assess the situation and take steps, through the Voluntary Sector Forum for example, to engage smaller organisations in the Children's Trust governance

arrangements. The third and private sector agencies have an important contribution to make through both their workforce and infrastructure. For example third sector agencies are essential to the effective delivery of the Government's offer to young people of five hours of culture a week. They can often reach vulnerable groups and help identify unmet need which would otherwise be invisible, such as those with speech and language difficulties. The private sector may provide a significant proportion of all full day-care for younger children, or places for young people to go. It is essential they are represented at the strategic governance and planning levels as well as at the delivery and front line levels of the Children's Trust.

Integrated Strategy

3.24 Strategic planning and commissioning arrangements are a central component driving the cultural change required across all services. These should be based on a combination of the Strategic Joint Needs Assessment, a thorough knowledge of the needs of local families, children and young people, and a clear vision of the quality of childhood to which the local area aspires and of the ways different services can best deliver improvements.

The Local Area Agreement, Sustainable Community Strategy and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

3.25 Children's Trusts must have a central and visible role in implementing, monitoring and refreshing the Local Area Agreement in a way that is consistent with reviewing and implementing the Children and Young People's Plan. The Children's Trust will agree, monitor and drive the children and young people elements of the Local Area Agreement which should, in turn, be wholly consistent with priorities in the CYPP. Both will feed into and deliver the overarching local authority Sustainable Community Strategy as it develops over time.

3.26 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment should be taken into account by the local authority and its partners in preparing both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the CYPP. The Children's Trust will need to draw on and develop a data-rich approach to strategic and operational planning which includes monitoring progress against the National Indicator Set. Needs assessments will improve and become more accurate as local areas collect and analyse local data and develop data of their own (for example children not on a school roll). Data sources include:

- Local Area Interactive Tool
- Data Interchange Hub
- Child and Maternal (ChiMat) health Intelligence Unit¹⁶

Planned improvements in the school census collection and development of the child health minimum data set will increase the information available to support intelligent commissioning and planning.

Children and Young People's Plan

3.27 The Children and Young People's Plan¹⁷ continues to be the key document which covers, in one place, all services for children, young people and families within a single strategic and overarching vision for the local area. Children's Trust partners are closely involved in its development and should ensure their own plans are fully aligned with it. The Children's Trust should sign off the CYPP, ensure that it is published, refreshed, evaluated and reviewed and both drive the operating plans which underpin it and reflect and inform the overarching plan of which it is a part. The Government is proposing to facilitate greater partnership ownership of the CYPP by legislating to place the duty to produce, publish and monitor the CYPP on the Children's Trust Board. The jointly-owned CYPP would reflect shared priorities in, for example, PCT commissioning plans and Local Area Agreements to address the needs of children and young people, including the most vulnerable and those with additional needs, and would design services around those needs.

3.28 It is important that the Children's Trust is accountable for its actions to the local community, including children and families and front line providers. The local authority must set out in the CYPP what the Children's Trust intends to do to improve outcomes for local children, young people and families and the annual review of the plan provides an update on progress against it. Both the CYPP itself and the annual review must be published.¹⁸ Each review should contain sufficient information in an accessible form to

¹⁶ ChiMat is a national resource that provides ready access to relevant information and knowledge through which service commissioners, providers, strategic organisations, regulators and other stakeholders can facilitate the delivery of high quality, cost effective services. For more information www.chimat.org.uk

¹⁷ See section 17 Children Act 2004; SI 2005 no. 2149 and SI 2007 no. 57.

¹⁸ At present the requirement to publish applies to the local authority – see Regulations 6 and 8 (3), Children and Young People's Plan (England) Regulations 2005, SI number 2149. But the Government intends to extend this to the Children's Trust Board in future legislation.

enable parents and young people to make informed judgements about how effective the Children's Trust has been, where there is more to do and if necessary call it to account. The review should be clear about how the public can make their views and concerns known in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. More advice will be given in the revised guidance on the CYPP which will be published by the end of 2008.

Commissioning

3.29 A Children's Trust is, in part, a commissioning partnership, commissioning services for children young people and their families. Strategic commissioning is a key means by which the Children's Trust partners come together to make a reality of the duty to co-operate and drive cultural change.

3.30 Commissioning is more than contracting and procurement. The commissioning cycle for all strategic partners encompasses:

- A strategic needs assessment – engaging with children, young people and families, understanding their needs and taking a sophisticated approach to the use of data;
- Planning and service design – identifying what services are needed to address each child's needs holistically and to prevent problems arising in the first place;
- Deciding how to deliver those services – identifying which organisations are best placed to deliver, contract, broker partnerships; or put service level agreements in place, and then
- Reviewing and challenging – assessing effectiveness and monitoring the impact on children's lives and prospects.

3.31 Commissioning can operate at different levels within the system:

- Strategic – this includes whole service commissioning by the Children's Trust for a local area and regional and sub regional collaboration for specialist services;
- Operational or local – a single unit operating as a commissioner, such as multi-agency teams operating in a locality, or commissioning by school clusters;

- Individual – lead professional commissioning and individualised budgets and packages of support.

- 3.32** Close collaborative working between local authorities and their PCT partners is essential for joint commissioning to be effective. This is an area where a step change in ambition and impact is required. PCT commissioners must work to ensure that they have in place a range of services to meet the needs of children in their area and that their contracts specify appropriate levels of engagement between providers and Children's Trust partners more widely. Children's Trust partners, working with service providers, will identify gaps and explore ways of responding to unmet needs. They will work with providers to develop services in the light of new evidence and in response to gaps between services and needs. This may include training and capacity building rather than new services, as well as decommissioning where appropriate.
- 3.33** Shared performance indicators for child health make locally determined aligned or pooled budgets increasingly relevant and often essential. This, in turn, makes locally determined joint investment statements increasingly relevant. All Children's Trust partners should pursue commissioning activities jointly and pool budgets, wherever appropriate, to shape local services to meet the needs of children, young people and families. Practice guidance on establishing joint funding arrangements, including aligned budgets and pooled budgets is now available¹⁹.
- 3.34** The commissioning cycle should apply whether the services are delivered by in-house teams, other public sector organisations, the third or private sectors, or a combination of these. Commissioning can embrace partnership working, joint ventures, grant-giving, co-production with communities, or individualised budgets. However, if a Children's Trust is to be capable of championing the needs of local children and families it must be clear about its role as both commissioner of services in the interest of the community and, through the work of its partners, as a provider of some of those services. Whatever organisational role is put in place there must be in all cases clear mechanisms for commissioners to hold in-house provider functions to account for delivery.

3.35 The Commissioning Support programme has been set up to work with Children's Trusts to improve their commissioning capacity and capability. The programme will run until April 2011 and will cover commissioning all services for children. Jointly sponsored by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department of Health (DH), the programme will complement and reinforce the aims of World Class Commissioning in health services. The programme will work with Children's Trusts as well as with regional and national stakeholders to ensure that the support offered takes full account of, and links with, related programmes. The two parts of the programme are:

- A community of practice – advice, expertise and knowledge provided by practising commissioners; and
- Specifically tailored face-to-face support.

DH and DCSF will publish a joint commissioning guide to support local authorities and health bodies (in particular PCTs) to commission child health services.

Commissioning Early Years Services

3.36 Sure Start Children's Centres are a key delivery mechanism for integrated services for children and their families. They may be managed directly by the local authority, a Primary Care Trust, or under contract through a private, voluntary or independent sector organisation. Commissioning early years services, whether by Sure Start Children's Centres or more generally, should be informed by local priorities and intelligent use of data, such as child health mapping, together with information gathered from parents. PCTs as key partners in delivery of early year's services need to be proactive in sharing data with partners. The PCT has a responsibility to work with early years' partners through service providers such as Sure Start Children's Centres, to help them achieve better outcomes for all children and families and to narrow the gap of disadvantage²⁰. Children's Trust Boards should utilise the expertise of planning groups based in the locality which are close to users and have unique insights.

²⁰ This accords with Objective One of the Department of Health's objectives and performance targets within its Public Service Agreement: to reduce health inequalities by 10% as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth.

Commissioning Education and Training

3.37 Schools are important partners in Children's Trusts. Schools now have a duty to promote the well-being of their pupils and the *Children's Plan* commits the Government to the development of school level well-being indicators. The vision of a 21st century school set out in the *Children's Plan* is of a school which not only provides excellent teaching and learning, but also acts as a vital community resource. As commissioner of school places the local authority should enable and broker the partnerships which make this vision a reality.

3.38 From 2010 local authorities will have new responsibilities for planning and funding 16-19 learning. This means that local authorities must commission a range of provision from schools, colleges and other training providers to meet the needs of every young person up to the age of 18. Local authorities have already begun to plan for this process working alongside the Learning and Skills Council. From September 2009 local authorities will begin to play a more meaningful role in the 2010/11 LSC commissioning cycle, using new sub-regional and regional collaborative structures. Local authorities' commissioning of 16-18 provision will be informed by the strategic commissioning priorities identified by the local strategic 14-19 partnership, which is a subset of the Children's Trust.

3.39 As well as participating in local authority-wide partnerships, schools and colleges are commissioning bodies in their own right both individually and in collaboration with other schools and community partners. Local authorities should plan strategically, in consultation with their partners, the most appropriate level for services to be commissioned, how best to support schools and colleges in effective commissioning and how to encourage more providers to come forward. Where schools and colleges commission services themselves, or in a partnership with other institutions, they will use their own budgets and expertise to identify what most suits the particular needs of their pupils or students. They should exercise their commissioning role as part of the wider partnership, aligning budgets with those of the local authority and its partners in response to a shared understanding of need. The DCSF has recently published²¹ guidance for local authorities and schools on commissioning alternative provision for young people.

21 See [http://publications .teachernet.gov.uk](http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk)

3.40 The Schools White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* and the subsequent Education and Inspections Act 2006 set out a role for local authorities as strategic commissioners of schools. The legal framework underpinning this role includes duties for local authorities to secure diversity in the provision of schools and increase opportunities for parental choice, to ensure fair access to educational opportunity and to consider carefully the views of parents on educational provision.

Integrated Processes

3.41 The Children's Trust should take a lead to provide and support activities designed to build the confidence of, and empower, practitioners to use their professional judgement in decisions related to children's well-being; and to foster trust and professional understanding between the services. This is particularly important in relation to decisions about safeguarding. Processes such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the lead professional role should be fully embedded. The cross government guidance *Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide*, provides advice on when and how practitioners can share information legally and professionally²².

3.42 A range of approaches is required to support the diverse needs of children. ContactPoint, the electronic enablement of the Common Assessment Framework (eCAF), the Integrated Children's Systems (ICS) and the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) have separate, specific purposes, but all support integrated working. Together they will enable practitioners from different agencies or areas to agree the right package of support for each child.

3.43 ContactPoint will provide a quick way for people working with children to find out who else is working with the same child. It will include basic information about every child in England from birth to their 18th birthday (and those over 18 in certain circumstances) and contact details on parents or carers and practitioners or other services working with that child. ContactPoint will be subject to stringent security controls with access limited to people with the appropriate training who have undergone security checks and who need to use it professionally.

²² Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide can be found at www.ecm.gov.uk/informationsharing

- 3.44** CAF is a standardised approach to assessing a child's additional needs. It can be used by trained practitioners in agencies that work with children in England. The national eCAF system provides an electronic tool that will allow a trained, authorised practitioner to create and share a CAF securely. Subject to explicit informed consent, practitioners from different areas will be given appropriate access to the key information they need to enable them to deliver appropriate services for the child or young person. Deployment of the national eCAF system is expected to begin from 2009 and it will be subject to stringent security controls.
- 3.45** ICS is a system primarily to help social care practitioners supporting looked after children and other children in need by providing a single approach to collecting, recording and using relevant case information efficiently and effectively. ICS is not an IT system per se but a business process currently being rolled out to help practitioners follow legal requirements and good practice.
- 3.46** Asset is the standard assessment framework used by all Youth Offending Teams. It is the generic baseline assessment for all young people in the youth justice system but will also trigger further specialist assessment where this is required. The Youth Crime Action Plan committed the Government to a review of the existing assessment procedures within the youth justice system to establish how Asset and the CAF can best be aligned.
- 3.47** CCIS is a well established system for supporting the work of the Connexions service. It has been designed for personal advisers and lead professionals to support effective intervention with young people by tracking their activity and their needs to enable targeted support, including referral to specialist agencies, and to monitor their progress.

Integrated Frontline Delivery

- 3.48** For every child to have access to the services they need when they need them specialist services have to be better integrated within universal settings. This enables a more comprehensive approach to prevention and early intervention; better cooperation between agencies, with a single point of contact; and practitioners working effectively with families, recognising that it is the actions of families that have the greatest impact on outcomes.
- 3.49** This means practitioners working together in an integrated way, characterised by professional respect and mutual trust, cutting across institutional boundaries to fit services around the needs of children. It involves working in teams made up of people from a range of professional backgrounds. The Children's Trust should be at the centre of the cultural shift which unites all people working with children and young people around a common purpose, language and identity, while keeping the strong and distinctive professional ethos of different practitioners. It should enhance inter-professional trust and greater willingness to work outside traditional service areas and shared information.

Workforce Strategy

- 3.50** Success in achieving our aspirations for children will depend on the quality and commitment of the children's workforce; that is everyone who works with children and young people. The Department is developing the 2020 national Children's Workforce Strategy²³ which will set out our ambitions in terms of supporting the quality of individual professions and developing a workforce with the knowledge, skills and leadership to make integrated front line working a reality across all children's services. The Children's Trust needs to take a leading role in driving this forward underpinning the Children and Young People's Plan by developing a local workforce strategy²⁴. This should cover the whole of the children's workforce, including schools and health organisations, and embed a culture of integrated working.

23 Publication date expected December 2008

24 The strategies would be of a higher quality if the Children's Trust had representation from the workforce within the governance arrangements

3.51 Effective and knowledgeable leaders and managers are needed in all areas of practice which impact on outcomes for children, young people and families. In the forefront of this are the Directors of Children's Services, their leadership teams and the partner organisations of the Children's Trust. We have already published a professional development framework for leaders and managers, and the 2020 Strategy will demonstrate how we will further support the development of leaders across all Children's Trust partners.

Co-location, multi-agency working and preventative tailored support in universal settings

3.52 Children's Trusts need to develop stronger systems of prevention and early intervention, where different partners providing services for children and their families work together effectively, increasingly co-located and integrated within universal settings. A lot has been learned from establishing Sure Start Children's Centres about co-locating services for young children and their families. Families with school age children can also benefit from co-located services offered through extended schools.

3.53 The Children's Trust should ensure that clear processes and pathways exist within universal services to engage and work with the specialist services when additional needs have been identified. These pathways should be accessible, and facilitate multi-agency arrangements for allocating resource and delivering joined-up services to address those needs; for example a co-located multi-agency team of practitioners established in and around universal settings, such as a Sure Start Children's Centre, or as part of the extended schools offer. Establishing and embedding such multi-agency practice requires joint planning between the different contributing agencies. Children's Centres that are jointly planned and managed by local authorities and their partners²⁵ should find it easier to provide the kind of holistic parent and child-centred services that parents need and expect. Many Children's Trusts may need to reconfigure their existing services and commission new ones to provide practitioners to support the needs identified in universal settings.

3.54 Co-locating different groups of professionals through, for instance, one-stop shops, facilitates more integrated ways of working. This has significant benefits to children young people and families and can help avoid stigma

²⁵ These are all partners, not the statutory 'relevant partners'.

and encourage service take-up. The key is coordinating service delivery. When different parties collaborate it reduces duplication of effort and supports coordinated contract management with the result that all parties – especially service users – benefit.

- 3.55** Children's Trust partners should work together to make the most of the significant amounts of capital investment available to improve local facilities and seek opportunities for co-locating services. The Trust school model may also provide schools with the structure and flexibilities to build sustainable locally managed co-location partnerships. The work of Children's Trusts is also vital for enabling schools to meet the commitment that by 2010 they will provide access to extended services. This is because schools need to work with other schools, other statutory service providers and private and third sector providers to deliver the range of services expected. The local authority and its partners in the Children's Trust have a key role in helping to support schools to provide services and facilities through partnership working, and will be able to help take a strategic view of local needs and gaps in provision.
- 3.56** The local authority should also, through the Children's Trust, foster partnership working between Sure Start Children's Centres, primary schools and other settings such as child care providers to drive up quality of provision and ease transitions.

Appendix: Legislative Underpinnings

Children Act 2004

2004 CHAPTER 31

PART 2 CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN ENGLAND

General

Section 10 Co-operation to improve well-being

- (1) Each children's services authority in England must make arrangements to promote co-operation between—
- (a) the authority;
 - (b) each of the authority's relevant partners; and
 - (c) such other persons or bodies as the authority consider appropriate, being persons or bodies of any nature who exercise functions or are engaged in activities in relation to children in the authority's area.
- (2) The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the well-being of children in the authority's area so far as relating to—
- (a) physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
 - (b) protection from harm and neglect;
 - (c) education, training and recreation;
 - (d) the contribution made by them to society;
 - (e) social and economic well-being.
- (3) In making arrangements under this section a children's services authority in England must have regard to the importance of parents and other persons caring for children in improving the well-being of children.
- (4) For the purposes of this section each of the following is a relevant partner of a children's services authority in England—
- (a) where the authority is a county council for an area for which there is also a district council, the district council;
 - (b) the police authority and the chief officer of police for a police area any part of which falls within the area of the children's services authority;
 - (c) a local probation board for an area any part of which falls within the area of the authority;
 - (d) a youth offending team for an area any part of which falls within the area of the authority;
 - (e) a Strategic Health Authority and Primary Care Trust for an area any part of which falls within the area of the authority;
 - (f) a person providing services under section 114 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (c. 21) in any part of the area of the authority;
 - (g) the Learning and Skills Council for England.
- (5) The relevant partners of a children's services authority in England must co-operate with the authority in the making of arrangements under this section.
- (6) A children's services authority in England and any of their relevant partners may for the purposes of arrangements under this section—
- (a) provide staff, goods, services, accommodation or other resources;
 - (b) establish and maintain a pooled fund.
- (7) For the purposes of subsection (6) a pooled fund is a fund—
- (a) which is made up of contributions by the authority and the relevant partner or partners concerned; and
 - (b) out of which payments may be made towards expenditure incurred in the discharge of functions of the authority and functions of the relevant partner or partners.

(8) A children's services authority in England and each of their relevant partners must in exercising their functions under this section have regard to any guidance given to them for the purpose by the Secretary of State.

(9) Arrangements under this section may include arrangements relating to—

- (a) persons aged 18 and 19;
- (b) persons over the age of 19 who are receiving services under sections 23C to 24D of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41);
- (c) persons over the age of 19 but under the age of 25 who have a learning difficulty, within the meaning of section 13 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, and are receiving services under that Act.

Section 17 Children and young people's plans

(1) The Secretary of State may by regulations require a children's services authority in England from time to time to prepare and publish a plan setting out the authority's strategy for discharging their functions in relation to children and relevant young persons.

(2) Regulations under this section may in particular make provision as to—

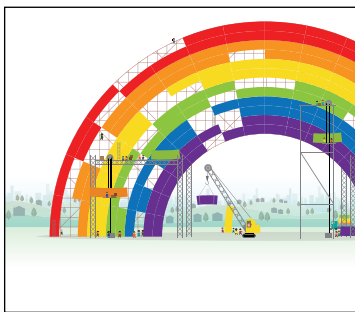
- (a) the matters to be dealt with in a plan under this section;
- (b) the period to which a plan under this section is to relate;
- (c) when and how a plan under this section must be published;
- (d) keeping a plan under this section under review;
- (e) consultation to be carried out during preparation of a plan under this section.

(3) The matters for which provision may be made under subsection (2)(a) include in particular—

- (a) the arrangements made or to be made under section 10 by a children's services authority in England;
- (b) the strategy or proposals in relation to children and relevant young persons of any person or body with whom a children's services authority in England makes or proposes to make such arrangements.

(4) The power to make regulations conferred by this section shall, for the purposes of subsection (1) of section 100 of the Local Government Act 2003 (c. 26), be regarded as included among the powers mentioned in subsection (2) of that section.

(5) In this section "relevant young persons" means persons, other than children, in relation to whom arrangements under section 10 may be made.



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