

CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS: IN CUMBRIA: PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL

1. Purpose of Partnership

- 1.1 We have been working towards Children's Trust arrangements in Cumbria since the beginning of 2005 to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people. The five outcomes are -
- Be Healthy
 - Stay Safe
 - Enjoy & Achieve
 - Make a Positive Contribution
 - Achieve Economic Well-Being
- 1.2 In order to achieve this we are committed to working in partnership and involving children & young people.
- 1.3 On 1st September 2005, the Children & Young People's Board adopted an overarching Vision, Mission and Values for the Children's Trust arrangements which were built on what children and young people in Cumbria have told us would make a difference to their lives.
- 1.4 The Children's Trust will put better outcomes for ALL children, young people and their families first. Our Vision is -

**In Cumbria - the best for every child, young person
and their family**

Enabling children and young people to be healthy; to stay safe;
to enjoy and achieve; to make a positive contribution; and to
achieve economic well-being

Draft

- 1.5 It will achieve this through its Mission -

In partnership, we will achieve our vision and be effective when we:

Create opportunities for all children, young people, their families and those working with and for them, to be actively **involved in developing and participating in children's services.**

Find **new ways of working and sharing available resources** to meet the needs of children, young people, and their families **at the earliest opportunity.**

Invest in a highly skilled and integrated workforce to deliver the expectations of children, young people and their families.

Commission services to secure improved outcomes, through evidence based practice, for all children, young people and their families.

- 1.6 The Values which the Children's Trust will build into everything it does are mainly derived from what a group of children & young people told us -

**Respect
Trust
Inclusion
Reliability
Fairness**

- 1.7 The children and young people's 10 Expectations, in their own words, were as follows -

Draft

**Respect
Trust
Connected
Confidential
Reliable
Easy to use
Fair
Professional
Comfortable
Individual**

- 1.8 Cumbria County Council and its partners are currently working to produce the first Children & Young People's Plan for April 2006 and will engage children and young people in its development. The Plan will build on the Mission, Vision and Values and will describe in more detail what partners will do to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and their families in Cumbria, building on existing good practice where it already exists.
- 1.9 In signing up to this Protocol, the partners involved in the development of Children's Trust arrangements in Cumbria are also helping to take forward the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which the UK Government ratified in 1991.

2. Composition of Partnership

- 2.1 It has taken some time to develop appropriate and robust governance arrangements for our Children's Trust arrangements that enable -
- A wide range of partners to be actively involved in the development and delivery of this complex agenda
 - Executive decisions to be made collectively by partners with a 'duty to cooperate' and other key stakeholders such as a voluntary sector representative
 - Relevant partners in Cumbria to begin a 'Trust' way of working that we will develop in the future
- 2.2 At a future point in time, it is anticipated that the work of the Change for Children Partnership (CfCP) and workstreams will be mainstreamed within our Children's Trust arrangements. There will still be a need for partnership governance arrangements that are likely to be the existing Children & Young People's Board and the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership - or their equivalents.
- 2.3 The key elements in our existing arrangements as at December 2005 are summarised overleaf.
- 2.4 A complete list of all partners involved in this work in Cumbria is attached as Appendix A. [NB: All appendices to the Protocol will be attached to the final draft] Appendix B contains the formal Terms of Reference for all these bodies and, for the workstreams, a list of current groups.
- 2.5 However, we recognise that our governance structures are not set in stone and will grow and develop over time.
- 2.6 At this point in time, the Children's Trust arrangements have no legal status but by signing up to the Partnership Agreement and with it, this protocol, all partners are committing themselves to our shared objectives and ways of working.

TOWARDS CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS IN CUMBRIA - WHO'S WHO (As @ December 2005)

Children & Young People's Board (CYPB)

Role: To drive the Every Child Matters/Change for Children programme forward by enabling a forum of senior representatives from all key partners to provide effective strategic leadership, direction and accountability.

Membership: Representatives from partners with a duty to cooperate plus a representative of the voluntary/community sector reference group.

Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)

Role: To provide inclusive partnership arrangements to support the CYPB

Membership: Named representatives from a wide range of partners

Change for Children Partnership (CfCP)

Role: To enable those working directly (the 'Project Team') on this agenda from all partner agencies to 'join up' and input into the actions of the Workstreams

Membership: Seconded or named representatives from across the County Council and from partner organisations.

Change for Children Workstreams

Role: To complete specific tasks within set deadlines to achieve the overall objectives of the Partnership, and develop its capacity.

Membership: From across the County Council and from partner organisations as appropriate. Each project team jointly led by a member of the Core Group.

Change for Children Core Group

Role: To coordinate the work of the Workstreams and support the work of the CfCP and CYPB.

Membership: Representatives from within Cumbria County Council from Education, Social Services and the corporate centre as well as representatives from external partners.

Draft

3. Roles & Responsibilities of Partners

- 3.1 We aim to have all partners (including Cumbria County Council) working towards Children's Trust arrangements in Cumbria signing up to the Partnership Agreement which means that they will work to deliver our shared Vision, Mission and Values by -
- Ensuring CfC priorities are reflected in own plans
 - Advocating with others on behalf of the Partnership
 - Identifying resources to help deliver, including where possible, secondments to the Partnership
 - Ensuring there is effective two-way communication between partner organisations and the Partnership
 - Undertaking appropriate risk management within their own organisations to help minimise or remove risks to the Partnership within their control or influence
- 3.2 Overall lead responsibility for Children's Trust arrangements lies with Cumbria County Council. Moira Swann, Director of Children's Services is the accountable officer and Philip Chappelhow is the Lead Member.
- 3.3 Every partner who has seconded a member of staff to the Partnership is responsible for that individual's well being. They must ensure, for example, that regular supervision and appraisals take place and expenses are provided, etc.
- 3.4 The Partnership expects that all individuals involved in one or more parts of the Children's Trust arrangements in Cumbria will behave in a way that exemplifies the five Values of the Partnership - namely, Respect, Trust, Inclusion, Reliability and Fairness. We will work together openly keeping the overarching Mission and Vision of the Partnership in our sights.
- 3.5 If difficulties arise in partnership working which, in the first instance, the Core Group cannot resolve it is expected that individuals will discuss these with their own line manager. Should someone behave in a way that members of the Core Group consider to be inappropriate, this will be referred back to their usual line manager within their 'home' organisation.

Draft

- 3.6 Decision-making - NB: THIS SECTION TO BE DEVELOPED ONCE THE CYPB'S EXERCISE TO DETERMINE DELEGATED POWERS IS COMPLETE.
- 3.7 At present each organisation in the Partnership has its own process for responding to complaints. Some have a statutory framework in which they operate and others consider it from a good practice perspective. However, they all stress the need to view complaints as an important way to improve services in addition to responding to a problem identified by a dissatisfied individual.
- 3.8 National Government guidance on required changes to Social Services complaints procedures are anticipated shortly, which will reflect the move to Children's Services. In the short term, the Partnership expects that all individuals working on this agenda will follow their own organisation's procedures.

4. Performance Management of Partnership

- 4.1 In the short term, one of the workstreams is developing the content and style of a performance monitoring report that will be presented on a regular basis to the Children & Young People's Board. The Board will determine the frequency of this reporting.
- 4.2 The report will be focused on the six priority groupings previously agreed for Cumbria with Government Office North West. As part of the work to develop the first Children & Young People's Plan, 'SMART' targets for outcomes will be generated which will build on the indicators developed by Government for the JAR/APA.
- 4.3 Another task for this workstream is to develop and articulate a Performance Management Framework that can be owned and used by all partners. This will include protocols for gathering performance information, reporting lines, quality assurance of data, etc.
- 4.4 Each partner will need to utilise this to ensure that they can monitor their own contribution to delivering the Partnership's Vision and Mission. The Partnership is aiming to have an electronic performance management system - in the short term, this is likely to utilise the County Council's existing corporate system 'Performance Plus'.

Draft

5. Human Resource Management for Partnership

- 5.1 As described in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 above, the requirement is that individuals on secondment to the Partnership will operate under their own organisation's Terms & Conditions. For example, the County Council has a Secondment Policy that sets out the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved.

6. Financial Management of Partnership

- 6.1 At present, there is a relatively small budget within Cumbria County Council that has been allocated to cover 'above the line' expenses as this work begins. This Budget is being monitored and reported to the Core Group, with support from Corporate Finance.
- 6.2 Financial management arrangements for the future will be part of the remit of the Corporate Director - Children's Services. A workstream has been established within the County Council to consider wider issues such as reporting, auditing and accountable body status.

7. Risk Management for Partnership

- 7.1 The Change for Children Partnership takes risk assessment very seriously. Risk management was identified at its first meeting in April as one of the issues that merited workstream action.
- 7.2 The Partnership secured support from Zurich Municipal to help guide it through a process of identifying, rating, managing and monitoring risks using Zurich's 'STORM' methodology. When identifying risks, members of the Partnership were asked "What might stop or impede the Partnership from achieving its Vision and Mission?" and therefore the risks that arose sometimes relate to individuals, organisations, the partnership itself and the Every Child Matters outcomes.
- 7.3 The completed Risk Report and an Action Plan to try to reduce risks that the Partnership felt could not be tolerated were considered by the CYPB in September. The Partnership has committed to reviewing both the risks themselves (ensuring that new risks are included and managed risks are removed) and the

Draft

Action Plan on a three monthly basis. A full risk assessment protocol produced by Zurich Municipal is available on request.

- 7.4 As part of its on-going work, the Children's Trust arrangements will also ensure that it reduces risks to children and young people from its work. All partners will ensure that they have adequate safeguards to ensure that any member of their staff who may have significant contact with individuals or access to significant information about a child or young person has been through the necessary checks and vetting procedures. It is proposed that the Safeguarding Board is asked to devise a pro forma so that all partners register their intention to undertake the necessary checks.

8. Partnership Communications

- 8.1 There is a Communication workstream which reflects the Partnership's recognition that effective two-way communication with a wide range of people and organisations is vital to the success of this agenda.
- 8.2 The Workstream is developing a communication strategy that will help everyone to ensure all partners and stakeholders are kept informed, engaged and able to participate in the move to a trust way of working for Children and Young People. This will build on many existing communication channels. They are also coordinating the 'branding' of the Partnership to ensure that all communications are consistent, clear and accessible to all - including children, young people and their families.

9. Information Sharing in the Partnership

- 9.1 The Information Sharing workstream dedicated to addressing this issue has begun its work with an audit of all partners' policies, procedures and practices. This will form the basis from which the group can work towards enabling effective information sharing through common systems and software. Any systems would need to be e-gis compliant to allow us to deliver a multi-agency solution when required.

Draft

- 9.2 All partners are being asked to sign up to the Cumbria Information Sharing Toolkit. This will ensure that all agencies share a common set of values and definitions with regards to information sharing. It is important that information is shared sensitively, with care and within the legal framework. The Cumbria Information Sharing Toolkit will provide a common framework to allow this to take place consistently.

10. Equality & Diversity

- 10.1 Three of our core values are Fairness, Respect and Inclusion. All of these must inform our approach to equality and diversity issues both in terms of how we work and what we deliver but also in terms of our leadership role to promote these values.
- 10.2 The Children's Trust Arrangement's stance on equality & diversity issues is as follows -

All forms of discrimination including on the grounds of disability, gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, belief, culture, nationality, national origin, age and sexual orientation are unacceptable.

- 10.3 The County Council's Equality Impact Assessment guidance (2004) states that in the case of partnership projects -

"The EIA procedures apply to all projects and policies where the County Council is the lead agency or accountable body in a multi-agency initiative or project or a County Council group project."

- 10.4 There will be a number of strands to our work on these issues that will develop with the Partnership. At this point in time, it is expected that -

- All partner agencies engaged in Children's Trust arrangements will require that their own employees and executive members (e.g. Councillors, Board members, etc.) fulfil statutory requirements (e.g. under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 or the Disability Discrimination

Draft

Act) by ensuring that they are properly informed, supported and, where necessary, trained.

- Any key policy documents and approaches to service delivery (including those of individual workstreams) produced by the Partnership will have been 'equality proofed'. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be used, based in the first instance on Cumbria County Council's template - attached as Appendix C. This should also involve consultation with representatives of relevant interest groups.
- We will also work to ensure that our policies and approaches take account of the diverse nature of Cumbria through 'rural proofing' (using the Council's 'Thinking Rural' guide) and are sustainable.
- Partners look for every opportunity in their day-to-day work to promote equality of opportunity and inclusion.