

NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

16 NOVEMBER 2009

**Review of Children's Trust Reporting Arrangements:
Consultation on Proposed Changes****1.0 Key Points**

- 1.1 This report is a consultation document which invites comments on proposed changes to the structure and reporting arrangements of the North Yorkshire Children's Trust.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Board are requested to comment on the proposed changes to the structure and reporting arrangements of the North Yorkshire Children's Trust as presented in this report.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Children's Trust Board meets six times annually at bi-monthly intervals and receives reports directly from all areas of activity within its remit. The maturation of the Children's Trust arrangements has been accompanied by an increase in the business of the Board. The rising level of business being reported to the Board has resulted in crowded agendas and lengthy meetings.
- 3.2 Many reports considered by the Board are presented primarily for information purposes and require no decision other than to note the content of the report. Appendix A illustrates that between January 2008 and July 2009 fewer than half of the reports presented to the Board required substantive decisions to be made. The remaining reports were presented solely for the Board 'to note' their content.
- 3.3 The Working Together section of the refreshed CYPP includes improvement priority WT1: 'To ensure strong governance arrangements are in place for the Children's Trust'. Within this improvement priority the key activities for 2009/10 include:
- Review current Children's Trust Board arrangements to identify potential improvements to reporting mechanisms and to ensure that arrangements continue to be robust and in line with national guidance.
 - Ensure that clear lines of accountability exist between the Children's Trust and its sub-groups and that performance management arrangements are developed to ensure that reporting to these bodies is efficient and received at the appropriate levels (i.e. working group / sub-group / Board level.)
- 3.4 The remainder of this report outlines some proposed changes to the Children's Trust Board's structure and reporting arrangements. This report is a consultation document: Board members are asked for their views on the changes outlined herein.

4.0 Proposed Changes: Sub-Groups

4.1 At present the Children's Trust Board has the following sub-groups:

- Early Years and Childcare Development Partnership
- Voice, Influence and Participation Group
- LDD Strategy Group
- 14-19 Strategic Advisory Group
- Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP)
- Children's Workforce Development Group
- North Yorkshire Play Partnership

4.2 Membership of these sub-groups is outlined in Appendix D.

4.3 In addition to the existing seven sub-groups it is proposed to establish a new multi-agency Performance and Commissioning sub-group for the Board. This new sub-group would take forward the in-depth monitoring of performance that is not always possible at Board meetings. The business of the sub-group would include detailed quarterly monitoring of performance in each CYPP outcome area, quarterly monitoring of LAA performance, CAA and inspection arrangements, and the constructive scrutiny of the performance of partner organisations.

4.4 The Performance and Commissioning sub-group would also be responsible for progressing the Children's Trust work on strategic commissioning. As a result, the Performance and Commissioning sub-group would become the owner of two sections of the CYPP: WT4 Performance Management and WT5 Commissioning Strategy.

4.5 The proposed Performance and Commissioning sub-group group would meet quarterly and report directly to the Board. Issues arising from this activity would be reported to the Board in a single highlights or exceptions report.

4.6 If the Board agrees to establish this new Performance and Commissioning sub-group, a proposed membership list, draft terms of reference, a draft programme of business, and suggested dates of meetings will be prepared and circulated.

5.0 Proposed Changes: Reporting Cycle and Agenda Management

5.1 It is proposed that the Children's Trust Board continues to meet six times annually at bi-monthly intervals. Appendix B illustrates an outline schedule of Board meetings and shows how these could align with meetings of the Board's sub-groups and of the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership Executive.

5.2 It is proposed to structure the agenda for each Board meeting around four key headings: Safeguarding, Performance and Commissioning, Vulnerable Groups, and Early Years. For example, under the Safeguarding heading the Board could receive regular reports from the MALAP and the LSCB. Likewise, under the Early Years heading the Board could receive reports from the Early Years and Childcare Development Partnership.

- 5.3 The agenda for each Board meeting could also include a thematic overview of one of the six North Yorkshire CYPP outcomes (the five Every Child Matters outcomes plus Building Capacity). These thematic overviews would provide the Board with a detailed annual report on progress and issues concerning the delivery of CYPP priorities under each outcome. This would supplement the routine quarterly performance report from the Performance and Commissioning sub-group. The thematic overviews could also be a platform for detailed reporting on specific activities within each outcome. For instance, the overview of Be Healthy could include reports on maternal health or the delivery of the 'Healthy Weight, Active Lives' strategy.
- 5.4 The agenda for each meeting would retain sufficient flexibility to consider urgent items and to include reports from key agencies if required. Appendix C shows how the agenda for a Board meeting might look under the proposed arrangements.
- 5.5 Each year one Board meeting would have a specific focus on the CYPP mid-year review. In the outline schedule of meetings at Appendix B the CYPP mid-year review is reported at the January meeting (as occurred in the 2008/09 reporting cycle). An alternative option would be to report the CYPP mid-year review at the November meeting (as happened in the 2007/08 cycle). The July meeting would feature a specific focus on the CYPP annual review and refresh.
- 5.6 At one Board meeting during the year it is proposed to include an item on resources in order to inform budget-setting processes. This could take place either in November or January.
- 5.7 In order to reduce the number of reports being presented formally at Board meetings, a recent development has been to circulate some update reports for information only. For instance, in July two update reports were circulated for information only; one concerning Integrated Youth Support, the other on ContactPoint. The rationale behind this arrangement is to share information about important pieces of work without taking up time on the already crowded agenda of a Board meeting. Board Members are asked for their views on whether this practice should continue.

6.0 Children's Trust Communications Strategy

- 6.1 The strategic partnership has recently been re-named 'The Children's Trust', reflecting both national trends and the shared language found in legislation and across the public sector in general. This presents a timely opportunity to review communications across the Trust and to establish and formalise communication needs and objectives.
- 6.2 The Working Together section of the refreshed CYPP includes improvement priority WT2: 'Consultation and Communications.' Within this improvement priority the key activities for 2009/10 include:
- The development of a comprehensive communications strategy for the Children's Trust to incorporate all stakeholders, to communicate key messages and to celebrate successes.
 - Enhance awareness of the communications mechanisms for the Children's Trust, including any potential changes to the Board branding, in line with national Children's Trusts guidance.
- 6.3 A proposal for a communications strategy and action plan will be developed and reported at a subsequent meeting of the Board.

7.0 Area Liaison Groups

7.1 Work is ongoing to examine the role and reporting arrangements of the Area Liaison Groups, with a view to aligning the operation of these groups more closely with the Children's Trust board. The outcome of this work, including proposed actions, will be reported at a subsequent meeting of the board.

8.0 Summary of Proposals

8.1 In summary, the proposals for the Children's Trust Board reporting arrangements are:

- Establish a Performance and Commissioning Sub-Group
- Continue to hold Board meetings six times a year
- Structure the agenda for Board meetings around key themes
- Include one outcome overview at each Board meeting
- One Board meeting per year will focus on the CYPP Annual Review and Refresh
- One Board meeting per year will focus on the CYPP Mid-Year Review
- One Board meeting per year will receive a report on resources
- Reports for information only will continue to be circulated separately from the main meeting agenda, unless the Board determines otherwise
- The Trust will develop and adopt a communications strategy

8.2 The Board is asked to comment on these proposals. A feedback form is appended overleaf.

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Children's Trust Board Reporting Arrangements: Feedback Form

Question 1	Should the agenda for Board meetings be organised under key themes (safeguarding, vulnerable groups, performance/commissioning etc)? If so, are the themes outlined in this report the right ones?
Question 2	Please provide comments on whether the proposed reporting cycle for the Board and its sub-groups is right.
Question 3	Please provide comments on whether it is a good idea to circulate some reports for information only rather than include them on the agenda for Board meetings.

Question 4	Please provide comments on whether the mix of sub-groups is right, especially the proposal to establish a new Commissioning and Performance sub-group.
Question 5	Please provide general comments on the structure of the Children's Trust Board and the proposals outlined in this report.

Please return your comments by email to David O'Brien: david.f.o'brien@northyorks.gov.uk