

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIP

Policy Statement on Integrated Working in Localities

Introduction

The member agencies of the North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership are committed to improving services to children and young people across the county. To achieve parity of services to all young people, whoever they are, however old they are and wherever they are, involves a radical change of practice. Services are to be delivered locally, by multi-agency, coordinated teams and in accordance with national and local guidance.

Context

National

The desire to improve multi-agency working is based upon national Government Policy. The *Children Act, 2004*¹, implemented in response to the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, gave the burden of responsibility for the wellbeing of children to the newly created Director of Children's Services (DCS), along with a Lead Member for Children's Services, both within the Children's Service Authority (CSA) (Local Authority). This responsibility, set out in the Act, requires the DCS to promote cooperation between all partners, both statutory ('relevant partners') and non-statutory in order to improve outcomes for children and young people within the county. This Act is core to the Every Child Matters Agenda, which is driving forward progress nationally. *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*² sets out how the Act should be implemented, from strategic direction, through processes and delivery of services, to improved outcomes for children and young people.

Local

As a result of Every Child Matters, the previously existing Children's Strategic Board was re-established as the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) includes all 'relevant partners' with the local additions of schools, the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, the voluntary and community sector and service user representatives. This Partnership is embedded by a constitution³, signed up to be all members of the Board. This constitution not only includes arrangements for the Strategic Partnership Board and its three Area Sub-Committees, but also sets out

¹ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040031.htm>

² www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

³ North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Governance Arrangements: A cooperative approach to improving the well-being of children in North Yorkshire. Ch 2,3,7

the principles of co-operation, general governance principles and a chapter on Children's Service Localities.

The key document which informs local priorities and developments is the North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan 2006-9 (CYPP). This document, built upon a careful needs assessment and upon consultation with service users and staff from across the agencies, sets out what service providers in North Yorkshire hope to achieve and how it will be achieved. The Plan focuses on the five statutory outcomes for children, but also focuses on capacity building. The section on capacity building clearly states that the key objectives⁴ for development over the next three years are the development of integrated front-line services, integrated processes to support these services and a skilled, flexible workforce. All 'relevant partners' have signed up to the CYPP and have therefore already agreed in principle to the locality strategy.

Aims

The locality strategy has several aims, all of which lead to improved services to children and young people in North Yorkshire. These aims are all reflected in the Children and Young People's Plan, 2006-9⁵.

Prevention

Children and young people will be safer if our services can intervene early to prevent potentially vulnerable children needing to access to high level services. It is our intention that, through working together closely and through effective use of integrated processes, fewer children and young people will need Level 4 and Level 3 services. It is our aim, through effective working practices at a local level, to be able to identify difficulties at an early stage and to help those children and young people to overcome them. There will always be cases where certain vulnerable children or young people need very high levels of support. Children or young people who may, under current arrangements, need specialist support, may only need it on a temporary basis if early intervention is effective. Furthermore, if taking a preventative approach is successful, there will be better, more easily accessed services available for those relatively few children and young people with acute and specialist needs.

In order to achieve this aim, it is important that current level 4 service providers are enabled to play a key role in prevention. It will be important to build the capacity of all the relevant services, so that they are able to contribute significantly to the development of effective prevention. This ultimately will result in a significant change in working practice, as more work is focused on preventative measures and less on acute casework.

⁴ North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan 2006-9, Objectives 6.1-6.3, pp 56-62

⁵ North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan 2006-9, pp 2-5

Improved Outcomes

The Every Child Matters Agenda sets out five outcomes that children and young people have a right to achieve. They are

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Wellbeing.

In North Yorkshire we already enable most children and young people to achieve most elements of these outcomes, but not universally. There are groups of children and young people, who, through no fault of their own, risk failing to achieve one or more of the outcomes. The locality strategy aims to enable practitioners to identify risks early to enable a young person to move back towards successfully achieving the outcomes.

Better Access

Some children and young people are affected by difficulties, such as adverse family situations or disabilities, and they need to have access to extra services which will enable them to achieve the outcomes. By providing services more locally, and with better communication between agencies, these vulnerable young people should be able to access the services they require more easily and more efficiently.

As North Yorkshire is such a diverse county, there is currently disparity between localities. By identifying 22 clear localities⁶, based on natural centres of population, partner agencies can ensure that the core entitlement to services is available equally across the county. This is not to say that every locality will have the same levels of service provision: localities with the greatest needs will need to provide additional services, and local priorities will be identified and acted upon.

Effective Joint Delivery

In order for practitioners to successfully enable children and young people in their care to achieve the five outcomes it is essential that they adopt an integrated approach to working. Not only must front-line staff work well in their own teams, but must also develop strong multi-agency relationships. This teamwork will be enhanced by integrated processes that work, for example, the common assessment (CAF), information-sharing and the lead professional role.

It will also be important for locality-based teams to have strong leadership to ensure effective joint delivery. Integrated Service Managers and Children's Centre Managers have an important role to play to ensure that teams work together to provide the best services for the children in their care. However, line managers must also play a role in ensuring that staff are knowledgeable, well-trained and understand their responsibilities.

⁶ North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan 2006-9, p 9

User-focused

The services provided in localities must be those that are wanted and needed by the community served. The CYPP was produced in consultation with service users, but the role of parents, carers, children and young people will continue in the locality. Teams will need to consult with service users in order to establish local needs, on top of the core entitlement. By focusing on the user, the services provided will be better focused and more effective in meeting the needs of the community.

Locality Working

All 22 localities will have implemented the locality strategy by April 2008. Further guidance on individual elements will be available, along with a detailed implementation strategy. To be successful, each locality is to have the following features:

Core Entitlement

All localities must provide the core entitlement to all children and young people, to be easily accessible within the locality. More specialist services will also be available, but not necessarily locally.

Multi-agency teams

Services are to be provided in a more integrated way. This means ensuring that professionals from different agencies work together effectively. In many instances there will be co-location of services, based around Extended Schools and Children's Centres, enabling staff to develop strong relationships and communicate effectively. There will be a strong communication network between staff in the locality, even where not sharing premises, to ensure work is not duplicated and that provision for a child is effective and necessary.

A core team for each locality will meet regularly to discuss cases and issues arising. This core team will be central to the effectiveness of the locality, ensuring that information is shared correctly, that issues around cases are followed up and to ensure that the common assessment is used effectively.

Good leadership within the locality will be essential to ensure effective partnership working. Children's Centre Managers, in particular, will have a key role to play, developing co-located services, promoting team work and bringing together new services.

As Children's Centres and Extended Schools are intended to be an integral part of the network of services, in many cases they will provide the base for locality teams.

Information Sharing⁷

The Locality Teams will have a protocol for information sharing. This will be based on the General Framework for Information Sharing as agreed by the Strategic Partnership. Without clear guidance on when and how to share information, multi-agency work will not be fully effective. The Child Index, to be implemented by 2008/9, will enable more effective information sharing.

Common Assessment

The Common Assessment Framework has been designed to be used, in accordance with national and local guidance, by any trained professional with a child who may benefit from early intervention requiring the input of more than one agency. The common assessment ensures that a child or young person is not assessed on the same issues repeatedly by different professionals who come into contact with that child. Instead, the issues raised in the common assessment can be shared with relevant professional staff.

Lead professional role

Children requiring multi-agency support may need a lead professional to help steer them through overcoming their difficulties. This will be someone known to the child who has received training in the role. The lead professional has a coordination and communication role, ensuring that the child has contact with other relevant agencies and will oversee reviewing the progress a child is making.

Lead professionals are not a separate workforce. Being a lead professional is a role which a range of frontline staff take on according to the need in individual cases. Being a lead professional does not mean taking on all the professional responsibilities of other agencies involved in a case. Each agency involved in a case remains directly accountable for their input into that case and it is expected that each specialist supports the lead professional in their role.

Support for Locality working

Management and Administrative support

A team of Integrated Service Managers (ISMs), covering the County, will take responsibility for ensuring that integration takes place effectively and efficiently and is maintained. With the agreement of partners they will be employed by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) to provide the management capacity essential to secure and maintain this complex multi-agency development. These senior, strategic managers ensure all agencies deliver their agreed entitlement to service in each locality for which they have responsibility. As part of this, they will be responsible for further developing Extended Services through schools and Children's Centres on behalf of NYCC. They will also ensure effective use of integrated

⁷http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/public/site/NYCC/menuitem.0329f0efd584164fd7428f1040008a0c/?vgn_extoid=478acc778f5d0010VgnVCMServer0d6519acRCRD

processes is set-up and maintained, in accordance with local guidance. The ISMs will also will monitor and review performance in localities and will work with local staff to identify priorities for improvement, collaborating with partner agencies in the process.

It has been agreed by partners that Children's Centre Managers will be line managed by the Integrated Service Managers so that they form a direct part of the integrated management capacity at local level.

The ISM will not provide line management to specialist staff working in locality teams. That will be provided by line managers in partner agencies. The ISM's role is to ensure that good systems are operating, that co-operation is maintained, and teams are managed and supported appropriately. Inter-agency protocols will support this aspect of the role.

Each ISM will have administrative support to support them and the localities. In the time before the Child Index is functional, this administrative officer will hold information about children who have undergone a common assessment and the details of any allocated lead professionals. They will also be a vital point of contact with the ISM.

Workforce Development

The Government published the Children's Workforce Strategy (CWS) in April 2005 in recognition of the importance of the skills, confidence and competence of this workforce to improving outcomes for children and young people as set out in Every Child Matters. An underlying principle is that everyone working with children, whether employed by a public, private or voluntary organisation, must share in duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and improve their well-being.

At a local level here in North Yorkshire the Children and Young People's Workforce Development Group has developed a Local Workforce Development Strategy in line with the CWS and sets out four major strategic challenges; to recruit more high quality staff, to retain people in the workforce, to strengthen inter-agency and multi-disciplinary working and to promote stronger leadership and management

We will achieve this through the implementation of this strategy and over a period of time we will develop a common core of values, behaviours and approaches for all Children and Young People's Service Workforce along with a common Induction framework in line with national guidelines. There will be clear Career Pathways across Children and Young People's Service ensuring career progression opportunities through skills acquisition.

We will develop joint partner/agency training to develop leadership capacity within multi agency/partnership arrangements and introduce new and remodelled roles through an agreed structure and process which is inclusive of all partners and agencies.

Performance Management

The overriding aim for performance management in the localities, is to ensure that the objectives and targets set out in the CYPP are delivered. Performance management arrangements for the CYPP are set out in that document⁸. As the locality strategy is designed to enable North Yorkshire to improve its performance as set out in the CYPP, these arrangements apply to the localities.

Monitoring and Reporting

The effectiveness of the overall locality strategy will be visible through the performance monitoring reports on the CYPP. The CYPP is monitored through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board on a biannual basis. The Strategic Partnership Area Sub-Committees will oversee the performance monitoring of relevant localities as a part of their role of ensuring the CYPP is delivered in their area⁹.

However, individual agencies will still need to monitor their respective statutory or contractual responsibilities. Individual agencies will maintain their established cycles of performance reporting, review and improvement.

Outcomes Targets

Targets have been set for the County in the CYPP based on a comprehensive needs assessment and analysis of service user surveys. The locality teams will work to deliver these targets. This will involve lead officers setting local targets in conjunction with the locality teams, in order to ensure that the countywide targets are met. Targets at locality level will reflect the fact that there are bigger improvements to secure in some localities than in others. As with the CYPP, individual agencies are responsible for the delivery of specific targets and lead responsibilities are identified.

Service Improvement Targets

The targets and objectives will also include changes and improvements to the services available and to the ways they operate. Whilst these targets and objectives relate to inputs, they are vital to any sustainable improvement in outcomes. Like the outcomes targets, they will all be drawn from the CYPP.

Needs Assessment and Benchmarks

In order to measure future performance, there must be an evidence-based assessment of the locality's starting point. A local needs assessment must be carried out, with comprehensive baseline data. Locality performance management will be able to track progress in the specific locality against these benchmarks. This

⁸ North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan 2006-9, pp 89-91.

⁹ North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Governance Arrangements: A cooperative approach to improving the well-being of children in North Yorkshire, p 49.

local needs assessment will enable agencies working in the locality to identify local targets and set appropriate objectives.

Commissioning Strategy

A commissioning strategy, developed by the Strategic Partnership, will support implementation of the CYPP as the strategy for improving outcomes. It will be designed to enhance delivery and reinforce performance management.

Development of the localities has been identified by the Strategic Partnership as a key priority in its initial commissioning strategy. Once established, locality teams and services will be subject to periodic review through the strategy.

Accountability

The accountabilities of agencies are set out in the Governance arrangements for the Strategic Partnership¹⁰. As a strategic partnership, following the Children's Trust approach option in DfES guidance, each agency retains its respective accountability in addition to needing to demonstrate its duty to cooperate. The North Yorkshire CYPSP does not have executive powers in relation to individual agencies, but does hold all partners to account for delivery as evidence of their cooperative duties.

For locality staff, lines of accountability will be clearly delineated. Managers and front-line staff in localities will be accountable to the Strategic Partnership for delivery of the CYPP via management arrangements within agencies and the arrangements for managing integration by NYCC which have been agreed by all partners. Terms of reference and protocols between organisations are being developed for teams ensure clarity about roles and responsibilities in locality working in North Yorkshire.

Revised draft: 30 September 2006

¹⁰ North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Governance Arrangements: A cooperative approach to improving the well-being of children in North Yorkshire. Part 1, Section 8 (p7)