



## AGENDA

### CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS BOARD

**Wednesday, 21st May, 2008, at 2.00 pm**  
**Swale 1, Sessions House, County Hall**

Ask for: **Theresa Grayell**

Telephone **(01622) 694277**

*Tea/Coffee will be available from 1.30 pm in the meeting room*

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Members' Interest relating to items on today's agenda
3. Minutes of Board Meetings held on (a) 5 December 2007 and (b) 12 March 2008 (Pages 1 - 11)
4. Chairman's Announcements
5. Update on actions identified from the meeting with Looked After Children and Care Leavers on 23 January 2008 (Pages 12 - 18)
6. Outline of Programme for Corporate Parenting Briefing, 6 June 2008 (Page 19)
7. Parental Alcohol Misuse and its Impact upon Children in Kent (Pages 20 - 23)
8. Kent Children's Trust (KCT) Arrangements (Pages 24 - 29)
9. Developing the Terms of Reference of the Board (oral item)

#### **Update items**

**Information Papers on these issues will be sent to Members separately:-**

*NB – Information items are not for consideration at the meeting*

10. Looked After Children and Child Protection Statistics

#### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Peter Sass  
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership  
(01622) 694002

**Tuesday, 13 May 2008**

*Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.*

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's Champions Board held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, on Wednesday 5 December 2007.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr M J Vye (Vice - Chairman), Mrs V J Dagger, Mr D A Hirst, Mr I T N Jones, Mrs M Newell, Dr T R Robinson and Mr J D Simmonds.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Brightwell, Policy and Performance Manager (Looked After Children/Leaving Care), CFE; Mr J Mitchell, Joint Commissioning Officer, CFE; Mrs J Doherty, Policy Manager, Central Policy Unit, CED; and Miss T A Grayell, Democratic Services Officer.

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**18. Minutes**

*(Items A3 (a) and (b))*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2007 are correctly recorded and they be signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2007 are already approved and signed and are included for reference only.

**19. Dates of Future Meetings**

*(Item A4)*

- (1) The Board noted the dates reserved for its meetings on 2008, as follows:-

Wednesday, 12 March 2008 (Child Protection)

Wednesday, 21 May 2008 (Looked After Children)

Wednesday, 24 September 2008 (Child Protection)

Wednesday, 3 December 2008 (Looked After Children)

- (2) These meetings will all start at 2.00 pm at County Hall.

**20. Chairman's Announcements**

*(Item A5)*

(1) The Chairman reported and welcomed the news that Beverley Hughes MP, the Minister for Children and Young People, had made an announcement on reducing the placement of young people outside their home area, a move for which the Board had lobbied.

(2) The Chairman and Democratic Services Officer reported the receipt of enquiries and compliments from other councils on the forward-looking way in which Kent had established its Children's Champions Board four years ago, and on the work it had undertaken since. Other councils admired Kent's pioneering approach and were now starting to look at establishing similar boards. This was a great tribute to the work that Members and officers

had put into the Board. The Democratic Services Officer would send the enquirers copies of the Board's past Minutes and reports to illustrate its work.

(3) There followed a brief discussion on how the Board could spread the message about its work to other County Council Members. For example, the Board had tried to encourage the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee to show the presentation it had seen on child pornography. Although this issue had since been taken forward and was being addressed in other ways, it remained an area of concern for the Board and would continue to be monitored.

**21. Presentation – Summary of Kent Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2006/07**

*(Presentation by Ms P Davies, Manager, Kent Safeguarding Children Board)*

*(The slides used in this presentation are attached to these Minutes at Appendix 1)*

(1) Ms Davies presented a series of slides which set out the background, development and structure of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) and its progress since its establishment. She answered a number of questions from Members. Points arising from the presentation and in response to questions, were as follows:-

- (a) The KSCB had a broader remit and more statutory responsibilities and powers than the former Kent Child Protection Committee;
- (b) staff hosted by the County Council but seconded to work with the KSCB were accountable to the Board rather than to the Council;
- (c) the relationship of the KSCB to the Children's Trust Board would become clearer as the Children's Trust is developed. The two Boards may have some common membership;
- (d) Members were concerned that the Child Protection ("at risk") Register would cease to exist from April 2008, but were assured that, although the register itself would no longer exist, every child considered to be at risk would have a Child Protection Plan. The County Council had no choice about discontinuing the register – it was a Government directive.
- (e) Members were concerned that the broader remit and responsibilities of the KSCB may lead to resources being spread too thinly;
- (f) some agencies who were partners on the KSCB did not currently contribute any resources to its operation. The County Council could press those who did not currently contribute to do so; and
- (g) the KSCB would shortly be producing a three year plan and this would be shared with the Children's Champions Board.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the content of the presentation, and the information given in response to questions, be noted, with thanks;
- (b) the KSCB's three year plan be reported to the Children's Champions Board, along with regular updates on the KSCB's work; and

- (c) the County Council press the KSCB's partner agencies who do not currently contribute resources to do so.

## **22. Education Provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People**

*(Item B1 – Report by Director, Commissioning (Specialist Services))*

*(Ms J Robson, Head of Language and Traveller Achievement Service, Minority Communities Achievement Service, and Ms K Goodman, Head of Operations, Service for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, were in attendance for this item)*

(1) Ms Robson and Ms Goodman presented the report and highlighted the key challenges facing Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People (UASCYP). Points arising from the presentation, and in response to questions from Members, were as follows:-

- (a) Kent has a particularly high percentage of UASCYP who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) – 30% compared to the national average of 8%. However, Kent had a good record of the number of UASCYP gaining admission to university;
- (b) 45% of this year's arrivals had received two years or less of formal education in their home country;
- (c) it was vital that UASCYP are kept engaged and found useful occupation to help them achieve some stability and recover from the emotional trauma of leaving their home country;
- (d) services for UASCYP were currently underfunded by approximately £4m per annum, and the County Council was lobbying Central Government to address this. This underfunding related only to the Social Services aspects of providing service – the education aspects of the service were funded separately;
- (e) addressing the needs of UASCYP for appropriate training to gain employment was a complex challenge, and the County Council was working with Colleges of Further Education, the Learning and Skills Council, Key Training Services and others to reduce the percentage of those who were NEET. Vocational training was known to be more successful if good competence in the English language was gained first, or at least was developed alongside vocational training. Training in the English language alone has been proven to be insufficient to engage young people as college-based academic courses do not suit all;
- (f) the high percentage of NEET could lead to a high percentage of unemployed young people and the danger of them becoming dependent on a benefits culture.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the information given in the report, and in response to questions, be noted, with thanks;
- (b) the work being undertaken, in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council, Colleges of Further Education, Key Training Services and other partners, to address the training issue, be acknowledged; and
- (c) a further update be made to the Children's Champions Board in six months' time.

### **23. Kent's Pledge for Children and Young People in Care**

*(Item B2– Report by Managing Director, CFE)*

(1) Mr Brightwell introduced the report and set out the work undertaken in drafting the Pledge and the consultation with young people which had been included. He explained that the Pledge had two parts – relating to Kent's own children, and children and young people placed within Kent by other local authorities.

(2) The Pledge would be expensive – costing £2.4m - £2.5m per annum to implement – but approximately £2m of this is expected to come from the Government under the “Care Matters” implementation grant, with the remaining £.5m already identified by the Children, Families and Education Directorate.

(3) Members praised the report and the volume and clarity of information it gave against each element of the Pledge - in particular, the financial implications of each. This was a good model which could be followed when presenting other issues.

(4) Members noted that the Pledge contained issues which the Board had put forward and/or worked on some time ago, and were pleased to see their influence coming to fruition in this way.

(5) Mr Brightwell and Mr Mitchell explained that the benefits of the Pledge enjoyed by children and young people in care could be monitored by regular six monthly reviews, carried out throughout the period of care and beyond, up to the age of 21. Finance had been put in place for the mentoring scheme to be continued.

(6) The Pledge would be produced in a range of languages as well as formats suitable for those with learning difficulties and sensory impairments.

(7) RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted, and Members' appreciation of the layout and clarity of the Pledge be conveyed to all the staff who had worked on it.

### **24. Proposals for a Corporate Parenting Workshop**

*(Item B3 – Report by Director, Strategy Policy and Performance, and Director, Commissioning (Specialist Services))*

(1) Mr Brightwell and Mr Mitchell introduced the report and proposed two events in the New Year to build on the success of previous events held by the Board.

(a) Firstly, another meeting with young people leaving care, like the one held in October 2005. To avoid asking young people to miss school or college to attend, this would need to be in an evening and the aim was achieve the meeting in January 2008.

(b) Secondly, another Corporate Parenting event, to which all Members of the County Council would be invited. This would update Members on developments in the role since the last event in September 2006 and could make use of new training materials being produced by the National Children's Bureau in the new year.

(2) Members welcomed the proposals and agreed that such events were vital in allowing Members to meet young people in an informal setting and hear at first hand their experiences, views and concerns as a way of developing Members' role as corporate parents.

(3) RESOLVED that the proposals be welcomed and work continue on finding a date for the meeting with care leavers in January 2008 and the Corporate Parenting event in Spring 2008.

## **25 Updating the Board's Terms of Reference**

(1) The Chairman reported that the idea of amending the Board's Terms of Reference, to reflect the development of Children's Trusts, had recently been raised. Once the Children's Trusts were more developed and the Board's relationship with them had become clearer, the Board would need to discuss at a future meeting what changes it wished to make to its Terms of Reference, and have the benefit of appropriate officer advice on how this could be undertaken.

(2) RESOLVED that the issue be revisited at future meetings.

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**DRAFT**  
**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS BOARD**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's Champions Board held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, on Wednesday 12 March 2008.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr M J Vye (Vice - Chairman), Mr T J Birkett (substitute for Mrs M Newell) Mr I T N Jones, Dr T R Robinson and Mr J D Simmonds.

OTHER MEMBER PRESENT: Mr M C Dance (Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills, CFE)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr K Arthur, Safeguarding Policy and Standards Manager, CFE; Mrs K Lambourn, Policy and Performance Manager (Child Protection/Children in Need), CFE; Mrs J Doherty, Policy Manager, Central Policy Unit, CED; and Miss T A Grayell, Democratic Services Officer, CED.

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

**1. Minutes**

*(Items A3 (a) and (b))*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2007 are correctly recorded and they be signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2007 were signed at the December meeting, but one small retrospective correction to the title of Minute 16 has since been made, and a corrected version of this page was signed by the Chairman.

**2. Presentation – Integrated Processes**

*(Item B1 – Presentation by Miss N Patient, ContactPoint Project Manager, who was in attendance at the invitation of the Board)*

*(The slides used in this presentation are attached to these Minutes as Appendix 1)*

(1) Miss Patient referred to a series of slides which had been included in the meeting papers and tabled some additional, updated information. She explained how the ContactPoint and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes fitted together and the range of services they would cover. Points highlighted in Miss Patient's introduction, and in response to questions from Members, were as follows:-

- (a) the ContactPoint Service would be established in Kent early in 2009, and would bring several benefits. It would allow early identification of children with problems, aid preventative work, and allow one central information database which would link all agencies and avoid duplication;
- (b) the ContactPoint directory would include basic information only – no case notes or information from GPs. There was a statutory requirement for organisations

to supply data, including all schools and independent schools, for example, so this would help identify children not attending school;

- (c) the 'sensitive services' referred to were services relating to any mental health, substance misuse or sexual health needs a young person may have;
- (d) the large number of potential users of the ContactPoint identified – 10,400 – was made up of staff who most needed access to the service to do their jobs; for example, headteachers, deputy headteachers and social workers responsible for referring young people onto services. Access for these users would be introduced in stages;
- (e) all users of the system would need to have had enhanced CRB checks (which would be reviewed every three years) and be fully trained before being able to access it. Miss Patient emphasised that ContactPoint could not be accessed from the Internet, or by any authorised user;
- (f) young people and their parents would not be able to log in directly but a young person could request to see their record under existing Access to Information legislation;
- (g) Members would not be able to access it directly but, to help them assist a local family which had approached them for help, they could request information via an authorised practitioner;
- (h) most children would have one 'lead professional', in most cases their lead Social Worker, but, for those with complex needs, professionals would need to decide between them who would take on the lead responsibility;
- (i) ensuring the quality of the data included was covered in the responsibilities of Miss Patient's colleague, the CAF/Lead Professional Project Co-ordinator, Ms Burwell;
- (j) Members were shown an example ContactPoint screen. The system was flexible and could be searched in several ways. After its launch, the system would continue to be developed to cover further and non-statutory services, for example, allowing a young person to search for local youth club facilities;
- (k) Members asked to be advised of the costs of introducing the new system, once these were known, and be advised as and when each new part of the system was introduced/launched.

(2). RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the content of the presentation, and the information given in response to questions, be noted, with thanks; and
- (b) the Board be kept informed of the progress of the system and be advised when each new part of it is introduced/launched, and the of costs of introducing the new system, once these are known.

**3. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and the Independent Safeguarding Authority**  
*(Item B2 – Report by Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)*

*(The slides on the new vetting and barring arrangements are attached to these Minutes as Appendix 2)*

(1) Mr Arthur introduced the report and explained that the new arrangements had emerged in response to the recommendations of the Bichard inquiry into the murders of two young girls in Soham. The report set out the key points of the new arrangements and had appended to it the Kent Safeguarding Children Board's guidelines on safer recruitment and employment. These guidelines were essentially a set of minimum standards that all agencies within Kent's children's workforce could sign up to in preventing unsuitable people being appointed to work with children.

(2) Although the funding details of the new arrangements were not yet known, Mr Arthur set out some likely costs. He explained that the current cost of a CRB check was £40 per person, and the new arrangements would require some 30,000 staff to be registered within the Authority. This number covered staff engaged under two areas of activity – regulated (those who worked directly with young people, including Social Workers, Youth Workers, Teachers, School Governors, etc) and controlled (support and administrative staff who would have access to information about young people but not work directly with them). The overall estimated cost for KCC of bringing in the new arrangements was £1.5m. This did not include the costs of supporting those voluntary organisations for which KCC acted as an 'umbrella', as it did for current CRB checking arrangements, and the ISA had stated that there will be no charge for registration of volunteers who meet the criteria. It was also recognised that up to 11 million people will need to be registered with the ISA in total, which will present a logistical challenge to central government, and it has been confirmed that the Criminal Records Bureau will administer the arrangements

(3) There would be a transition period of approximately 12 to 18 months while the new arrangements were set up, and new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) registrations carried out, and it was important to minimize the risk of people falling through the net during this time. Those likely to be registered first would be those who had either never been CRB checked or had last been checked years ago. Those who had most recently been CRB checked would be registered last by the ISA. Also, in the transition period, everyone currently on a barred list (List 99, POCA and POVA) would be reviewed to see if they met the new barring criteria. Each case would necessarily be reviewed thoroughly by an ISA panel of experts (chaired by Sir Roger Singleton) and everyone was likely to be allowed to make representation, so the review process would be slow and potentially very costly.

(4) RESOLVED that the information given in the report, and in response to questions, be noted, with thanks.

#### **4. Meetings with Care Leavers**

*(Item B3 – Report by Overview, Scrutiny & Localism Manager)*

*(Mr P Brightwell was in attendance for this item at the invitation of the Board)*

(1) Miss Grayell introduced the report of the January meeting with young people leaving care, and sought Members' views on how they wished to approach the next meeting with the same group, due in July 2008.

(2) Members who had attended the meeting said how impressed they were with the mature approach the young people had taken to tackling and relating the problems they had experienced. Members also observed that many of the points raised were those which any young person might share, whether or not they were in care.

(3) Mr Brightwell explained that a recent meeting between the Leader of the County Council and a similar group of care leavers had raised similar issues, which the Leader had asked the Board to address. He set out how he proposed to take forward each of the issues

raised, and explained that he would prepare a detailed action plan which he would share with Board Members. Points highlighted in discussion, and in response to questions raised by Members, were as follows:-

- (a) all young people who have left care continued to receive advice and support from a personal adviser up to the age of 21, via the Connexions service;
- (b) some district councils had raised the minimum age for housing application in an attempt to manage demand on very limited housing stock;
- (c) young people had expressed a range of views on whether or not a school should be advised of a student's care status, but several Members and officers expressed the view that a school did have a legitimate need to know and echoed the young people's unanimous view that such information should be treated very sensitively;
- (d) private and voluntary organisations had a role to play in the provision of housing and advocacy services. KCC supported some such organisations and services via grant funding – for example, the Young Lives Foundation and the Independent Visitor service. Members expressed concern that budget pressures may force the KCC to reduce its financial support, and sought reassurance on this point.

(4). RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the issues which arose at the recent meeting with care leavers, and the actions being put in place to take them forward, be noted;
- (b) the next meeting between the Board and the same group of care leavers, to be held in July 2008, be planned as a daytime rather than an evening meeting, in the school holidays, but the young people be consulted to see if this arrangement also suited them; and
- (c) the second Corporate Parenting event, to which all KCC Members would be invited, be planned for June 2008, so the guidance still awaited from the National Children's Bureau (currently expected at the end of March) could be used in preparing its content. The event would serve to keep all Members up to date with their role as Corporate Parents and also highlight the work of the Children's Champions Board in equipping Members to fulfil this vital role.

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To: Children's Champion Board: 21 May 2008

From: Marilyn Hodges, CFE Director Strategy, Policy and Performance and Bill Anderson, CFE Director Children's Social Services

**Subject:** Update on actions identified from the meeting with Looked After Children and Care Leavers on 23/01/2008

## Summary

The report provides an update on the issues and actions raised from two meetings with Kent County Council's (KCC) Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers and County Council Members from KCC's Children's Champion Board (CCB). The first meeting took place on the evening of 23 January 2008, at Session's House and involved members of KCC's CCB who met with a group of Looked After Children and Care Leavers supported by Upfront and 16plus. A summary of the event with key actions identified was presented in a report to the CCB on 12 March 2008. The second meeting took place on 13 February 2008, which involved Paul Carter and Keith Ferrin, who met with a group of Care Leavers supported by Upfront and 16plus.

**Requested Outcomes:** CCB are asked note the progress that is being made with respect to each of the actions outlined under section 1 of the report.

### 1. Update on issues raised and actions undertaken

A brief summary of each of the issues raised and discussed at the CCB meeting and the meeting with Paul Carter and Keith Ferrin is outlined below.

**Overnight stays at friends houses** – some of the young people highlighted that this is still an issue even though policy and guidance on this was made more flexible in 2004 to reflect national guidance (i.e. LAC (2004) 4).

"It's intrusive to have friends police checked if you want to go and sleep over at theirs."

Action – Paul Brightwell to liaise with KCC fostering service etc to ensure that all foster carers are aware of KCC Children Family Health and Education directorate's (CFHE) guidance on delegation of consents for overnight stays.

#### Update:

- **The County Manager of KCC Fostering Service has been made aware of this issue and asked to remind her staff and foster carers and fostering Social Workers about the delegation of consents for overnight stays and school trips.**

**Foster Carers boundaries** – some of the young people complained that their foster carer were setting too strict curfews on when they should be back at home in the evenings. It was agreed by all that this should be an area open to negotiation between the young person, their parents and their Foster Carer.

"If it's a school night you should do your homework first – school comes first. Carers should be more flexible - weekends should be later."

Actions – Paul Brightwell to raise with fostering service to ensure that the placement plan meeting (as part of the placement information record) includes an age appropriate discussion on this issue. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to also be informed of this issue and to ensure that they ask to see the placement plan.

**Update:**

- **The County Manager of KCC CFHE Fostering Service has been made aware of this issue and asked to take forward the proposal to include a discussion of this issue in the placement plan meeting, which is chaired by Fostering Social Workers.**
- **IROs have also been asked to ensure that they check that this issue has been covered at the child/young person's LAC review meeting.**

**LAC Reviews and IRO role** – The young people did not always feel able to raise issues they wanted to at their LAC review meeting, especially any criticisms about their foster carer/placement. The young people wanted more opportunities to be able to contact their IRO prior to the day of their review meeting.

“I can't talk about my foster carers at the review because they are sitting there and it would be difficult to ask them to leave.”

“I went to my brother's review when his placement broke down. I advocated for him but the foster carers don't like you to be there, saying what they should/shouldn't do. You should be able to choose an advocate rather than have one (IRO) imposed.”

“I would like to be able to chair my own review meeting with the IRO just helping me.”  
[young person over 16yrs]

Actions – Regular meetings between IROs and LAC have already been arranged via Upfront (KCC's advocacy service for LAC). IRO invitation cards (to be implemented from February 2008) now include each IROs contact details with an invite to contact them. IRO service to explore with young people and Family Group Conferencing Service, how young people (wanting to) can be supported in chairing their LAC review. Issue to also be raised at SE regional IRO network group.

**Update:**

- **Regular meetings between IROs and young people are continuing to take place.**
- **The IRO invitation cards and leaflets have been implemented and include IRO contact details.**
- **The IRO service development plan for 2008/09 includes a focus on how to enable young people to be assisted by the IRO in chairing their own LAC review meetings. Work on this will be undertaken later in the year.**

**Housing** - this is an area that is seen as being extremely important to young people - especially Care Leavers and LAC aged 16 years plus, despite the work that has been undertaken in this area since the issue was last realised by young people (e.g. see KCC's Children and Young Person Plan and LAC position statement, priority 20).

“I need to feel safe and have choice. I was almost sent to a B&B at 16 but I refused.”  
[young person now aged 20]

“At 21 support ends but what if you lose your job soon after, get into difficulty when still settling or you lose your home?”

Paul Carter has asked that an exploration be given to the development of more foyer projects and that he will ask that an item on 'housing strategy for care leavers/young people' is placed on the agenda when he meets with the district councils.

Actions -

Paul Carter to take forward item on housing strategy for Care Leavers/young people with district councils

An Issues Paper on housing for Care Leavers/young people to be presented to Kent's Trust Board (KTB).

**Update:**

- **An issues paper will be produced by Mick McCarthy (16plus Manager) and Paul Brightwell (Policy and Performance Manager) for KTB/LAC Strategy Group, later in 2008/09.**
- **Paul Carter is organising a half session with Kent Leaders (District Councils) to discuss the housing strategy, which will include a focus on the needs of Care Leavers. This is expected to take place in late summer.**

**Benefits/travel** – All of the young people were either experiencing financial difficulty or worried that they would be once they left foster care – especially after the age of 18.

"I was told I could shop on £10 per week. I claim Housing benefit and must pay two thirds of my accommodation. I have £60 a week left to live on – that's everything."

"You can't eat healthily – as Government advises – on what you get. LAC should get a vegetable and fruit voucher like young mums, to help eat healthily."

"There should be an officer who is specialist in Benefits."

"The benefits agency are not as responsive to young people as 16plus are."

Actions – Kent's pledge includes a commitment for ongoing financial support to care leavers (up to 21) with council tax and lost housing benefit due to being in Further Education or employment. Further work to be undertaken with 16plus – including issue of access to benefits advice and more support on promoting healthy eating.

**Update:**

- **16plus have been notified of issues raised by young people and asked to review how benefits advice is provided to young people living independently, or in the process of leaving care.**
- **Work has not yet been undertaken to look at the issue of promoting healthy eating – including the issue of how vegetable vouchers could be issued to Care Leavers. Work on this will be undertaken later in 2008/09.**

**Social Workers** – Aside from the view of one young person who didn't want a Social Worker at all, the young people valued having a Social Worker but wanted more opportunities to be able to have time with them.

"Need more Social Workers at weekends, especially when there is a crisis. Some problems can't wait until Monday."

"You may need a Social Worker for support beyond age 21."

Actions – the importance of this issue and the importance of access to help and support is recognised. Kent’s pledge already includes a commitment for all LAC to have a named Social Worker, IRO and LAC Nurse – with over £1m of additional funding on top of KCC’s Care Matters Grant allocation. Access to their SWs at weekends will be explored with CFHE’s Children’s Social Services Section – although this is not a straightforward issue given that young people want contact with someone that they already know.

**Short-break care (respite)** – This issue was also raised by young people in their pledge DVD ‘All about us’, and focuses on the importance of ensuring ways that LAC can remain in their foster home if their carer is away on respite or being able to have a choice in who their respite carers are.

“I want to go to people I know – not strangers. There’s no choice.”

Actions – work on this issue is already being undertaken by KCC Fostering Service in response to the issues raised by young people in their DVD ‘All about us’ (see appendix 3).

**Confidentiality** – the young people focussed on the importance of confidentiality within schools. There were mixed views between them about whether teachers should be told whether a child is looked after.

“School doesn’t need to know you are LAC – it’s irrelevant.” (2 young people currently at school)

“You get upset if someone mentions mum, so I think they should know.”

“Ok, it’s different for everyone. It needs careful treatment to do the right thing for each person.”

“My school found out and I had lots of nosey and rude questions and was bullied.”

Actions – Schools, SWs, Foster Carers and IROs have already been made aware of this issue – although a further memo will be sent out reminding all of the importance of this issue for LAC.

**Update:**

- **A memo from Graham Badman will be sent to all schools, foster carers and IROs reminding them of the importance of respecting LAC’s confidentiality.**

**Computers/Internet** – The young people raised the importance of having their own computer and internet access and were very pleased to be told that this commitment is already included in Kent’s pledge (see appendix 2).

**Difficulties getting passports and driving licenses** – The issue of passports has been raised previously by young people (see pledge DVD ‘The Big Issue’) and is included as a commitment in Kent’s pledge (appendix 2).

Action - The issue of driving licenses is a new issue to us and will be explored with 16plus to see how this issue can be resolved.

**Update:**

- **16plus have confirmed that they do support young people to apply for a driving license and driving lessons when this is needed as part of employment and when this is helpful in providing young people with a form of identification.**
- **16plus also run a motorbike course where the young people have their motorbike licenses paid for and they are entered for a test as part of the course. The course is very popular with young people.**

***More Youth Workers*** – the issue raised by the young people is similar to that of SWs – they want more of them/youth worker time and asked that this issue be looked at by 16plus.

Action – 16plus Service and Youth Service will be asked to look at this issue and respond to the young people's request.

**Update:**

- **16plus (Sue Clifton and Mick McCarthy) are to meet with John Turner (Assistant Head of the Youth Service) in May 2008 to discuss the current working relationships between 16plus and the Youth Service – and to seek additional Youth Worker time.**
- **16plus have also been asked to consider undertaking a survey of young people's views of the support they receive – including their views on the importance of Youth Workers and Social Workers, in order to establish more fully young people's views on this issue.**

***Journey into care*** – One young person felt that his journey into care was not the right thing for him and that he shouldn't have been in care but allowed to have remained at home. Another young person said that she had been told that she and her brother would remain in the same placement – but that he had since been moved to a different placement at short notice and that she only gets to see him once a month.

Action - In both cases, the young people (with support from their youth workers attending the meeting) were invited to contact Paul Brightwell, who then could look into their personal issues in more depth.

**Update:**

- **Neither of the young people have chosen to take up the offer from Paul Brightwell. Given the time that has elapsed since the meeting it is unlikely that they will take up this offer – although a reminder of this offer has been given to Upfront and 16plus should the young people wish to at a later date.**

***Transport*** – At the meeting on 13 February 2008, Paul Carter informed the young people that he is exploring whether Kent's Freedom Pass can be made available to Looked After Children and Care Leavers beyond their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday up to at least 18 years and ideally up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

**Update:**

- **It has been agreed by KCC Cabinet that the freedom pass will be extended to LAC and Care Leavers aged 16 to 21 years in the areas in Kent that it is available and in other areas as the scheme is extended.**

2. Next Steps

A Corporate Parenting workshop for elected members is taking place on 6 June 2008, which will involve young people from Kent's 16plus service in co-hosting the event and contributing to the workshop agenda.

Following on from the workshop a further awayday event for CCB members and scrutiny panel members to focus on their targeted corporate parenting roles and responsibilities - to take place in September 2008 is recommended.

There is a need to arrange a follow-up meeting between July and September to provide update on progress in addressing issues raised by children and young people on 23 January and 13 February 2008.

Paul Brightwell  
Policy and Performance Manager – Looked After Children/Leaving Care  
CFE, Strategy, Policy and Performance Section  
Sessions House, Maidstone, Kent

Tel: 01622 694308

[Paul.Brightwell@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.Brightwell@kent.gov.uk)

8 May 2008



## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS BOARD

CORPORATE PARENTING FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN –  
TRAINING FOR KCC ELECTED MEMBERS

6 June 2008 – Darent Room, Sessions House

- 12:00 Refreshments and buffet lunch
- 12:30 Introduction  
(A CFHE Director and a young person – tbc)
- 12:45 NCB Setting the scene questionnaire
- 13:00 Kent's Looked After Children – an overview  
(John Mitchell, Joint Commissioning Officer)
- 13:25 Corporate Parenting – responsibilities of KCC Elected Members  
(Paul Brightwell, Policy and Performance Manager LAC)
- 13:55 The role of the Children's Champions Board  
(Mrs Ann Allen, Chair of Children's Champions Board)
- 14:10 Tea/Coffee Break (*Elected Members to revisit answers to setting  
the scene questionnaire during break*)
- 14:25 Answers to NCB setting the scene questionnaire
- 14:35 Young people's experience of being looked after and leaving care  
(facilitated by 16 plus) – including showing of two DVDs  
produced by children and young people.
- 15:00 Questions/discussion
- 15:20 Kent's Pledge to children and young people in and leaving care  
(CFHE SMT Director – tbc)
- 15:50 Questions
- 16:00 Closing comments (CFHE Director and young person)
- 16:30 Close

By: Marilyn Hodges, Director Strategy, Policy & Performance

To: Children's Champions Board - 21 May 2008

Subject: PARENTAL ALCOHOL MISUSE AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN IN KENT

Classification: Unrestricted

File Ref:

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Summary: This report provides a first overview of current information available regarding parental alcohol misuse and its impact on children in Kent

FOR INFORMATION

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## Introduction

1. (1) In March 2008 a select committee report in relation to alcohol abuse in Kent was published. The committee examined evidence regarding the extent of alcohol abuse in Kent and the current level of services, programmes and initiatives available within Kent.

(2) The report made a number of key recommendations to Kent County Council and, following this, the Champions Board asked for a report in relation to these issues in respect of children of alcohol misusing parents which had been highlighted in Recommendation 9 of the report.

(3) 'The Committee urges that KCC offers immediate intervention to support those with urgent needs, such as children mistreated by alcoholic parents, young carers of misusers and misusers suffering from alcohol withdrawal crisis. If during assessment, a parent is in need of alcohol treatment, KCC Social Services should ensure that support is provided to ascertain that the children are properly cared for.'

(4) This report provides a first review of the current information available and looks at research regarding the impact of parental alcohol misuse upon children. It looks at what is known of the extent of the issue in Kent and the current services and initiatives that are either in place or are planned.

## Research Information

2. (1) Many people drink without negative consequences to themselves or others including their children. However, in families where alcohol misuse is an issue, there can be far reaching consequences for the children involved. Studies (i) suggest that problematic alcohol misuse by a parent must significantly affect the quality of their parenting. Parents can become emotionally unavailable, inconsistent and unpredictable. The conflict and disharmony often associated with problematic alcohol consumption, rather

than the drinking itself, often brings adverse consequences. There is a strong association between alcohol misuse and violence in the home.

(2) Children of problem drinking families have higher levels of a range of problems than children of non problem drinkers which can include:

- Anti social behaviours including aggressive behaviours towards others, hyperactivity and other forms of conduct disorder
- Emotional problems including a wide range of psychosomatic problems including asthma, bed wetting, negative attitudes towards their parents and themselves, high levels of self blame, withdrawal and depression
- School based problems including learning difficulties, reading retardation, loss of concentration, poor performance, aggression and truancy
- Caring responsibilities. Children may have to take on responsibilities for caring for a parent or siblings and running a household. This can impact on their education, peer relationships and social lives.

### **The Extent of the Problem**

3. (1) The numbers of children affected by parental alcohol misuse is not conclusively established either nationally or in Kent. In part this is because the problem often remains largely hidden, with children and parents not in touch with services until the problem has escalated. A recent study (ii) suggested that there are approximately 1,000,000 parents who are alcohol dependent and that this impacts on approximately 1,300,000 children.

(2) Nationally it is also estimated that for 25-33% of children subject to Child Protection Plans, parental alcohol misuse plays a part (iii). In Kent no specific data is able to be collected to identify the numbers of children who are looked after or subject to a Child Protection or Child In Need Plan where parental alcohol misuse is a factor. However, manual counts and samples of caseloads confirm that the proportion where this is an issue of concern can be as high as 50%. It is notable in this regard that Children and Families teams were the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest referrers to the EK Substance Misuse team in 2006-2007, although this only amounted to 49 cases.

(3) Provision for young carers is provided through a variety of voluntary organisations. They also do not keep specific data on the numbers of their children where alcohol misuse is a factor but anecdotally they report that children and young people who care for a parent who misuses alcohol may experience the stigma of caring as well as that of the alcohol abuse itself and therefore this caring may be more "hidden" than other types of young carer activity. Young people who care for a parent in these circumstances may find it difficult to access information and support to make informed choices about their own alcohol use and as a result could be at risk of developing misuse behaviours themselves.

### **Service Provision**

4. The seriousness and extent of the problem is however recognised in a number of projects and initiatives that are currently in place throughout Kent:

- KSCB provides multi agency training to raise awareness and improve responses to parental alcohol misuse
- The substance misusing parents project in Thanet and Dover fast tracks substance misusing parents – drugs and alcohol – into treatment and ensure joint work between Children and Families teams and the drug and alcohol service. They worked with 47 families in 2007/8, 20 of whom identified alcohol as their primary drug.
- The Sunlight Project in Thanet, Canterbury, Dover and Swale provides group work for children 7-13 whose parents abuse drugs and/or alcohol. It aims to build resilience and offer a safe place to learn about substance misuse, identify support networks and coping strategies, develop new skills and have fun. It helps to break down the stigma and fear so many of these children feel. In 2006/7 the project worked with 247 children
- A specialist health visitor working across Kent to provide consultation and support to midwives and health visitors working with families where there is substance misusing parents
- The Windmill Clinic in Medway, Swale and Dartford which develops care pathways and treatment for pregnant substance misusing women.

## **Future Plans**

5. As this survey suggests, however, although good practice exists there is currently a lack of joined up provision, strategic ownership and direction within Kent on this issue. In recognition of this a Hidden Harm working group has been formed under the chairpersonship of Angela Slaven, the Director of Youth offending and substance Misuse. It plans to involve wide range of agencies to work together to:

- Improve outcomes for children of substance misusing parents and the parents
- Develop a multi agency hidden harm strategy for children's services and adult drug and alcohol treatment services through a needs assessment. Key to this approach will be:
  - a review of best practice from national research
  - a mapping exercise of service provision and funding
  - a development of responses based on resilience and reduction of harm
  - an identification of resources and systems to capture need
  - a review of multi agency arrangements and protocols aimed at improving outcomes for children of substance misusing parents
  - ensure the specific needs of young people who take on caring responsibilities for alcohol misusing parents are identified
  - a development of mainstream services as well as services in voluntary sector

- develop the sharing of good practice between projects focused on supporting the children of substance misusing parents and those supporting young carers
- an assurance that drug and alcohol services monitor levels of parental use and have appropriate policies and procedures in place
- the development of a Children and Families process for children of substance misusing parents through universal or adult treatment services.

## Conclusion

6. This report provides a first review of the issues relating to children of parents who misuse alcohol in Kent. It highlights a number of initiatives and projects currently developed but, most importantly, identifies the setting up of the new Hidden Harm group as potentially a major way forward to improve outcomes for this group of children through strategic developments.

## Recommendations

7. Members of the Children's Champions Board are asked to consider whether, in view of their interest in this issue, they commission an updated report on the work of the Hidden Harm group in 12 months to consider the progress made.

Officer Name	Kathryn Lambourn
Title	Safeguarding, Policy & Performance Manager
Contact telephone number	01622 694852
E-mail address	kathryn.lambourn@kent.gov.uk

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### *Background Documents:*

- (1) Alcohol Concern Keeping it in The Family. 2008
- (2) Hidden Harm Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users
- (3) Suffer the Children Adult Children of Alcoholics. Priory Group 2006

### *Other Useful Information:*

None

By: Marilyn Hodges, Director Strategy, Policy & Performance

To: Children's Champions Board – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008

Subject: KENT CHILDREN'S TRUST (KCT) ARRANGEMENTS

Classification: Unrestricted

File Ref:

Summary: This paper provides a progress report on the development of children's trust arrangements in Kent with a particular focus on the introduction of Local Children's Services Partnerships.

## FOR INFORMATION

### Introduction

1. (1) The development of children's trust arrangements is part of a national programme of change to improve outcomes for children and young people in line with the Every Child Matters (ECM) framework and the priorities in the national Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures.

(2) Through the Children Act 2004 (section 10) the following services have a duty to co-operate to improve outcomes through effective children's trust arrangements:

- District Councils
- The Police Authority and Chief Officer
- The Probation Board
- The Youth Offending Team
- The Strategic Health Authority and PCTs
- The Learning and Skills Council and related service providers

(3) As the Children's Services Authority Kent County Council has a lead role to ensure that services comply with this duty and that arrangements for integrated planning and delivery are effective. Accountability for children's services rests with the Children's Services Authority and is secured through the Director of Children's Services, and the Lead Elected Member. Through the KCT governance framework this accountability is shared with members of the KCT.

(4) Following the launch of the national Children's Plan in December 2007 the DCSF has issued new statutory guidance on inter-agency co-operation through children's trust arrangements. This statutory guidance strengthens the framework for children's trusts by stressing the importance of robust partnership arrangements under the section 10 "duty to co-operate" and also the co-operation of "relevant partners" including schools. The DCSF is inviting views on the statutory guidance by 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007. The guidance can be viewed on web address.

## **Background**

2. The Children's Champion's Board report received on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007 set out the background to the development of children's trust arrangements.

## **Progress in Kent**

3. (1) The Kent Children's Trust (KCT) established in September 2006 meets quarterly to consider strategic issues regarding the development of children's services across Kent. Agendas, papers and minutes of KCT meetings can be viewed on: <http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenstrust.cfm>

(2) To support the effective operation of the KCT a partnership agreement has been developed which sets out terms of reference, meeting protocols and responsibilities of partner agencies. A KCT Executive Group has also been established.

## **Kent Children and Young People's Plan (KCYPP)**

4. The KCT is currently reviewing the Kent Children and Young People's Plan: Positive about our Future (CYPP) which is the single overarching plan for children's services in Kent. As part of this review the KCT have identified nine high level priorities:

- 4.1 To reduce the impact of poverty (generational and situational) on children's lives by tackling the underlying causes and mitigating the effects.
- 4.2 To draw on and improve resilience in C&YP to help them make informed and healthy/safe choices and develop coping strategies. To include a focus on C&YP with emotional and/or mental health problems.
- 4.3 To improve parenting by implementing every Parent Matters and developing more effective multi agency support and early intervention for families experiencing problems. To include:
  - taking action to increase fathers involvement in their children's upbringing.
  - reducing the incidence & impact of domestic violence and substance misuse on children and families.
  - improving the communication & interaction development of younger children.
- 4.4 To improve the quality and stability of housing provision for vulnerable C&YP through to early adulthood.
- 4.5 To improve the achievement and quality of life for young carers by implementing the Young Carers' Strategy.
- 4.6 To ensure more young people have things to do and safe places to go in their leisure time and improve outcomes for adolescents at risk to themselves and potentially others through, for example, implementation of the Integrated Youth Strategy.
- 4.7 To increase engagement and participation by young people in education, employment and society in order to prevent disaffection and improve security.

- 4.8 To take action to reduce the incidence and impact of bullying in schools and the community.
- 4.9 To improve leadership and collaboration at all levels.

All partners of the KCT are committed to supporting these priorities in service planning and delivery. These strategic priorities also provide a framework for the development of local children and young people's plans.

## **Local Children's Services Partnerships**

5. (1) The Kent Children's Trust (KCT) have agreed to introduce 23 Local Children's Services Partnerships (previously known as Local Children's Trusts) across Kent from September 2008. Building on best practice in District Consortia and clusters and learning from the pathfinders the local partnerships will strengthen integrated working to improve outcomes for local children, young people (CYP) and families. The Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) will be based on the geography of the existing school clusters and will increasingly draw together all public and voluntary services for CYP and families in that locality.

### **(2) Key elements of Local Children's Services Partnerships**

#### **2.1 Local Children and Young People's Plan**

Each LCSP will agree and deliver a LCYPP based on the Kent CYPP and focussed on the particular issues that local C&YP face. All localities have been asked to start work on a LCYPP in readiness for September 2008 and we have provided a range of multi agency data to support early planning. Local multi agency data can be viewed on:

[http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/kct\\_localdata.cfm](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/kct_localdata.cfm)

#### **2.2 Local Children's Services Partnership Board**

The local Board will lead the development of the partnership and work with existing partnership groups, for example Crime Disorder Reduction Partnerships. The Board will report to the Kent Children's Trust and be accountable for delivering the LCYPP and ensuring the new partnership arrangements and integrated working are effective.

#### **2.3 Local Children's Services Partnership Manager (LCSP Manager) and Teams**

Each local partnership will be managed by an LCSP Manager. These new posts will be introduced from September to lead the development of integrated working, to support the Partnership Board and to ensure outcomes are improved.

All staff currently part of the cluster teams will transfer to the new LCSP and further staff will be deployed as the LCSPs develop. There will also be much stronger links with professionals across partner agencies particularly as integrated processes for CAF, lead professional and Contact Point are implemented.

(3) **LCSP Pathfinderers**

Improving outcomes across the ECM framework is acknowledged to be a long term agenda. The introduction LCSPs in September is a significant milestone in Kent and forms part of a long term change programme to embed highly effective children's trust arrangements.

Three pathfinders are operating across Kent based on the geography of the school clusters in:

- Shepway urban and rural
- Tunbridge Wells, and
- Maidstone cluster 2.

An interim evaluation of pathfinders was presented to the KCT in July 2007. The purpose of the evaluation was to enable the sharing of knowledge, learning and experience from the pathfinder localities. A final evaluation of the pathfinders will be available in June 2008; this will inform the development of LCSPs across Kent.

## **Children's Health**

6. (1) The vision for Kent Children's Trust includes developing a radical partnership with Health. Both Kent Primary Care Trusts have entered into a formal agreement enabling commissioning of health services for children and young people to be carried out by a single, unified team. The team is co-located with KCC to enhance joint working.

(2) A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children has been produced in collaboration with the Public Health Unit and is informing the work of the team at all levels. The joint strategic needs assessment can be viewed on:  
[http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenhealth\\_policy.cfm](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenhealth_policy.cfm)

(3) There is already a significant increase in the levels of investment into children's health in Kent as a result of this close partnership working. Further work is underway at County, PCT and Local Children's Service Partnership level to ensure that health service specifications are gradually reviewed and amended as part of a rolling programme to ensure improved health outcomes for Kent children and young people.

## **Recommendations**

7. Members of the Children's Champions Board are asked to:

- (a) Note this progress report on the development of Kent children's trust arrangements.

*Officer Name: Joy Ackroyd*  
*Title: Trust Development Manager*  
*Contact telephone number: 01622 696031*  
*E-mail address: joy.ackroyd@kent.gov.uk*

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**Background Documents:**

- Kent Children's Trust Membership  
[http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/kct\\_membership.cfm](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/kct_membership.cfm)
- Children's Health: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment  
[http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenhealth\\_policy.cfm](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenhealth_policy.cfm)
- National Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures  
<http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenstrust.cfm>
- Children's Trust: Statutory guidance on inter-agency co-operation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families.  
[Statutory Guidance for Children's Trusts on the Duty to Cooperate](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1544)  
<<<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1544>>>

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