



AGENDA

CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS BOARD

Wednesday, 5 December 2007 at 2.00 pm
Swale 3, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

Ask for: **Theresa Grayell**
Telephone **01622 694277**

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the meeting.

Membership (8)

- Conservative (5): Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mrs V J Dagger, Mr D A Hirst,
Dr T R Robinson and Mr J D Simmonds
- Labour (2): Mr I T N Jones, DL and Mrs M Newell
- Liberal Democrat (1): Mr M J Vye (Vice-Chairman)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

A. BOARD BUSINESS

- A1 Substitutes
- A2 Declarations of Members' Interest relating to items on today's agenda
- A3 Minutes of Board Meetings held on (a) 23 May and (b) 26 September 2007
(Pages 1 - 20)
- A4 Dates of Future Meetings – to note that meetings of the Board will take place on
the following dates, all starting at 2.00 pm:-
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)
- A5 Chairman's Announcements

B. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- B1 Education Provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People (Pages
21 - 28)
- B2 Kent's Pledge for Children and Young People in Care (Pages 29 - 72)
- B3 Proposals for a Corporate Parenting Workshop (Pages 73 - 76)

B4 Updating the Board's Terms of Reference

C. UPDATES

Information Papers on these issues will be sent to Members separately

NB – Information items are not for consideration at the Meeting

C1 Looked After Children and Child Protection Statistics (Pages 77 - 78)

C2 School Attendance of Looked After Children (Pages 79 - 84)

C3 School Attendance of Looked After Children (Pages 85 - 90)

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)

Stuart Ballard
Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694002

Tuesday, 27 November 2007

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

CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's Champions Board held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 23 May 2007.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr M C Dance, Mrs M Newell and Mr M J Northey (substitute for Mrs V J Dagger).

OTHER MEMBER PRESENT: Dr T R Robinson (Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Brightwell, Policy and Performance Manager (Looked After Children), CFE, Mr J Mitchell, Joint Commissioning Officer, CFE, and Miss T A Grayell, Democratic Services Officer.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

6. Membership
(Additional Item)

The Democratic Services Officer announced that, since setting the agenda for this meeting, Mr M J Vye had joined the Board to fill the vacancy left by Mrs M E Featherstone. As this announcement had only very recently been made, the issue of the Vice Chairmanship of the Board had yet to be resolved.

7. Minutes
(Item A2 (a) and (b))

(1) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman. The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2006 are already approved and signed, and are included for reference only.

(2) There were no matters arising from the Minutes of 14 March 2007.

8. Chairman's Announcements
(Item A3)

Margaret Featherstone

Members expressed sadness at the great gap left by Margaret's death and the loss of her expertise to the work of the Board. It was agreed that a letter of condolence be sent to Margaret's family.

Press Release - Out of Area Placements

The Chairman reported a press release from 22 May about children in care being placed out of their home area. This had been issued following a visit to Kent by the Minister for Children, Young People and Families, Beverley Hughes MP, who had pledged her support to reducing the number of out of area placements. Discussion of this issue gave rise to

Members' concern about the funding of Foster Care placements, and Members asked to have a comparison of Kent's and national Foster Care rates paid to Foster Parents, and other payments available (for example, for special skills).

New start time for Board Meetings – 2.00 pm

Members decided that, as Board meetings no longer followed on from other morning meetings, as had been the case when the Board was first established, meetings could now start earlier. Accordingly, the start time of the Board meetings from September 2007 onwards would move forward to 2.00 pm.

9. Improving the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children *(Item B1 - Report by Director Commissioning Specialist Services)*

(1) Mr Mitchell introduced the report, which outlined work by the County Council and its partners to improve the educational achievement of children and young people in care. He highlighted the varying patterns of achievement across England which had been identified, and the reasons for these, where these had been possible to identify, and explained that national statistics from the DfES would add to this picture when these became available in the near future.

(2) Arising from the information in the report, and from Members' discussion of it, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The spread of LAC between schools in Kent was becoming more even, although there were still more in East Kent than in West.
- (b) Performance indicators which measured absence from school did not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences, and include absences which were not the fault of the child, for example when the child was awaiting a placement in school. The new Schools Admissions Code will help with this as it would empower local authorities to accommodate LAC in an appropriate school part way through the year, even if that school was officially full.
- (c) The average length of stay in care was now 47½ months, so children and young people were spending more of their school careers in care. If a child were to have a short term placement and then move, the authority would try as far as possible to keep them at the same school. Stability at school became even more important when their home life was disrupted and transient.
- (d) Many children and young people known to Social Services but not in care were also known to experience problems with achieving well at school. Being a LAC is not necessarily the reason for poor school performance as many already were performing badly when they became looked after, for example, due to an unsettled family situation. While concerned with raising standards for all children and young people, the County Council had a specific duty to promote the achievement of children who did become looked after.
- (e) Although the total number of LAC in Kent had reduced in recent years, those in care were more vulnerable than before.

- (f) The advent of the Freedom Pass, giving free travel to school for all young people under 16, would help children and young people access their chosen school and maintain a good attendance habit. In addition, the Care Matters green paper included a proposal to provide free home to school transport for looked after children.
- (g) The lack of settled family life need not necessarily mean a child or young person would perform poorly at school. Many unaccompanied minors do very well at school, as evidenced in local and national media in recent years.

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

10. Children's Trusts Update

(Item B2 - Presentation by Joy Ackroyd, Trust Development Manager)

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

(1) Ms Ackroyd updated Members on the ongoing development of Children's Trusts. Arising from her presentation, and in response to questions put by Members, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The establishment of Children's Trusts offered a good opportunity to address historic problems and identify ways to change.
- (b) Although Kent was not one of the 34 local authorities in the official pilot, there was still much good work going on in partnership initiatives and innovation with three local pilot pathfinder projects in Maidstone, Shepway and Tunbridge Wells. Pathfinder clusters were based on school clusters.
- (c) Progress on Children's Trusts had identified the need for strong local arrangements to underpin work at County level and the need to ensure that all necessary partners were engaged.
- (d) Much of the work related to pilot schemes was already going on around the County and data from existing activities was useful to feed into and inform the new initiatives. The new arrangements offered the opportunity to pull together existing work.
- (e) The new arrangements were undeniably complex but the gains from them could be huge.
- (f) Members' involvement in the development of Children's Trusts was vital and Members could be involved in a number of ways, including via Local Boards.
- (g) The involvement of parents and young people was also vital and this was a key theme to be addressed as the Children's Trusts arrangements moved forward.
- (h) The pilot pathfinder projects were making use of/would make use of the 'Mosaic' system of data analysis.
- (i) Work of the Children's Trusts related to that of the Children's Champions Board in that, although Children's Trusts were for all young people, those who would most benefit from them were those most vulnerable who needed the most support to lead good quality lives.

- (2) RESOLVED that:-
- (a) the content of the presentation and information given in response to questions be noted, with thanks; and
 - (b) a further update report be made to the Board in Autumn 2007, by when the evaluation of the pilot pathfinder projects will be available.

11. Corporate Parenting Update

(Item B3 - Joint Report by Directors of Children's Social Services and Strategy, Policy and Performance)

- (1) Mr Brightwell introduced the report and highlighted a few key points, as follows:-
- (a) Kent had been successful in reducing the number of LAC and increasing the number of adoptions to one of the highest rates in the UK. However, those children which remained in care were the hardest to place.
 - (b) The average length of time children spent in care in Kent had increased from just over 36 months in March 1999 to 47½ months in March 2006.
 - (c) The longer a child remained in the care of the County Council, the wider the range of services he or she would need to access and become involved in. This presented a challenge for service providers but also an opportunity to influence the child's life for the better over a longer period of time.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
- (a) information in the report and its appendices and given in response to questions be noted, with thanks;
 - (b) Kent's success in reducing the number of Looked After Children and increasing the number of adoptions to one of the highest rates in the UK be commended;
 - (c) KCC's guidance for Members on corporate parenting be updated following the publication of "Care Matters: Next Steps" (White Paper) and the publication of the NCB Corporate Parenting Materials; and
 - (d) a further workshop for Members take place in 2008 to raise awareness of the new changes.



Conditions for Change

National Policy Context

- Every Child Matters: Green Paper & The Next Steps - *outcomes for children*
- Children's Act 2004 - *duty to co-operate*
- National Service Framework for Children and Maternity Services - *joint commissioning*
- Care Matters - *Looked After Children*
- Choosing Health

Provide the conditions for a step change in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Partners for Change

Kent Children's Trust Board



Established September 2006

Partners for Change

KCC Partners



Kent Children's Trust

Kent Children's Trust:

Developing the CYPP as the strategic commissioning plan to improve outcomes for Children and Young People.

Local Children's Trust Pathfinders

Local Children's Trust Pathfinders:

A strategic multi agency partnership to jointly plan and commission local services and ensure integrated service delivery.

Partners for Change

Local Children's Trust Pathfinders



Shepway Urban & Rural, Maidstone 2 and
Tunbridge Wells

All pathfinders are asked to:

- Establish a LCT Pathfinder board
- Develop a shared understanding of context and priorities
- Agree a local CYPP
- Evaluate and share their experience

Partners for Change

How local should an LCT be?



Some of the issues:

- neighbourhood change
- complex data sets and resources
- GP practice based commissioners
- engage schools and children's centres
- work with local Voluntary and Community Services

NB. We are pathfinding. Final decisions about size have not been made.



What does the LCT Pathfinder Board look like?

C
O
R
E

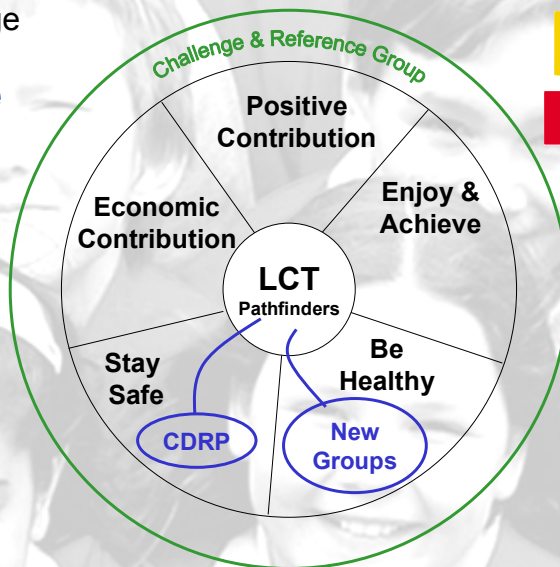
- Education - *'Largest Social Footprint'*
- Children's Social Services
- Health
- Police
- District Council Officers
- Voluntary Sector

Not just about meetings but integrated working arrangements



How will the LCT Pathfinders operate?

Schools are critical partners operating in each outcome area



LCT Pathfinders will need to work together and relate to a range of groups - for example CDRPs.



Data sources for pathfinders

- Mosaic analysis
- 18 high level outcome measures about the lives of children
- The children and young people of Kent

Children's Trust Communications

www.clusterweb.org.uk/Children/childrenstrust.cfm

This page is intentionally left blank

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's Champions Board held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday 26 September 2007.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mrs V J Dagger, Mrs M Newell, Dr T R Robinson and Mr M J Vye.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr K Arthur, Head of Children's Safeguards Service, CFE; Mrs K Lambourn, Policy and Performance Manager, Child Protection, CFE; and Miss T A Grayell, Democratic Services Officer.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

12. Membership

(Item A1)

The Chairman reported that Dr T R Robinson and Mr J D Simmonds had joined the Board in place of Mr M C Dance and Mr C T Wells.

13. Election of Vice-Chairman

(Item A3)

The Chairman proposed, and Mrs V J Dagger seconded, that Mr M J Vye be elected Vice-Chairman of the Board.

Agreed without a vote

14. Minutes

(Items A5(a) and (b))

(1) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2007 are correctly recorded and they be signed by the Chairman. The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2007 are already approved and signed, and are included for reference only.

(2) There were no matters arising.

15. Kent Multi-Agency Public Protection (MAPPA) Update

(Item B1 – Presentation by Detective Inspector Derek Cuff, Operations Manager, Public Protection Unit, Kent Police)

The slides used in this presentation are attached to these Minutes as Appendix 1.

(1) DI Cuff presented a series of slides which set out the history, purpose and process of the MAPPA system, including the categories and levels of risk under which offenders are listed, and how each level is handled.

(2) Arising from DI Cuff's presentation, and in response to questions raised by Members, the following points were highlighted:-

- (a) Kent is particularly vigorous at mapping violent offenders.
- (b) The Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR) includes more than those who are convicted of offences. Potentially dangerous individuals are also included.
- (c) Internet offending is a huge area of current concern. Kent has the UK's most sophisticated digital computer system which helps trace and identify internet offenders, but police forces in the UK still need to keep up with the fast-changing technology and offenders' knowledge of it.
- (d) Members expressed grave concern at there being no Government-set performance indicator for child protection work. It was suggested that the Board write to the Minister for Children and Young People, Beverley Hughes MP, to lobby for a performance indicator to be introduced.
- (e) Young offenders were also a growing problem for the police and Children's Social Services, as young offenders may not qualify for help/treatment until and unless they are convicted. While on remand, they have Looked After Child (LAC) status, but do not keep this once sentenced, unless they were LAC at the time of the offence. They are then classified as Children in Need, and Children's Social Services, together with the Youth Offender Service, work with them and put together a plan for the time of discharge. While in custody they are placed where services are best able to meet their needs, or where a place is available, and this is sometimes far from their families.
- (f) Board Members offered to help, in whatever way possible, with publicity for DI Cuff's team's child protection campaigns.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the excellent presentation be noted, with thanks; and
- (b) the Board writes to the Minister for Children and Young People to express its grave concern that no Government-set performance indicator for child protection work exists, and lobby for one to be introduced.

16. Children's Safeguards Unit Annual Report (for the 2005/2006 Academic Year)
(Item B2 – Report by Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance)

(1) Mr Arthur introduced the Annual Report and answered questions from Members. Points highlighted in the presentation and in discussion were as follows:-

- (a) Information from schools, regarding allegations against staff, and investigations, is gathered by the Unit and shared with Clusters via the Local Education Officer. Although anonymous, all information is still handled with great care and sensitivity and has a very limited circulation. It is necessary to gather such information to feed into the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB), and a designated officer takes on this responsibility. Local authorities also have a duty to provide the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) with annual data.
- (b) All Kent schools, including special and residential schools, now undertake retrospective Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on all staff employed

before 1991, as well as on all new appointments. Mr Arthur explained that he chairs the KSCB 'Safe Recruitment and Employment Sub Group' the membership of which also includes the previous speaker, DI Cuff, and Mrs Lambourn. This group is responsible for developing safe recruitment standards in all agencies that work with children on behalf of the KSCB.

- (c) Mr Arthur explained that an allegation of physical abuse can very easily arise from an incident in which a member of staff has had to physically restrain pupils involved in a fight. The intervention may well follow exactly the careful guidelines which are set down for staff, but an aggrieved pupil, whose perception of the incident was different, might tell their parents, who then complain directly to the police. The majority of cases, when investigated, are found to be unsubstantiated, as staff in most cases had acted appropriately to keep a situation safe. A way of reducing the number of parental complaints is for staff to contact parents and inform them of the incident when it happens and send home a copy of the incident report.

(2) Members shared officers' concerns about two issues:-

- (a) An increase in the number of recorded incidents of sexual behaviour by children against other children, whether these happen at home or in school. It is known from work in progress with other agencies that there are currently 52 children of school age on the Sex Offenders Register. The Kent Safeguarding Children Board will shortly be considering a report on the issue, which will set out the nature of the problem and what measures, including staff training on managing risk, are being put in place to address it. A difficulty around this issue is the need to distinguish between natural adolescent experimentation and inappropriate, threatening or coercive behaviour.
- (b) There is an ongoing problem in following up investigations on supply teachers against whom allegations may have been made in previous placements. Supply agencies do not have a disciplinary procedure and, as supply staff can move very easily from agency to agency, they are very difficult to trace. These concerns have been fed into the DCSF as a national response is required.

(3) RESOLVED that the report and the presentation be noted, with thanks, and the development of retrospective Criminal Records Bureau checking for all school staff, set out in paragraph (1)(b) above, be welcomed.

17. Kent Child Witness Service

(Item B3 – Report by Denzil Peach and Maureen Utting of the Kent Child Witness Service)

(1) Mr Peach and Mrs Utting introduced the Kent Child Witness Service (KCWS) and outlined its origins and role, and the framework within which it operates. They also showed a video which followed a young woman attending Court to give evidence. Arising from their presentation, and in response to questions from Members, the following points were highlighted:-

- (a) KCWS was established in 1997 by a partnership of Victim Support, the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service and Social Services, in response to an identified need to support children who need to attend Court proceedings to give evidence. These partners still serve together on KCWS's committee.

- (b) The service originally supported 100 children when it was established, but has grown since to help many more. Many attend open court, but 'special measures' (for example, giving evidence using a video link or from behind a screen) is increasing now. 750 children used the video link service to give evidence in 2006/2007.
- (c) The service works with young people aged 17 years and under, attending both Magistrates and Crown Courts. The service is totally impartial and works with prosecution and defence witnesses. The process followed is exactly the same for each.
- (d) The role of the KCWS, once a child has been referred to them by the Police, is to prepare that child to attend Court by visiting them at home and talking to them about the procedure, using literature appropriate to their age group and offering a pre-trial familiarisation visit to the Court premises.
- (e) There are very definite guidelines within which the service has to work, to avoid compromising the case and its own role and integrity:-
 - (i) when visiting a child at home, a volunteer cannot discuss the case or the child's experience;
 - (ii) the volunteer cannot coach the child in the evidence they will be giving;
 - (iii) volunteers have to have an understanding of the rules of evidence and be aware of what behaviour might contaminate or compromise that evidence;
 - (iv) a volunteer must not transport the child/family to court as this may leave the way open for suggestions that the case might have been discussed on the way;
 - (v) volunteers report back to KCWS on their visit to a child and specify what was covered in it. They stick closely to the set literature and standard procedures and approaches.
- (f) In visiting a child at home, KCWS volunteers have the opportunity to build a relationship with the family. The family is often more anxious about the Court appearance than the child.
- (g) All KCWS staff and volunteers are CRB checked. Volunteers who wish to work with the service must already be experienced Victim Support volunteers. Volunteers are given 7 days' core training, as a Community Services Volunteer or Witness Service Volunteer and those wishing to become KCWS staff receive a further 2 days' training arranged and delivered by Kent Police.
- (h) Courts are able to offer some flexibility over how a young person presents their evidence. A request for 'special measures' should be made 28 days in advance of the hearing date, although this can be challenged if it is thought unreasonable, and may not ultimately be granted by the judge or magistrates. Unfortunately, at present, giving evidence using a video link would mean the defendant could see the child, but giving evidence from behind a screen in the court room means the defendant could not see the child. The two parties are kept separate throughout the proceedings. Special measures would mean an

interpreter or British Sign Language signer can be arranged to assist a child if needed. A child with learning difficulties can have their caseworker present if both parties in the case agree.

(2) Members were most impressed with the care taken to support and accommodate a child through the Court process, the excellent work of the KCWS staff and volunteers, and the quality of the preparative literature. Members were also offered the opportunity to visit the Court to see the facilities available and arrangements made for child witnesses.

(3) RESOLVED that the excellent presentation, video and information given in response to questions be noted, with thanks, and Kent Child Witness Service staff and volunteers be commended on their excellent work.



Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

History of MAPPA

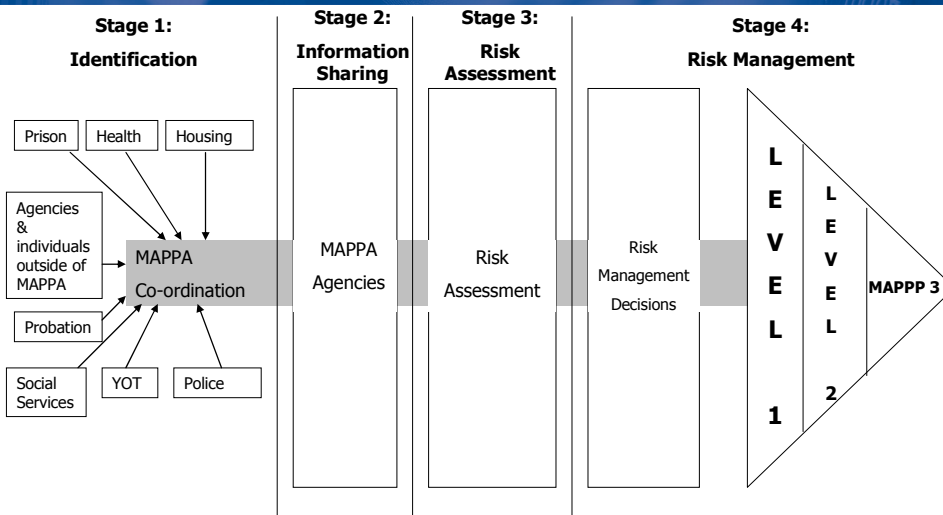
- **Sex Offenders Act 1997**
Registration of convicted Sex Offenders
- **Criminal Justice & Courts Services Act 2000**
Sections 67 and 68
MAPPA on Statutory Basis – Responsible Authority
Includes Violent Offenders sentenced to 12mths plus
- **Criminal Justice Act 2003**
Responsible Authority and duty to co-operate
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
- **ACPO Guidance on Protecting the Public: Managing Sex Offenders & Violent Offenders (2006)**

Purpose of MAPPA

- Identify who may pose a risk of harm
- Share relevant information about them
- Assess the nature and extent of that risk
- Find ways to manage that risk effectively, protecting victims and reducing further harm



The Four Core Stages of MAPPA



Categories of Offenders

MAPPA works on a clear categorisation process:-

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Registered Sex Offenders	Violent Offenders <i>or</i> other Sex Offenders who are on licence to the Probation Service	Other Offenders who have a previous conviction for an offence <i>and</i> who pose a risk of serious harm to the public



Levels of Management

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Single Agency Management	Risk Assessment Meetings	Multi-Agency Public Protection Meetings
An offender who poses a low to medium risk Level 1 – risk management is used when the risk posed by the offender can be managed by one agency without significantly involving other agencies	An offender who poses a medium to high risk Level 2 – risk management is used where the active involvement of more than one agency is required but where either the level of risk or the complexity is not so great as to require a referral to Level 3	One of the 'critical few' Level 3 – risk management is for those offenders who pose the highest risk of causing serious harm to the public and whose management is complex



Levels of Risk of Harm

- **Low:** no significant, current indicators of risk of harm (ROH) – **Level 1** registered sex offenders
- **Medium:** there are identifiable indicators of ROH. The offender has the potential to cause harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances e.g failure to take medication, loss of accommodation, relationship breakdown drug or alcohol misuse – **Level 1**
- **High:** there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious – **Level 2**
- **Very High:** there is an imminent risk of serious harm. The potential event is more likely than not to happen imminently and the impact would be serious – **Level 3**



Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR)



ViSOR is a national database accessible to all Police Forces in England and Wales and more recently Scotland and Northern Ireland. It provides up to date information on the names, addresses and description etc, of all registered sex offenders. It includes images, risk assessments and minutes of all MAPP meetings. It went live in Kent on 24th February 2005.



Issues

- Pro active management of sex offenders
- Intelligence – SIU Analysts
- Internet offending
- Missing Registered Sex Offenders
- Management of Potentially Dangerous Persons (PDPs)
- Growth of violent offenders
- Young offenders



- Mental Health
- Housing
- Approved Premises
- Media
- Disclosure



To: Children's Champions Board - 5 December 2007

From: Joanna Wainwright – Director, Commissioning (Specialist Services)

Subject: EDUCATION PROVISION FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING YOUNG PEOPLE

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report outlines the current position on access to education, employment and training for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People (age 14 – 19). It proposes a series of discussions with the Learning and Skills Council, Colleges of Further Education and other providers to further develop the range of provision for this vulnerable group in order to improve education outcomes.

Background

Context

1. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People continue to arrive in Kent (80 since January 2007). On arrival they become Looked After Children. As such Kent has a number of commitments (as set out in the LAC Pledge), responsibilities and duties towards them. These duties include a holistic assessment of their needs at Appledore and placement in suitable education, training or employment. Those under the age of 16 are introduced into the school system and given appropriate support across the full curriculum. However, the majority (86% of arrivals since January 2007) are over 16 and are placed in LSC funded provision in Colleges of Further Education (FE).

Current Provision in Further Education and emerging issues

2. (1) Of the young people attending FE (currently 52%) the majority are working towards Entry or Pre Entry level English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) as a pre requisite for all other studies. Although they eventually master the Speaking and Listening elements most struggle to achieve the Reading and Writing skills and the functional literacy required for vocational and academic programmes of study. The majority of the young people remaining on ESOL dedicated provision for two or even three years.

(2) Disaffection from ESOL provision is a significant feature due to the absence of progression and the impact of the asylum progress on mental health and well-being. Hence many UASCYP fail to complete their studies and become NEET. College ESOL places are at a premium with a number of constraints in terms of volume and entry points. One college only permits entry in September of each year while two others enable entry at any point subject to places. This means that many young people wait for a considerable period before being able to access a college place and so add to the number of UASYP who are NEET (currently 30.7%). Destinations (in terms of employment, education and training) is included as Appendix 1.

(3) Of those young people who have arrived since 1st January 2007, 45% declare that they have had two years or less of education in their own country. It is therefore felt that ESOL may not meet the needs of all young people nor is it likely to achieve the retention, achievement or success rates required by the LSC.

(4) FE colleges in Kent that provide for this client group see ESOL as the major route and entry point for these young people. However, though the colleges make every effort to stimulate the learning of young people and vary the means by which they cover the curriculum, there is clear evidence of high drop out and little progression. This indicates that current provision is not meeting the needs of the young people. (This information on drop out rates has been sought from FE colleges and we are awaiting a response.)

Impact of the New Asylum Model

3. Kent has UASCYP who are subject to procedures pre the New Asylum Model and those whose cases are managed with the New Asylum Model. Children and Young People in either system experience stress and trauma. Those within the New Asylum Model have a to complete a significant number of meetings and processes within the first 2 months of their arrival in the UK. In addition, those young people whose cases are dealt with under processes before New Asylum Model experience long term uncertainty in terms of the outcome of asylum process. This impacts significantly on their capacity to engage in assessment and education provision.

Informal Discussion with providers of Further Education since January 2007 re provision

4. The three colleges that provide ESOL courses for the majority of UASCYP are Canterbury College, West Kent College and Mid Kent College. At each of these settings the teaching staff make every effort to engage the young people by making the ESOL provision varied and stimulating. There is also an understanding and appreciation that the client group need to progress onto the full range of FE provision but that this requires successful achievement of ESOL Entry 3. Early discussion with West Kent College and Mid Kent College about language acquisition through Independent Living Skills provision as an alternative to ESOL has also met with agreement but this is still to be prioritised by the Colleges.

Issues arising from absence of education provision

5. (a) The economic and social consequences of many UASCYP being NEET and the impact this could have upon communities and community cohesion.
- (b) Current education and training provision for those aged 16+ may not meet the needs of many who will return to their home country
- (c) Resources within FE are focused on ESOL provision.
- (d) Impact on the mental health and well being of UASCYP through boredom and isolation

Proposed education priorities for 16+ UASCYP¹

6. (a) Develop English speaking and listening skills to enable them to function in the community.
- (b) Develop a range of independent living skills appropriate to living in Kent.
- (c) Develop a range of transferable skills that will enable them to progress and contribute to society either in the UK or if returned at some time in the future to their home country.

The means to achieving these priorities differs for each individual but the inclusion of two or more of the options set out in Appendix 2 will address the needs of the majority:

Conclusion and next steps

7. (1) The current range of LSC funded education provision for UASYP (aged 16 – 19) is not achieving the best possible outcomes for the current cohort of UASYP. It is proposed that KCC CFE discuss the way forward with partner agencies through the following forum:

- (a) UASYP Assessment Service 14-19 Advisory Group (includes Connexions)
- (b) LSC Quality and Curriculum meeting with Colleges of Further Education
- (c) LSC FE Partnership Managers meeting

(2) KCC and the LSC would work in partnership to ensure and promote development for an appropriate range of provision.

Recommendation

8. Children's Champions Board is asked:

- (a) to note the significant number of UASCYP who are NEET,
- (b) to be aware of discussions with the Learning and Skills Council, Colleges of Further Education, Key Training Services and other providers in order to secure the better outcomes for this vulnerable group and KCC commitments in the LAC Pledge.

Jenny Robson
Head of Service, Minority Communities Achievement Service
Tel: 01622 694059
Jenny.robson@kent.gov.uk

Karen Goodman,

1. As drawn from outcomes of discussions with young people by Education, Social Workers and Care Staff

Head of Operations, Services to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Tel: 01622 694886
karen.goodman@kent.gov.uk

Background documents: None

UASYP in Kent – June 2007
Destinations: Employment, Education or Training

KCC Resident in Kent	Volume	% of Total
NEET	80	30.7
Missing	5	1.9
School	46	17.6
College ESOL	86	33.0
College FE	32	12.3
University	1	0.4
Work	9	3.4
Other	2	0.8
Total	261	100.0

KCC Resident outside Kent	Volume	% of Total
NEET	19	35.8
School	8	15.1
College FE	21	39.6
University	2	3.8
Work	2	3.8
Other	1	1.9
Total	53	100

All U19 KCC UASYP	Total	% of Total
NEET	99	31.5
Missing	5	1.6
School	54	17.2
College ESOL	86	27.4
College FE	53	16.9
University	3	1.0
Work	11	3.5
Other	3	1.0
Total	314	100.0

31.7.07

Source of data: manual translation of data provided by individual Social Workers.

Possible solutions in terms of the development of new provision based upon the profile of the current UASYP population in Kent:

A. Entry to Employment (funded by LSC via an FE College) delivered at Appledore to formalise and certificate skills prior to Independent Living and so provide structure to preparation for independent living and language acquisition during reception period at Appledore. An alternative to this approach would be to attend provision as soon as they move into the community to consolidate and build upon what they have gained at Appledore.

LEADING TO:

A. ASDAN Award programme - Customised and appropriate ASDAN Award programme (LSC funded) delivered outside a formal education environment. ASDAN comprises a series of “Challenges” that build credits towards a full certificate. The challenges can be customised to utilise and develop a range of transferable skills alongside language acquisition.

OR:

B. Skills for Working Life through an FE College - Customised / dedicated Entry Level to provide language acquisition + development of transferable skills. “Skills for Working Life” is a direct progression from Independent Living Skills. It offers a range of employment and vocationally focused activities and is available at Entry 2 and Entry 3. It can provide an introduction to further vocational education or employment.

OR:

C. Customised E2E (Entry to Employment) delivered by - KCC Kent Enterprise for Youth (KEY) or other E2E provider (LSC funded) Customised / dedicated Entry to Employment (E2E) to provide language acquisition + development of transferable skills. E2E is a short course of around 15 weeks that seeks to engage a young person in employment related skills. It can provide an introduction to employment or further education.

OR:

D. Work Experience - Identify and utilise opportunities for those who have had no previous education experience and for whom formal education is not a priority but may motivate or inspire for the future. This will provide language acquisition + development of transferable skills. This would need the establishment of a formalised scheme and lead organisation.

OR:

E. FE - ‘Fast Track’ ESOL - Tuition and accreditation (i.e. intensive 10 to 15 weeks) for those who have well developed spoken and written English Language skills and who are ready and able to access academic / vocational / further education.

AND (FOR ALL 16+ UASYP):

- F.** Extra Curricula activity – Kent Youth & Community and the Voluntary sector to provide dedicated activities and locations across Kent where UASYP can meet to maintain cultural links and build and develop links with the indigenous youth groups and be a focus for personal development.

Note:

1. Language Acquisition

The theme running through each of the above is “Language Acquisition” (with the focus on Speaking, Listening and possibly word recognition) and the development of Transferable Skills. If the young people can acquire language skills at the same time as a range of transferable skills they will make best use of their time and optimise scarce local resources to best effect.

In order to support identification of the most appropriate route the Education Assessment, whilst maintaining its broad approach, would state which of the proposed offer is(are) the most appropriate route(s) for each particular individual before the first LAC review.

2. Planning Arrangements for individual young people:

- Planning and providing the right location and volume for each of the education / training and extra curricula routes can only be done in full Partnership with all including the LSC, KCC Youth & Community and the Voluntary sector alongside an aligned accommodation strategy for the young people.
- At present, when a young person moves from Appledore the Transition Teams (Social Services) identify available accommodation and, once placed, Staff from the Education Assessment Service try to access an appropriate education placement in that locality.

There are currently 313 UASYP who are U19 (1st September 2007) and residing in Kent. A planning volume of around 200 places distributed across the above provision would enable the present cohort to be accommodated allowing for some U16 in compulsory education and others on a range of post 16 provision.

By: Graham Badman, Managing Director – Children, Families and Education

To: Children’s Champions Board - 5 December 2007

Subject: Kent’s Pledge for Children and Young People in Care

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The report describes the work that has been undertaken to develop Kent’s Pledge for children and young people in and leaving care, which has been undertaken by a multi- agency/professional working group on behalf of the Looked After Children (LAC) Review Steering group, chaired by Marilyn Hodges.

Introduction

1. (1) Kent’s Pledge for children and young people in and leaving care is attached as Appendix 1 and the range of other issues identified from the LAC review are described at Appendix 2.

(2) Section 2 of the report focuses on:

- (a) The purpose of a pledge for children in care
- (b) A description of Kent County Council’s (KCC’s) Pledge
- (c) Key objectives/outcomes and how each commitment contributes to these
- (d) How the pledge will be evaluated

(3) Section 3 provides a detailed account of the work undertaken to develop the pledge, including the views of children and young people who were consulted throughout its development.

(4) Section 4 focuses on work that has been undertaken to estimate the cost of implementing the pledge and how this is to be funded.

(5) The appendices presented with the report are:

Appendix 1: KCC’s Pledge for Children in Care

Appendix 2: Summary of LAC Review

Appendix 3: Pledge source/outcome table

Appendix 4: Key factors that have influenced the pledge

Appendix 5: KCC Children, Families and Education’s (CFE’s) response to the pledge DVDs

Appendix 6: Work undertaken to estimate cost of implementing the pledge

The Role and Purpose of a Pledge

Purpose

2. (1) The primary purpose of a pledge for children and young people in care is to:
- (a) Inform children and young people what they can expect in terms of services and support from their corporate parent (i.e. the local authority responsible for their care)
 - (b) Encourage best practice with respect to promoting and safeguarding children/young people's welfare
 - (c) Promote better outcomes for children and young people in and leaving care¹
 - (d) Close the widening gap between children in care and their peers. The report titled 'Close the Gap for Children in Care (NCH, 2005) challenged government to make a pledge to address the under-achievement of children in care with the aim that the growing inequalities they face would be closed by 2020).
- (2) Care Matters highlights a number of issues that a pledge should take into account (see Care Matters, White Paper, page 22, paragraph 1.25 and page 23):
- (a) The basic statutory requirements with which local authorities should already be complying;
 - (b) Key opportunities and benefits offered to children in care locally;
 - (c) Support to engage in positive activities as much as possible;
 - (d) Children and young people should be consulted and involved in developing the pledge, including those with special needs and disabled children, and;
 - (e) The pledge should be regularly reviewed and included in the local Children and Young Person's Plan (CYPP).
- (3) The White Paper (see page 22) also highlights a list of basic elements that a pledge should cover:
- A commitment to involve children in decisions which affect them and to take account of their wishes and expressed feelings about the services they receive
 - Qualified social workers for every child in care with clear arrangements in place for the child in care to contact his/her social worker as necessary
 - Effective assessment of individual needs and an up to date care plan based on those needs
 - A placement with carers who can meet needs

¹ Children and young people leaving care are especially vulnerable to experience poor outcomes and fail to achieve their full potential. They are: 5 times less likely to get 5 good GCSE's; 7 times more likely to be excluded; 6 times more likely to truant; 4 times more likely to suffer from mental health problems; 3 times more likely to become pregnant teenagers; 3 times more likely to be cautioned or convicted of an offence (a quarter of adult prisoners have spent time in care); Have a 10% chance of having 10 placements by the age of 11 years; Have a 50% chance of leaving school with no qualifications; Only 6% of young people in the care system continue into HE (compared with 39% of the general school leaver population)

- Contact with siblings and birth parents in line with their care plan
- Regular reviews in which children will be enabled to participate meaningfully (particularly for disabled children with communication difficulties)
- Services which recognise the diverse ethnic and cultural needs of the children
- Access to advocacy services if children have a complaint
- An Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to ensure children's rights are upheld
- Access to high quality free early years provision at age 3 and 4
- A place in a good school
- A designated teacher in school to ensure high quality support in school
- Details of support available to participate in positive leisure time activities
- Support to reduce absence from school
- Help to catch up with school work if they fall behind
- Regular assessments of their health (physical and emotional)
- Details of support available when they move on from care
- The support young people can expect when entering further and higher education
- How the local authority will support young people seeking employment, including employment with training

Description of Kent's Pledge

3. (1) Kent's pledge for children and young people in care are in two parts, connected together by an overarching statement of purpose:

- (a) A pledge for children and young people in care of Kent County Council
- (b) A pledge for children and young people in care placed in Kent by another local authority (OLA LAC)

(2) A combined pledge was not developed for the following reasons:

- (a) It would be overly confusing for children and young people to follow – especially if some of the promises given remained dependant on whether the were looked after by KCC
- (b) An increased risk of making commitments that could not be kept by KCC for some children and young people,
- (c) It would require making commitments for OLA LAC that KCC is not resourced to provide nor has legal authority to undertake, or
- (d) It would reduce the number of commitments made in the pledge so that it was equally applicable to all and consequently reduce its effective to promote better outcomes for this group of children/young people.

(3) Consideration was also given to developing a pledge in three parts (i.e. pledge for KCC citizen LAC; Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), and OLA LAC). Some of the commitments made in the pledge with respect to UASC are not grant reclaimable. In addition, reference to parent's and family in some of the commitments has had to be qualified to take into account issues for UASC whose parent's whereabouts are unknown.

(4) The working group did not recommend this for the following reasons:

- (a) KCC would be criticized for highlighting inequalities between these two groups of children, whom KCC has equal corporate parenting responsibilities for.
- (b) KCC have already criticized government for doing this in the Home Office consultation paper, 'Promoting Better Outcomes and Planning for UASC' (i.e. Kent's response to the Home Office consultation).

(5) Within the model chosen for the pledge a number of commitments have been identified, which are presented within 6 headings:

- (a) A sense of belonging
- (b) A consistent adult in your life
- (c) A good education
- (d) Good memories for the future
- (e) Preparation for adulthood
- (f) Champion your needs and interests

(6) A copy of the pledge is presented at Appendix 1.

Promoting better outcomes and evaluation

4. (1) Appendix 3 provides a detailed description of each commitment in the pledge in relation to its source (e.g. Care Matters, young people, statutory requirements, research), its contribution to promoting better outcomes, and additional cost.

(2) The commitments identified are all considered necessary to promote better outcomes for children in care. When correctly applied and combined with the range of tasks and duties highlighted in established practice checklists (such as the Social Work Checklists, Checklists for Foster Carers, and model school policy) this should lead to better outcomes for this vulnerable group of children and young people.

(3) The relationship between each commitment with respect to improvements on a given outcome (e.g. see footnote under paragraph 2.1.1) is not necessarily a direct one or easy to measure quantifiably. There are a number of reasons for this:

- (a) There are constraints on making the commitments in the pledge too specific because of the level of diversity that exists within the care population. For example, a commitment that each child in care will achieve 'x' number of GCSEs at A*-C at age 16 or 18 years would not be applicable to a LAC with a significant disability that affected their learning.
- (b) Some of the commitments included have been identified as being important by children/young people (e.g. a commitment for each child/young person to have a passport if legally entitled to own one) and while their link to better outcomes may not be clear or direct, they still have merit for inclusion in the pledge.
- (c) A number of the commitments have been influenced by specific proposals in Care Matters (e.g. see list of basic elements highlighted under paragraph 2.1.3)
- (d) It is also important to ensure that each commitment is realistic and achievable rather than aspirational.

(4) Work is being undertaken to ensure that each commitment in the pledge is incorporated into KCC's Integrated Children's System (ICS). This will mean that it will be possible to know for a given child, groups of children or Kent's whole LAC population the extent to which each commitment is being delivered. The extent to which the pledge helps to achieve local and national (e.g. PAF) targets for children/young people in and leaving care will be evaluated as part of an annual review of the pledge.

(5) Supporting the delivery of the pledge will be a key objective of Integrated Looked After Children Support Services (ILCSS) (described in the report at Appendix 2), which is planned to be up and running from April 2008.

Key influences on the development of the Pledge

5. (1) The recommendations outlined in Care Matters and our response to it (see paragraph 2.1.3 and at Appendix 4, parts A and B) have been a key influence on the contents of the pledge.

(2) The multi-agency/professional working group that developed the pledge worked closely with children and young people and their representatives (e.g. Upfront; 16plus Youth Workers) with respect to style and content.

(3) Consultation with children/young people included two residential events focussing specifically on the pledge. A detailed account of the issues raised by the children/young people at these events is outlined at Appendix 4, part C. The young people developed 2 DVDs to present their views, which were formally presented to Members, managers and practitioners at a viewing on 31st August 2007 in the Sessions House lecture theatre. Appendix 5 outlines CFE's response to the DVDs.

(4) Copies of the DVDs will be made available at the meeting.

(5) Appendix 3 (see source column) also outlines issues raised by children and young people at other events where their views have been sought. These include an event arranged by the Children's Champion Board to meet with a group of children/young people to hear their views in 2005, issues raised at the 2005 16plus young people's conference as well as young people's views on the pledge and Care Matters, which was taken into account when developing Kent's response to the Green Paper.

(6) Children/young people have also been consulted directly on the framework and wording in the pledge, which has included some major editing in response to their feedback.

(7) Consultation has taken place with operational staff at the NCH: Action for Children, whose report 'Close the Gap for Children in Care (2005) (see paragraph 2.1.1 of the report – bullet point 3). Their feedback on Kent's pledge (an earlier draft) was broadly very positive, although a recommendation was made that the pledge would benefit from a greater focus on issues for children with a disability. Kent's Children's Trust also made a similar recommendation.

(8) In response to this feedback the following actions have/are being undertaken:

- (a) Consultation has taken place with managers and practitioners in the Children's Disability teams, which resulted in some amendments/additions to the pledge to make sure that each

commitment is relevant to children with a disability. This includes a new commitment to ensure that every disabled child (approximately 50 LAC) will be provided with a communication passport (which describes how that child communicates) (estimated additional cost to pledge £1000 pa).

- (b) Work is taking place to look at how the pledge should be presented for children with a severe disability (e.g. via widget)
- (c) Arrangements are in place for a further 3 residential events, which are planned for spring/summer 2008. The focus of these events is the development of an information/training DVD in three parts focussing on children/young people's experience of the care system (coming into care, being in care and leaving care). The residential events are being planned by a working group of professionals with children/young people (including children with a disability and UASC). This work is likely to highlight additional issues that will need to be incorporated into the pledge at the next available review.

(9) Further work is to take place on the wording of the pledge by consulting with the plain English Society (recommended at POC, 15/11/2007).

(10) Work is also to take place with the UASC team to look at how the pledge can eventually be produced in different languages (relevant to children/young people from key ethnic minorities). This work will make use of KCC's link with the Refugee Council and other relevant groups to help ensure that the interpretation of the pledge is accurate.

Resource Implications

6. (1) The commitments outlined in the pledge exceed the expectations presented in Care Matters. They include additional commitments that have been highlighted by children and young people as being important to them and/or are considered necessary to support the goal of promoting better outcomes for children and young people in and leaving care.

(2) A number of the commitments have resource implications over and above current resources for services/sections that would be responsible for meeting them. Some of the commitments, if applied to UASC, would not be grant claimable (highlighted in the pledges where applicable). Similarly, the commitment to fund sports and leisure activities for OLA LAC would be an additional cost (although one where negotiation could and should take place with the respective responsible local authorities for reimbursement of these costs).

(3) KCC CFE Finance have produced an analysis of the predicted cost of each of the commitments made in the pledges in three tables (one KCC citizen children in care, UASC and OLA LAC), which is presented at Appendix 6.

(4) Undertaking all of the commitments is estimated to cost an additional £2.6m in the first year, with ongoing costs of around £2.4m pa, based on current numbers of children and young people in care.

(5) The most additional funding that KCC is likely to receive from government to implement Care Matters (including the pledge) is £2m pa (over the next 3 years – 2% of the national £100m implementation grant).

(6) KCC CFE has already earmarked £600k in the MTP (identified from savings in other areas) for implementation of Care Matters, which is to be undertaken primarily through the pledge.

Recommendation

7. Children's Champions Board is asked to note and comment on the report.

Paul Brightwell
Policy and Performance Manager – Looked After Children/Leaving Care
Children, Families and Education Directorate
Tel: 01622 694308
Paul.Brightwell@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents:

None

Our pledge for Kent's children and young people in care

Kent County Council understands that being in care and leaving care isn't always easy and that it can bring additional challenges and pressures for you. If we are to get it right for you we need to make a real difference to help you achieve your best and gain success in your life.

Our pledge includes a number of promises to you that will help make sure that your time in care is a positive experience. These are based around 6 themes:

- a sense of belonging
- a consistent adult in your life
- a good education
- good memories for the future
- preparation for adulthood
- champion your needs and interests

We are making a pledge to you because you are a child/young person in care or leaving care living in Kent.

Ideally we would want to make the same promises to all children in care living in Kent but this is not possible at present because your needs are different and it also depends on which local authority is responsible for your care. It is equally important to ensure that the promises that we make to you are ones that we are confident that we can keep and that will be important to you and have a positive effect in your life.

This is why we have made two separate pledges. These are:

- A pledge for children in the care of Kent County Council, and
- A pledge for children in care placed in Kent by another local authority

We will review our pledge to you on a regular basis so that when possible we will increase the promises that we make and listen to the views of children and young people in care.

[Insert name and signature of Graham Badman and Lead Member]

Pledge for Children and young people in care of Kent County Council

Kent County Council understands that being in care and leaving care isn't always easy and that it can bring additional challenges and pressures for you. If we are to get it right for you we need to make a real difference to help you achieve your best and gain success in your life.

Our pledge includes a number of promises to you that will help make sure that your time in care is a positive experience. These are based around 6 themes:

- a sense of belonging
- a consistent adult in your life
- a good education
- good memories for the future
- preparation for adulthood
- champion your needs and interests

We will review our pledge to you on a regular basis so that when possible we will increase the promises that we make and listen to the views of children and young people in care.

[Insert name and signature of Graham Badman and Lead Member]

A sense of belonging

We will:

- Provide a placement for you as near as possible to your family and friends
- Help you maintain contact with family and/or friends and when this is not possible give you a clear reason why
- Ensure that you and where appropriate your parent's views of the type of carers that you would want are taken into account when choosing your placement and respite care
- When making decisions we will take into account your age, background and beliefs, including your ethnic and cultural needs and needs that may be as a result of a disability especially communication
- Arrange for you to get your national insurance number for your 16th birthday or as soon as possible after being entitled to have one
- Get you a passport by your 16th birthday if you are legally entitled to have one – sooner if you need one to go on holidays with your carers and take part in school activities
- Tell you who your corporate parents are and how you can contact them

A consistent adult in your life

We will:

- Ensure that you have a named social worker/caseworker and Independent Reviewing Officer and know how you can contact them
- Make sure that you have at least one person in your life who you can expect to be around throughout your time in care

A good education

We will:

- Ensure that you have a place at a school that will enable you to do your best
- Make sure that 3 and 4 year old children in care can go to early years education
- Work with your school and the designated teacher¹ to help you do your best
- Provide opportunities and support to pursue your education beyond 16 years, including help going to university or further education if you want to do this
- Help you catch-up with school work if you fall behind
- Expect your carers to take an active interest in your education and make positive links with your school, including attending parent's evenings and other school events
- Provide a computer for you if you have been in care for 6 months or more and are aged 11 years or over and, where appropriate, access to the internet
- Celebrate your achievements and success

^{*}All schools are expected to appoint a designated teacher who is responsible for co-ordination all of the schools services for those children in care who attend the school

Good memories for the future

We will:

- Provide at least 4 hours a week of opportunities to pursue hobbies and interests (including sports, art and music)^{*}
- Help you build a photo album of key people in your life and places you have been to while in care

Preparation for adulthood

We will:

- Make sure that you are consulted about key decisions being made in your life
- If you have a disability we will make sure that you have your own 'communication passport' that tells others how you communicate and how they can communicate to you
- Ensure that accommodation provided to young people preparing to leave care is safe and properly supported - with temporary, unsuitable accommodation, being a last resort and used for as little time as possible
- Invest in a savings account for you a sum of £100 for every year you are in care. This money will be available to you on your 18th birthday^{*}
- Up to your 21st birthday, help you with council tax and losing out on housing benefit as a result of taking part in education, training and low paid employment^{*}
- Help and support you take up appropriate opportunities for training, further education and employment
- £1000 for every year you complete in Higher Education or £2000 for the whole period of the course, whichever is the greater^{*}
- Ensure that your transition to adult services if you require them is as smooth as possible

Champion your needs and interests

We will:

- Ensure that you are able to communicate your wishes, feelings and interests – taking into account any disabilities you have
- Listen to your wishes and feelings before making decisions that affect you and support you if you need help to do this
- Work with you and your family to make sure that plans for your care are up to date and meet your educational, health and care needs
- Make sure that you know how to complain and how to get in touch with Upfront (Kent's Children's Rights Service), who can provide support to help you pursue a complaint
- Provide you with access to a solicitor (at our cost) if you want legal advice about your care order, or any other legal order affecting you – such as contact with certain people in your life

Pledge for children and young people in care placed in Kent by another local authority

Kent County Council understands that being in care and leaving care isn't always easy and that it can bring additional challenges and pressures for you. If we are to get it right for you we need to make a real difference to help you achieve your best and gain success in your life.

Our pledge includes a number of promises to you that will help to ensure that your time in care is a positive experience. These are based around 6 themes:

- a sense of belonging
- a consistent adult in your life
- a good education
- good memories for the future
- preparation for adulthood
- champion your needs and interests

We see our role as supporting your local authority meet their responsibilities to you so that you can be treated the same as all other children in care living in Kent. This includes encouraging your local authority to include in their pledge to you a range of promises, like the ones that we can make to children and young people in care of Kent County Council.

We will review our pledge to you on a regular basis so that when possible we will increase the promises that we make and listen to the views of children and young people in care.

[Insert name and signature of Graham Badman and Lead Member]

A sense of belonging

We will:

- Help your local authority ensure that your care plan includes extra help to enable you to attend school and maintain contact with important people in your life
- Make sure you know who your corporate parents are and how you can contact them

A consistent adult in your life

We will:

- Ask the local authority responsible for your care to ensure that you have a named Independent Reviewing Officer and a named Social Worker who visits you on a regular basis and tells you how to contact them, and
- Ask you local authority to make sure that you have at least one person in your life who you can expect to be around throughout your childhood

A good education

We will:

- Work with your social worker to ensure that you have a place at a school that will help you to do your best
- Work with your school and the designated teacher¹ to help you do your best
- Help you catch-up with school work if you fall behind
- Celebrate your achievements and success

¹Schools are expected to appoint a designated teacher who is responsible for co-ordinating all of the schools services for those children in care who attend the school

Good memories for the future

We will:

- Provide at least 4 hours a week of opportunities to pursue hobbies and interests (including sports and music)

Preparation for adulthood

We will:

- Ask the local authority responsible for your care to make sure that you are consulted about key decisions being made in your life

Champion your needs and interests

We will:

- Encourage you to communicate your wishes, interests and feelings – taking into account any disabilities you have
- Ask the local authority responsible for your care to make sure that you know how to complain and how you can access a Children's Rights Service who can provide support to help you pursue a complaint
- Support you, your carers and your local authority in making sure that plans for your education and health needs are up-to-date
- Remind your local authority of their responsibility to provide you with access to a solicitor if you want legal advice about your care order, or any other legal order affecting you – such as contact with certain people in your life

LAC Review summary report

Introduction

1. Kent had begun to look how it might improve services for Looked after Children ahead of the government green paper 'Care Matters' and following its publication in October 2006 the Managing Director of CFE commissioned the Director of the Strategy, Policy and Performance Division to conduct a formal review.

Process

2. (1) A multi-agency officer LAC Steering Group, chaired by the Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance, was set up to undertake the detailed work required by the Review process.

(2) Information to inform the review was gathered through a range of mechanisms:

- Feedback from partner agencies during the Care Matters consultation
- Consultation events with Head teachers, young people, Elected Members, foster carers, social work practitioners, 16+, Upfront and others
- Review of structural arrangements
- Topic investigations of the robustness of Kent's policy/practice
- Report on the work of the LAC Strategy Group (sub group of Kent's Children's Trust)
- Identification of sources of finance
- Compilation of background information

(3) The LAC Review Steering Group findings were reported to the Managing Director of CFE on 19 June 2007 and its recommendations were accepted.

LAC Review recommendations and progress

3. The LAC Review process resulted in many recommendations and the following, which include a report on progress, represent a selection that were considered to be high priority:

- Make representations to Health to prioritise development of more responsive mental health services for LAC including providing a mental health assessment for all LAC.

Interim project capacity has been identified to undertake research to inform a specification for services for vulnerable young people pending the arrival of the newly appointed CAMHS Project Manager. Work is also in hand to include a mental health assessment as part of the initial health assessment.

- Extend Family Group Conference service to wider age groups and earlier intervention;

The service to wider age groups will shortly be in place and discussion about intervening earlier has started.

- Local Children’s Trust arrangements to prioritise the commissioning of early intervention services that are effective in preventing LAC;

Kent Children’s Trust has agreed that the commissioning of such services should be prioritised.

- Kent should develop an Adolescent Strategy;

A steering group is in place and a specification for this service is in an advanced stage of development.

- Kent should lobby for ‘funding to follow the child’ to ensure other authority LAC are not disadvantaged;

Consideration is being given to the setting up of a Member Select Committee on this topic in the autumn.

- Kent should ensure LAC are prioritised as Clusters implement arrangements to prevent exclusions and ensure access to education for excluded pupils;

This work has started as part of a range of actions to promote education of LAC.

- Kent should consider lobbying as part of the Care Matters consultation for tax incentives that will encourage foster carers to continue to care for care leavers beyond 18;

The Managing Director, CFE will be writing to the Minister about this.

- Kent should set up of a multi-agency LAC Support Team which would be deployed across 3 areas to improve integrated working that will include professionals from CFE, Health and Connexions and be hosted by a Cluster under Kent’s local Children’s Trust arrangements;

A steering group has been set up to take this recommendation forward. It is expected that the team will be in place by April 2008.

- Kent should develop multi-agency Protocols for LAC;

It is expected that these will be in place during spring 2008.

Resources

5. The resource implications of both the review and the Pledge have been costed where possible and incorporated into Kent’s Medium Term Planning process. It is anticipated that some activity can be covered within existing budgets. The steering group is currently exploring how the cost of delivering the pledge could be reduced through potential sponsorship arrangements.

LAC action matrix

6. (1) In addition to the recommendations set out above an Action Plan Matrix is being developed in order to ensure the other findings of the sub groups are also pursued as part of the overarching strategy to improve services for LAC.

(2) It had also become evident during the review that a range of actions were already being taken forward under the aegis of the LAC Strategy Group, sub group of Kent Children's Trust and in other forums. Therefore, the Matrix has been expanded to incorporate not only these tasks but also those set out in the Care Matters White Paper which are believed to be good practice or are likely to be required. This integrated plan, set out using the headings of Care Matters, should clarify arrangements and simplify monitoring.

Pledge Commitments / Outcomes

KCC Pledge			
Pledge Commitment	Source	Contribution to Better Outcomes	Additional Estimated Cost pa
1. Sense of belonging			
Provide a placement for you as near as possible to your family and friends	Care Matters proposals (see White Paper pages 60 to 61); The Utting Report, 1997; The Children Act 1989 duties	Promotes safeguarding of LAC; PAFC69 (distance of placement) performance; Contributing to positive identity in children/young people by enabling hem to maintain contact with family and friends (e.g. Gilligan 2001; 2004); Meeting existing KCC Policy on out of authority placements; Provides example of good practice to other local authorities re placing LAC in Kent	£335k
Help you maintain contact with family and/or friends and when this is not possible give you a clear reason why	Children Act 1989 duties. Also linked to commitment above. Contributes to key message of Care Matters re promoting stability (Chapter 3 of White paper)	Promotes safeguarding of LAC; Contributing to positive identity/resilience in children/young people by enabling them to maintain contact with family and friends (Gilligan 2001; 2004 highlights importance of a secure base in promoting resilience); Helps to promote stability of placements (e.g. PAFA1 – placement stability); The commitment indirectly promotes Educational attainment (PAFA2 – GCSE attainment); increased opportunities for sport and leisure activities (Care Matters requirement); increased opportunities for LAC to be rehabilitated home or achieve legal permanence through family/friends (kinship care)	£0
Ensure that your, and where appropriate your parent's, views of the type of carers that you would want are taken into account when choosing your placement and respite care	Young people (Hardelot DVDs on pledge); Children Act 1989 principles; Research findings on the benefits of involving children/young people in decision making	Will help to reduce placement instability; contributes to performance on PAFA1 (stability in placements); also contributes indirectly to educational achievement (including PAFA2 (GSCE attainment) and PAFC24 (school absence)); safeguarding and healthy care (ECM) objectives	£0
When making decisions we will take into	Children Act 1989 duties; reinforced in Care	Promoting LAC's identity and increased resilience to cope	£0

account your age, background and beliefs, including your ethnic and cultural needs	Matters	with adversity (e.g. Erikson, 1982). This commitment indirectly supports better outcomes re educational attainment (PAFA2 (GCSE attainment), PAFC24 (school absence), LAA target (key stage results and GCSE attainment); healthy care (ECM) and safeguarding	
Arrange for you to get your national insurance number for your 16 th birthday or as soon as possible after being entitled to have one	Young people (Hardelot DVDs on pledge)	Necessary for young people 16years or over to obtain employment (supports performance on PAFA4 – NEET); promotes children/young peoples’ identity/resilience through self esteem and self efficacy (based on research findings by Gilligan 2001); evidence for involvement of children/young people in development of services	£0
Get you a passport by your 16 th birthday if you are legally entitled to have one – sooner if you need one to go on holidays with your carers and take part in school activities	Young People (Hardelot DVDs on pledge)	Promotes identity; increased opportunities for sports and leisure activities (Care Matters proposal); demonstrates involvement of children/young people in development of services	£8,928
Tell you who your corporate parents are and how you can contact them	Care Matters (see range of proposals focussing on corporate parenting under Chapter 1 of White Paper, specifically pages 22 to 27); Existing DCSF guidance for members on their role as a corporate parent (see KCC guidance document)	Promotes effective corporate parenting and accountability; contributes to evidence that Lead Member and DCS (Graham Badman) are meeting their current and forthcoming legal duties for LAC	£0
2. A consistent adult			
Ensure that you have a named social worker/caseworker and Independent Reviewing Officer and know how you can contact them	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge – see page 22 and 63 and 64 of White Paper re SWs; page 22 and 132 re IROs); Highlighted by young people (Hardelot DVDs on pledge)	Promotes safeguarding; helps to prevent LAC drifting in care; indirectly supports LAC placement stability (including PAFA1) through support to carers (based on research findings – e.g. McAuley et al, 2006)	£637,588
Make sure that you have at least one person in your life who you can expect to be around throughout your time in care	Highlighted in Care Matters (White Paper); Issue raised by young people (Hardelot DVDs on pledge). Commitment includes focus on provision of Independent Visitors (legal requirement under The Children Act 1989 and emphasised in Care Matters, including new legislation (page 133)	Safeguarding; promoting identity/resilience of LAC (i.e. a secure base – Gilligan 2001; 2004). Indirectly supports better outcomes re placement stability (including PAFA1); educational attainment (e.g. PAFA2 (GCSE attainment); PAFC24 (school absence) and LAA target 3 – key stage results and GCSE attainment); access to sports and leisure opportunities (Care Matters proposal).	£0

3. A good education			
Ensure that you have a place at a school that will enable you to do your best	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – page 22 and Chapter 4; issue raised by young people – ie. Upfront Survey (1998); meeting with Children’s Champion Board 2005.	Improved educational attainment of LAC and Care Leavers; contributes to a range of government performance targets – e.g. PAFA1 (placement stability); PAFC24 (school absence); PAFA2 (GCSE attainment); PAFA4 (reducing NEET); C81 (reducing offending); contributes to LAA target 3 (key stage results and GCSE attainment); supports healthy care (ECM) agenda for LAC; promotes identity/resilience (i.e. importance of school in promoting resilience – Mortimore, 1995; Quinton and Rutter, 1988); increases opportunities for LAC to achieve legal permanence outside of the LAC system	£0
Make sure that 3 and 4 year old children in care can go to early years education	Care Matters proposal (see page 67 of White Paper); Supports current KCC policy and requirements under Section 52 of The Children Act 2004	As above (except LAA target 3 contribution)	£0
Work with your school and the designated teacher ¹ to help you do your best	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – see page 22 and 71; Supports existing expectations under Section 52 of The Children Act 2004	As above	£106k
Provide opportunities and support to pursue your education beyond 16 years, including help going to university if you want to do this	Care Matters Proposal (basic element of pledge) – see page 22; commitment supports research findings re existing outcomes for care leavers (i.e. only 6% of young people in care continue into HE, compared with 39% of the general school leaver population)	As above – increase in number of KCC care leavers entering HE	£0
Help you catch-up with school work if you fall behind	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – see page 22; commitment supports an existing KCC service (Catch-up fund) initiated in 2000 as a result of listening to views of children/young people in care	As above	£0
Expect your carers to take an active interest in your education and make positive links with your school, including attending parent’s evenings and other school events	Care Matters (chapter 3); Section 52, The Children Act 2004; research findings on role of parental participation on promoting educational attainment (e.g. Cotton and Wikelund, 1989; Fan and Chen, 2000; Flouri and Buchanan,	As above	£0

	2004)		
Provide a computer for you if you have been in care for 6 months or more and are aged 11 years or over and, where appropriate, access to the internet	Issue raised by young people (16plus conference 2005) ; Supports existing work undertaken under LAA target 3; Quality Protects initiative; research on benefits of ICT and computers to promote learning (e.g. basic skills – Mann, 1999; BECTA, 2000; Motivation – Peabody, 1996; Sherry, 2001; and establishing life-long learning habits – Schollie, 2001)	As above and promoting access to leisure activities	£111,555
Celebrate your achievements and success	Corporate Parenting Guidance; Research findings on promoting Resilience in Children	As above - particularly promoting identity/resilience	£0
4. Good memories for the future			
Provide at least 4 hours a week of opportunities to pursue hobbies and interests (including sports, art and music)*	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – see page 22; Young People (Hardelot DVDs on pledge)	Supports Healthy Care initiative (part of ECM agenda for LAC); promotes placement stability (including PAFA1), identity/resilience; contributes to evidence that lead member and DCS (Graham Badman) are meeting their current and forthcoming legal duties for LAC	£406080
Help you build a photo album of key people in your life and places you have been to while in care	Based on principles of Life Story work with vulnerable children who have experienced instability/change	Promoting a greater sense of identity and belonging (e.g. a secure base – Gilligan 2001; and a sense of identity – Erikson, 1982); promotes effective corporate parenting; indirectly this commitment will help to promote placement stability (including PAFA1) and educational attainment (including GCSE attainment - PAFA2 and school absences - PAFC24)	£6,500
5. Preparation for adulthood			
Make sure that you are consulted about key decisions being made in your life	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989/1991/Children Act 1989 and more recent childcare legislation; The Gillick Judgement 1985 ; Young People (Hardelot DVDs on pledge) ; Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – page 22 ; Research findings on benefits on involving children/young people in decision making	Promoting safeguarding (e.g. Butler-Sloss 1988); Decisions for child in all aspects of their lives are more likely to be successfully implemented (e.g. Thoburn, 1992; Hodgson, 1996); promotes greater resilience and sense of identity through promoting self efficacy (e.g. Gilligan, 2001; Henderson, 1995)	£0

Ensure that accommodation provided to young people preparing to leave care is safe and properly supported - with temporary, unsuitable accommodation, being a last resort and used for as little time as possible	Young people (Hardelot DVDs on pledge) + issue raised with CCB members in 2005 and at 2005 16plus conference. Specific CYPP area for improvement	Promotes safeguarding; supports APA requirement re provision of suitable accommodation; enables KCC to demonstrate it is meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities for Care Leavers as well as LAC	£0
Invest in a savings account for you a sum of £100 for every year you are in care. This money will be available to you on your 18 th birthday*	Care Matters proposal (see Chapter 6, page 112-113) ; Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) (Dominic Maxwell, January 2005) recommendation; Issue raised by CCB in 2006.	Helping towards young people successfully leaving care with an adequate level of support from their corporate parent – demonstrates effective corporate parenting by the local authority	£144,000
Up to your 21 st birthday, help you with council tax and losing out on housing benefit as a result of taking part in education, training and low paid employment*	Young people – raised with CCB members in 2005 during an arranged meeting event	Supports PAFA4 performance + issues raised above	£348,300
Help and support you take up appropriate opportunities for training, further education and employment	Care Matters proposal (part of basic element of pledge); Children (leaving care) Act 2000; Performance Assessment Framework target	Supports PAFA4 (reducing NEETs) Helping towards young people successfully leaving care; increase number of care leavers entering HE (i.e. nationally only 6% of young people in care continue into HE, compared with 39% of the general school leaver population)	£0
£1000 for every year you complete in Higher Education or £2000 for the whole period of the course, whichever is the greater*	Care Matters proposal (part of basic element of pledge); Supports existing KCC policy; supports existing Children (leaving care) Act 2000 responsibilities	As above	£0
6. Champion needs and interests			
Ensure that you are able to communicate your wishes, feelings and interests – taking into account any disabilities you have	Care Matters (basic element of pledge – see page 22); Children Act 1989 duties	Promoting safeguarding (e.g. Butler-Sloss 1988); Decisions for child in all aspects of their lives are more likely to be successfully implemented (e.g. Thoburn, 1992; Hodgson, 1996); promotes greater resilience and sense of identity through promoting self efficacy (e.g. Gilligan, 2001; Henderson, 1995)	£0
Listen to your wishes and feelings before making decisions that affect you and support you if you need help to do this	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989/1991/Children Act 1989 and more recent childcare legislation; The Gillick Judgement	As above	£0

	1985 ; Young People (Hardelot DVDs on pledge); Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – page 22 ; Research findings on benefits on involving children/young people in decision making		
Work with you and your family to make sure that plans for your care are up to date and meet your educational, health and care needs	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989/1991/Children Act 1989 and more recent childcare legislation; The Gillick Judgement 1985 ; Young People (Hardelot DVDs on pledge); Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – page 22 ; Research findings on benefits on involving children/young people in decision making	As above	£0
Make sure that you know how to complain and how to get in touch with Upfront (Kent’s Children’s Rights Service), who can provide support to help you pursue a complaint	Care Matters (basic element of pledge – page 22); existing KCC policy	As above	£0
Provide you with access to a solicitor (at our cost) if you want legal advice about your care order, or any other legal order affecting you – such as contact with certain people in your life	Existing Children Act 1989 duty	Promotes safeguarding; effective corporate parenting; involvement of child/young person in decision making (promotes resilience via promoting self efficacy)	£0

OLA Pledge			
Pledge Commitment	Source	Contribution to Better Outcomes	Additional Estimated Cost pa
1. Sense of belonging			
Help your local authority ensure that your care plan includes extra help to enable you to attend school and maintain contact with important people in your life	Care Matters	Promotes example of best practice to other local authorities placing LAC in Kent in a way which benefits the child/young person through encouraging better outcomes – including placement stability; safeguarding; identity/resilience and health care (ECM) agenda	£0
Make sure you know who your corporate parents are and how you can contact them	Care Matters (see range of proposals focussing on corporate parenting under Chapter 1 of White Paper, specifically pages 22 to 27); Existing DCSF guidance for members on their role as a corporate parent (see KCC guidance document)	Promotes good example of effective corporate parenting and accountability to the responsible local authority; contributes to evidence that Lead Member and DCS (Graham Badman) are meeting their current and forthcoming legal duties for all LAC in Kent	£0
2. A consistent adult			
Ask the local authority responsible for your care to ensure that you have a named Independent Reviewing Officer and a named Social Worker who visits you on a regular basis and tells you how to contact them	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge – see page 22 and 63 and 64 of White Paper re SWs; page 22 and 132 re IROs); Highlighted by young people (Hardelot DVDs on pledge)	Promotes safeguarding; helps to prevent LAC drifting in care; indirectly supports LAC placement stability (including PAFA1) through support to carers (based on research findings – e.g. McAuley et al, 2006) Promotes best practice in other local authorities	£0
Ask you local authority to make sure that you have at least one person in your life who you can expect to be around throughout your childhood	Highlighted in Care Matters (White Paper); Issue raised by young people (Hardelot DVDs on pledge). Commitment includes focus on provision of Independent Visitors (legal requirement under The Children Act 1989 and emphasised in Care Matters, including new legislation (page 133)	Promotes safeguarding; promoting identity/resilience of LAC. Indirectly supports better outcomes re placement stability (including PAFA1); educational attainment (e.g. PAFA2 (GCSE attainment); PAFC24 (school absence) and LAA target 3 – key stage results and GCSE attainment); access to sports and leisure opportunities (Care Matters proposal). Promotes best practice in other local authorities	£0

3. A good education			
Work with your social worker to ensure that you have a place at a school that will help you to do your best	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – page 22 and Chapter 4; issue raised by young people – ie. Upfront Survey (1998); meeting with Children’s Champion Board 2005.	Improved educational attainment of LAC and Care Leavers; contributes to the responsible local authorities performance a range of government targets – e.g. PAFA1 (placement stability); PAFC24 (school absence); PAFA2 (GCSE attainment); PAFA4 (reducing NEET); C81 (reducing offending); contributes to LAA target 3 (key stage results and GCSE attainment); supports healthy care (ECM) agenda for LAC; promotes identity/resilience; increases opportunities for LAC to achieve legal permanence outside of the LAC system	£0
Work with your school and the designated teacher ¹ to help you do your best	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – see page 22 and 71	As above	£0
Help you catch-up with school work if you fall behind	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – see page 22	As above	£0
Celebrate your achievements and success	Corporate Parenting Guidance; Research findings on promoting Resilience in Children	As above – especially resilience/identity	£0
4. Good memories for the future			
Provide at least 4 hours a week of opportunities to pursue hobbies and interests (including sports and music)	Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – see page 22; Young People (Hardelot DVDs on pledge)	Supports Healthy Care initiative (part of ECM agenda for LAC); promotes placement stability (including responsible authorities performance under PAFA1), identity/resilience; contributes to evidence that lead member and DCS (Graham Badman) are meeting their current and forthcoming legal duties for all Kent LAC	£342,066
5. Preparation for adulthood			
Ask the local authority responsible for your care to make sure that you are consulted about key decisions being made in your life	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989/1991/Children Act 1989 and more recent childcare legislation; The Gillick Judgement 1985 ; Young People (Hardelot DVDs on pledge) ; Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – page 22; Research findings on benefits on involving children/young people in decision making	Promoting safeguarding (e.g. Butler-Sloss 1988); Decisions for child in all aspects of their lives are more likely to be successfully implemented (e.g. Thoburn, 1992; Hodgson, 1996); promotes greater resilience and sense of identity (e.g. Henderson, 1995) Promotes best practice in other local authorities	£0

6. Champion needs and interests			
Encourage you to communicate your wishes, interests and feelings – taking into account any disabilities you have	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989/1991/Children Act 1989 and more recent childcare legislation; The Gillick Judgement 1985 ; Young People (Hardelot DVDs on pledge); Care Matters proposal (basic element of pledge) – page 22 ; Research findings on benefits on involving children/young people in decision making	Promoting safeguarding (e.g. Butler-Sloss 1988); Decisions for child in all aspects of their lives are more likely to be successfully implemented (e.g. Thoburn, 1992; Hodgson, 1996); promotes greater resilience and sense of identity (e.g. Henderson, 1995) Promotes best practice in other local authorities	£0
Ask the local authority responsible for your care to make sure that you know how to complain and how you can access a Children’s Rights Service who can provide support to help you pursue a complaint	As above	As above	£0
Support you, your carers and your local authority in making sure that plans for your education and health needs are up-to-date	Care Matters (basic element of pledge – page 22)	As above	£0
Remind your local authority of their responsibility to provide you with access to a solicitor if you want legal advice about your care order, or any other legal order affecting you – such as contact with certain people in your life	Existing Children Act 1989 duty	Promotes safeguarding; effective corporate parenting by responsible local authority; involvement of child/young person in decision making (promotes resilience) Promotes best practice in other local authorities	£0

Key factors that have influenced the contents of the pledge

A) Pledge issues suggested by Care Matters (Green Paper)

- A choice, with their Social Worker, of high quality placements
- 24/7 support from the lead professional or an out of hours contact
- At least four hours a week of positive out of school activities
- Annual health assessments (x2 for under 5's) and x2 yearly dental check-ups
- An independent advocate
- A chance to take part in volunteering
- The choice of when to move on to enter adult life, up to the age of 18
- A chance to have their voice heard and influence the work of the local authority through participation in a 'Children In Care Council'

B) Issues highlighted by Kent County Council in response to Care Matters (Green Paper)

Universal Pledge:

- *A commitment to ensure that 3 and 4 year olds access early years education.*
- *A choice of a good school that is helping each child to do their best*
- *A commitment to provide twice yearly health assessments for under 5's and annual health assessments and twice yearly dental check-ups for older children from an NHS dentist*
- *To enable children/young people to express their wishes and feelings in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken into account*
- *To have high but achievable expectations for achievement for each child/young person*
- *A minimum entitlement of 2.5 hours per week to sport and leisure activities (see also question 19)*
- *Not to be discriminated against for any reason*
- *To be told how to complain if things go wrong and to deal with any complaint properly*

Pledge as Corporate Parent:

- *Encouragement to participate in making decisions and plans for your future*
- *Timely out-of-school educational support*
- *Reducing changes of Social Worker/lead professional and maintaining stability of other key professionals in the child's life (especially at transition stages)*
- *To provide information to children/young people about their family and other important people in their lives and to promote contact with them or a clear explanation of why it is not possible*
- *A safe environment/home with more options/choice so that it is right for each child/young person*
- *To promote a sense of permanency for the child*
- *An independent advocate (see also question 10)*

- *To prepare young people for life as an adult with the necessary help available to you while you are doing this, including*
- *Help and support while continuing in full-time education beyond age 16 years*
- *To be proactive in keeping in touch with all young people looked after their 16th birthday to at least 21 years*

Other things that could be included in a pledge as corporate parent are:

- *For young people who were Looked After beyond their 16th birthday to be exempt from paying council tax once living independently up to their 21st birthday (this is currently being explored in Kent at the request of young people) – this is also suggested under question 23*
- *To pursue an application for criminal injuries compensation for all children in the care of the local authority who have been subject to abuse or neglect or an act of criminal violence. Kent County Council has already established a fast-track service with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority and currently holds approximately £1.6m in criminal injuries awards that it has been successful in obtaining for children/young people looked after by the local authority.*

C) Issues Raised from consulting with Children and Young People

Two residential activity events took place in March 2007 in order to help ascertain the views of children and young people with experience of the looked after system, about what they want in a pledge. These events took place at the Hardelot Education Centre in France and focussed on different age groups of children/young people. 16plus staff supervised the first residential event (9/03/07 to 11/03/07), which involved looked after children (16 years upward) and care leavers. The second residential event (16/03/07 to 18/03/07) was arranged with the assistance of Upfront (Children's Rights Services) and focussed on a generally younger group of children and young people, ranging in age from 10 years to 18 years. The work of the children/young people is being developed into two DVDs – one for each group and due for formal release in August 2007.

The key elements of what the children and young people highlighted as needing to be included in Kent's Pledge are outlined below:

Views expressed by the younger group of children/young people supervised by Upfront (aged 10 years to 18 years)

18 plus NOT 16 plus. The group felt that 16 years is too young to start preparing to move on into independent living. They show this in the DVD by standing in a circle holding hands with another a young person in the middle of the circle. This was to show how isolated and scared the young person felt and the barrier of having no control over their life at this point. The young people also made the point that if you were living with birth parents you would not necessarily leave home so young. The young person then runs into the barrier and each time a member of the circle shouts out at them, cook for yourself, clean, budget etc, to the point that the young person is bounced around and so overwhelmed that he collapses.

Tact in schools. It is upsetting for children in care when teachers are insensitive or forgetful of their situation. This can cause unnecessary distress or isolation for the young person. The example given in the DVD was a Mother's Day card. This upset the young person so much that she ended up putting it in the bin. The group was saying how even the smallest comment could cause bullying or a feeling of being different.

A Social worker is for life not just for Christmas! There was a strong feeling of being passed around, leaving children with a feeling of no worth or importance. One group member stated

“It’s as if social workers unwrap us and then throw us away.”

The DVD shows a young person being introduced to a number of social workers and not one of them doing as he promised, the promise being their passport.

Respite with someone you know. The group stated how upsetting it was when foster families go away on family holidays without them. It upsets them even more when they are then left to stay with respite carers they don’t even know. One group member stated,

“You are in care initially, therefore there is a feeling of rejection, you are then rejected again by your foster family, so that feeling is reinforced and the trust is lost each time you are put into respite.”

This part of the DVD was filmed on the beach to create the feeling of isolation and feeling alone. The young people wrote in the sand words that described how this situation made them feel. After being told that they were going on respite with strangers they then saw their foster family excitedly running across and destroying all their feelings that they had written in the sand.

The young people wrote a poem expressing themselves, which they have not included in the DVD, but would like the LAC Review Group to read.

*Social workers come and go, but problems stay the same
A new one comes in every week but doesn’t learn my name
They promise this, they promise that, they say it’s all for me
But nothing ever happens, at least nothing I can see.*

The issues highlighted by older young people (aged 17 years to 20 years)

This group of young people decided to base their DVD around a news programme with an anchorman introducing the various reports, each focussing on a different issue important to them in a pledge. The first and last pledges are acted out, the middle three are to have voiceovers.

Pledges will come up as bullet points after each clip and then all five will be displayed at the end of the news bulletin.

Accommodation issues - *“a safe environment/home with more options/choice so that it is right for each child/young person”*

Graig, a Roving Reporter interviews two young people, one in a supportive placement where he is doing well at college and feels happy and secure, the other where he has dropped out of education and receives no support or encouragement at home.

Identity issues - *“to ensure each young person has a passport and National Insurance number before the transition to 16plus”*

- 1) Garen visits the Army Recruitment Centre to apply to join up. He is asked for his NI number but cannot produce it and is told to come back when he's got one. He asks how he can get one and is told that he'll have to find out for himself.

2) A group of young people is filmed boarding a minibus to go away on a residential experience abroad. Matt is left behind because he doesn't have a passport.

Sport accessibility - *"a minimum entitlement of 2.5 hours per week of funded sports and leisure activity"*

A young man is lazing in bed, because he can't afford to access sports/leisure facilities and he can't afford the bus/train fare to get there. The DVD shows a variety of sporting activities, highlighting that participation in sports and leisure opportunities encourage a healthy lifestyle and helps to develop social skills and general wellbeing, promoting confidence and self-esteem.

Contact issue - *"to be proactive in keeping in touch with all young people looked after, after their 16th birthday to at least 21 years"*

Still picture of a young man, inset still picture of a worker, both on telephone. Message that all young people should have as an absolute minimum a telephone call from their worker every month until at least their 21st birthday.

Life skills issues - *"to prepare you for life as an adult with the necessary help available to you while you are doing this"*

- 1) Matt struggles to put a cover on his duvet. Worker appears and demonstrates how to do it.
- 2) Garen struggling with his bills and cash. Worker appears to help him budget.
- 3) Matt asks for help in learning basic life skills.
- 4) Still pictures of various life skills - cooking, budgeting, health, hygiene, first aid, etc, etc.

Message that young people need to be taught basic life skills, once learnt, never forgotten

CFE's response to young people's Hardelot DVDs

The DVDs produced by children and young people in and leaving care with respect to their views on a pledge include a number of issues. These are summarised below together with KCC CFEs response to them. The DVDs and KCC CFEs response were presented to children/young people, key managers within KCC and partner agencies and County Council Members at a formal launch of the DVDs on 31st August 2007.

Guarantee a safe home environment, with more choices, so that it is right for every young person.

- We will look at ways in which young people can be more involved in deciding who should be a foster carer.
- We will look at how young people can get involved in providing training to carers and social workers, so that they have a better understanding of what it means to be in care.
- We will ask Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to make sure that:
 - the social worker is seeing the child/young person regularly, with opportunities to see them on their own.
 - the child/young person can see their IRO before the review starts.
- We want to recruit more foster carers so that children/young people have more choice about where they go to live.

Ensure that every young person has a passport and a National Insurance number

- We have included a commitment to both of these requests in Kent's pledge for children in care.
- We have asked Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to ensure that these issues are checked during the review meeting.
- We have added a check onto the Looked After Children Review form to remind IROs of the need to check these documents for children/young people aged 15yrs and upwards.
- We will work with 16plus to make sure the pathway plan includes a check for passports and National Insurance numbers.

Provide a minimum of 2.5 hours funded sport and activities per week

- We do not think that this is enough, and we are looking at increasing this to 4 hours per week in Kent's pledge. (we will keep you updated)

Be proactive in keeping in touch with all looked after young people after their 16th birthday, until they are at least 21 years old, with a minimum of one telephone call per month

- 16plus have amended their service plan so that it includes a commitment to do this

Prepare each young person for life as an adult, and make sure that the necessary help is available

- We agree that leaving care at 16 years old to live independently is too early for most young people.
- We think that the idea of a life skills booklet/CD is a very good one. We will produce this with 16plus, with help from young people. It will include information about local resources and places to get help and advice.
- We recognise that carers need more training on this.
- We will explore with 16plus how each young person can have a mentor for the first year of living independently. This could be a foster carer, another young person, a family member or an independent visitor.

Tact in schools - teachers to be more sensitive to the needs of children and young people in care

- This is an issue for all children in schools, but is particularly important for children and young people in care.
- We will take up confidentially and discretely any issues of insensitivity in school that we become aware of with the designated teacher and headteacher, so that they are aware of the impact that this has had and how it can be prevented in future.
- We already provide training to teachers about the needs of children and young people in care.
- We will explore how we can involve more young people in training with teachers and school governors.

Consistent adults - including fewer changes of social worker

- Through Kent's pledge, we are looking at how we can ensure that each child and young person has at least one consistent adult in their lives while they are in care

Respite care with people you know

- We need to make the process of providing two weeks of respite care per annum for foster carers more child friendly.
- Many foster carers who use their respite already arrange for the child / young person to be cared for in their home, with a respite carer who already knows the child / young person.
- Some carers also choose not to use respite until after the children and young people have left the placement.
- We will continue to encourage both of these options.
- We will look at how we can reward carers with two weeks additional pay in place of respite.
- We will look at how we can enable children and young people to choose their respite carer and ensure consistency of respite while in care.

Pledge**Additional
estimated costs
£'s****Method of calculation****A sense of identity and belonging**

Provide a placement for you as near as possible to your family and friends	£335,000	6.5 additional Fostering SWs, plus 1 practice supervisor
Help you maintain contact with family and friends and when this is not possible give you a clear reason why	£0	Within existing budgets
Ensure that you and your parent's views of the type of carers that you would want are taken into account when choosing your placement	£0	Within existing budgets
Arrange for you to get your national insurance number for your 16th birthday or as soon as possible after being entitled to have one	£0	Within existing budgets
Get you a passport by your 16th birthday – sooner if you need one to go on holidays with your carers and take part in school activities	£8,928	124 passports per year at a cost of £72
Tell you who your corporate parents are and how you can contact them	£0	Within existing budgets

A consistent adult in your life

Ensure that you have a named social worker and know how you can contact them	£637,588	14 additional SWs and 2.5 practice supervisors
Make sure that you have at least one person in your life who you can expect to be around throughout your childhood	£0	Within existing budgets

A good education

Ensure that you have a place at a good school that will help you to do your best	£0	Within existing budgets
--	----	-------------------------

Work with your school to help you do your best	£106,000	Replace curent one-off pilot funding for mentoring with base budget
Provide opportunities and support to pursue your education beyond 16 years, including help going to university if you want to do this	£0	Within existing budgets
Help you catch-up with missed time out of school	£0	Within existing budgets
Expect your carers to take an active interest in your education and make positive links with your school, including attending parent's evenings and other school events	£0	Within existing budgets
Provide a computer to our children in care who are aged 11 years or over and, where appropriate, access to the internet	£111,555	65 new computers per year plus broadband at £144 pa for up to 600 children. Plus one-off up front cost of up to 400 computers totalling £155k
Celebrate your achievements and success	£0	Within existing budgets

207045

Page 64

Good memories for the future

Provide at least 4 hours a week of opportunities to pursue hobbies and interests (including sports and music)	£327,966	£5 per week per child plus junior leisure centre membership at £22 pa
Help you build a photo album of key people in your life and places you have been to while in care	£6,500	Provide a simple digital camera for 65 children each year, as they reach the age of 11. Plus one-off upfront cost of up to 535 cameras totalling £53k

69550

Preparation for adulthood

Make sure that you are consulted about key decisions being made in your life	£0	Within existing budgets
--	----	-------------------------

Ensure that accommodation provided to young people preparing to leave care is safe and properly supported - with temporary, unsuitable accommodation, being a last resort and used for as little time as possible	£0	Within existing budgets
Invest in a savings account for you a sum of £100 for every year you are in care. This money will be available to you on your 18th birthday	£116,300	Assumes average 3.7 year stay in care
Up to your 21st birthday, help you with council tax and losing out on housing benefit as a result of taking part in education, training and low employment	£348,300	Average band A council tax and £50pw rent allowance for 100 children aged 16-21 still in education

Champion your needs and interests

Make sure that you know how to complain and how to get in touch with Upfront (Kent's Children's Rights Service), who can provide support to help you pursue a complaint	£0	Within existing budgets
Provide you with access to a solicitor (at our cost) if you want legal advice about your care order, or any other legal order affecting you – such as contact with certain people in your life	£0	Within existing budgets

Total ongoing budget needed (base budget)

£1,998,137

Amount per child

£1,718.09

Total one-off start up costs

£208,000

Pledge	Additional estimated costs £'s	Method of calculation
--------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------

A sense of identity and belonging

Help your local authority ensure that your care plan includes extra help to enable you to attend school and maintain contact with important people in your life	£0	Within existing budgets
Tell you who your corporate parents are and how you can contact them	£0	Within existing budgets

A consistent adult in your life

Ask the local authority responsible for your care to ensure that you have a social worker who visits you on a regular basis and tells you how to contact them	£0	Within existing budgets
Ask you local authority to make sure that you have at least one person in your life who you can expect to be around throughout your childhood	£0	Within existing budgets

A good education

Work with your social worker to ensure that you have a place at a good school that will help you to do your best	£0	Within existing budgets
Work with your school to help you do your best	£0	Take from new base funding in "Kent" sheet
Celebrate your achievements and success	£0	Within existing budgets

Good memories for the future

Provide at least 4 hours a week of opportunities to pursue hobbies and interests (including sports and music)	£342,066	£5 per week per child plus junior leisure centre membership at £22 pa for 1213 children
---	----------	---

Preparation for adulthood

Ask the local authority responsible for your care to make sure that you are consulted about key decisions being made in your life	£0	Within existing budgets
---	----	-------------------------

Champion your needs and interests

Ask the local authority responsible for your care to make sure that you know how to complain and how you can access a Children’s Rights Service who can provide support to help you pursue a complaint	£0	Within existing budgets
Remind your local authority of their responsibility to provide you with access to a solicitor if you want legal advice about your care order, or any other legal order affecting you – such as contact with certain people in your life	£0	Within existing budgets

Total ongoing budget needed (base budget)

£342,066

Amount per child

£294.12

Pledge	Additional estimated costs £'s	Method of calculation
A sense of identity and belonging		
Ensure that your views of the type of carers that you would want are taken into account when choosing your placement	£0	Within existing budgets
Arrange for you to get your national insurance number for your 16th birthday or as soon as possible after being entitled to have one	£0	Within existing budgets
Tell you who your corporate parents are and how you can contact them	£0	Within existing budgets

A consistent adult in your life		
Ensure that you have a named social worker and know how you can contact them	£0	Within existing budgets
Make sure that you have at least one person in your life who you can expect to be around throughout your time in care	£0	Within existing budgets

A good education		
Ensure that you have a place at a good school that will help you to do your best	£0	Within existing budgets
Work with your school to help you do your best	£0	Take from new base funding in "Kent" sheet
Expect your carers to take an active interest in your education and make positive links with your school, including attending parent's evenings and other school events	£0	Within existing budgets

Provide a computer to our children in care who are aged 11 years or over and, where appropriate, access to the internet	£0	Within existing budgets
Celebrate your achievements and success	£0	Within existing budgets

Good memories for the future

Provide at least 4 hours a week of opportunities to pursue hobbies and interests (including sports and music)	£78,114	£5 per week per child plus junior leisure centre membership at £22 pa
Help you build a photo album of key people in your life and places you have been to while in care	£0	Within existing budgets

Preparation for adulthood

Make sure that you are consulted about key decisions being made in your life	£0	Within existing budgets
Ensure that accommodation provided to young people preparing to leave care is safe and properly supported - with temporary, unsuitable accommodation, being a last resort and used for as little time as possible	£0	Within existing budgets
Invest in a savings account for you a sum of £100 for every year you are in care. This money will be available to you on your 18th birthday	£27,700	Based on 277 unaccompanied children under 18

Champion your needs and interests

Make sure that you know how to complain and how to get in touch with Upfront (Kent's Children's Rights Service), who can provide support to help you pursue a complaint	£0	Within existing budgets
Provide you with access to a solicitor (at our cost) if you want legal advice about your care order, or any other legal order affecting you – such as contact with certain people in your life	£0	Within existing budgets

Total ongoing budget needed (base budget)

£105,814

Amount per child

£90.98

Total one-off start up costs

By: Marilyn Hodges – Director, Strategy, Policy & Performance
 Joanna Wainwright – Director, Commissioning (Specialist Services)

To: Children’s Champions Board - 5 December 2007

Subject: Proposals for a Corporate Parenting Workshop

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report presents, and seeks views, on an outline proposal for a Corporate Parenting Workshop to KCC Members.

FOR INFORMATION

Introduction

1. (1) The statutory framework underpins the important role of elected Members of Local Authorities as the ‘corporate’ parent of children and young people looked after by or leaving the care of the Local Authority.

(2) The provision of a Corporate Parenting Workshop is part of a package of information and guidance to help Members to understand and fulfil their responsibilities as corporate parent.

The Outline Proposal

2. (1) The draft outline proposal for the Corporate Parenting Workshop is appended.

(2) It is suggested that the workshop takes place on or after February 2008 in order to take advantage of NCB training materials which are expected to be released in January 2008.

Other Provision

3. Plans are also underway to set up a meeting between Members of the Children’s Champions Board and Looked After Children and care leavers so that they are able to learn about their experiences of what it is like being in care. It is suggested that this meeting takes place by early January 2008.

Recommendations

4. Members of the Children’s Champions Board are asked to:

- (a) Note the contents of the report.
- (b) Put forward views on the draft programme so that officers are able to work up the final programme.

Paul Brightwell
Policy & Performance Manager – Looked After Children
01622 694308
paul.brightwell@kent.gov.uk

John Mitchell
Joint Commissioning Officer
01233 898540
john.mitchell@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents:

None

Proposal for the Corporate Parenting Awareness Raising Workshop for Members

(Half day seminar)

Draft outline agenda

- Welcome and introduction Ann Allen
- Opening presentation - Graham Badman and/or other CFE director
- A brief overview of outcomes for LAC against the ECM key outcomes, then info about Care Matters and the Kent Pledge
- Hardelot DVDs and input from some of the young people involved to highlight key messages from LAC and care leavers
- Corporate parenting and implications for Members - to include use of NCB training materials (if available)/ alternatively use presentation and updated data from previous workshop - Paul Brightwell/John Mitchell
- Question and Answer session
- Close - Ann Allen

This page is intentionally left blank

The following information relates to Item C1 of the agenda of the meeting of the Children's Champions Board on 5 December 2007. This is an information paper, which is circulated on or around the time of this meeting and is circulated to members of the County Council.

	Children on the CP Register Oct 06	Children on the CP Register Oct 07	Number of Looked After Children Oct 06	Number of Looked After Children Oct 07
Canterbury	80	79	108	88
Swale	90	65	109	113
Thanet	112	100	205	207
East Kent Total	282	244	422	408
Ashford	80	68	81	89
Dover	60	56	77	72
Maidstone	90	120	61	61
Shepway	69	95	102	101
Mid Kent Total	299	339	321	323
Dartford	55	60	32	30
Gravesham	92	75	55	59
Sevenoaks	26	51	52	54
Tonbridge & Malling	55	45	52	49
Tunbridge Wells	49	39	49	38
West Kent Total	277	270	240	230
Disability EK	6	14	46	44
Disability WK	3	1	13	16
16+	0	0	126	139
Children on the CP Register	867	868		
All Kent LAC			1168	1160

This page is intentionally left blank

By: *Joanna Wainwright, Director, Commissioning Specialist Services*
Marilyn Hodges, Director, Strategy, Policy & Performance
Bill Anderson, Director, Children's Social Services

To: Children's Champion Board - 5 December 2007

Subject: EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Classification: Unrestricted

File Ref:

Summary: This report informs Members of educational outcomes for children and young people looked after by Kent County Council, to the year ending 30 September 2007.

FOR INFORMATION

Introduction

1. (1) A report to Children's Champion Board on 23 May 2007 described actions Kent County Council and its partners are taking to promote the educational achievement of children in care and young people leaving care, in accordance with our duties under Section 52 Children Act 2004. Our action plan aims to improve children's achievement by promoting the stability and quality of their care placements, reducing any time they spend out of school, providing them with guidance and support, helping them catch up and fulfil their potential and ensuring carers and other professionals are equipped to support their learning and promote their health and wellbeing.

(2) Key actions undertaken in the last year include development of a Kent Pledge setting out our intended commitments to Looked After Children, changes to school admission arrangements, Cluster action plans, a new mentoring support service, an incentive scheme for year 11 pupils and early intervention in response to any absence from school.

Impact on outcomes for children

2. (1) Appendix 1 summarises key attainment, absence and exclusions data for the period 2002 to 2007 for children and young people looked after by Kent County Council. Key points to be noted in relation to 2006/7 results are as follows:

- Improvements in the percentages of LAC achieving at least level 4 in English, Maths and Science at key stage 2
- A reduction in the percentages of LAC achieving at least level 5 in English, Maths and Science at key stage 3, against a backdrop of significant improvements over the last 3 years

- Improvements in the percentages of LAC achieving 5A*-C and 1A*-G at GCSE/GNVQ and a reduction in the percentage achieving 5A*-G, against a backdrop of significant improvements over the last 2 years for this indicator
- A significant reduction in the percentage of LAC missing 25 days or more of schooling in the year
- A significant increase in the percentage of LAC sitting GCSE/GNVQ exams
- The percentage of LAC permanently excluded remaining as in 2005/6, following a significant improvement since 2004/5.

(2) Appendix 2 provides a breakdown by Cluster of the number of Looked After Children attending Kent schools.

Recommendations

3. Members of the Children's Champion Board are asked to note the contents of this report.

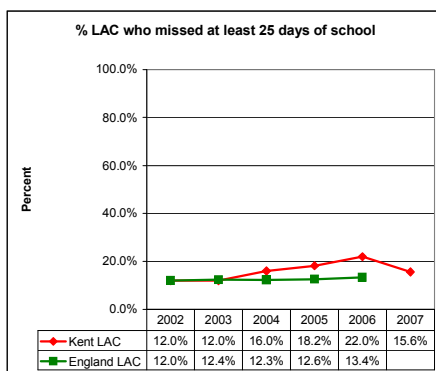
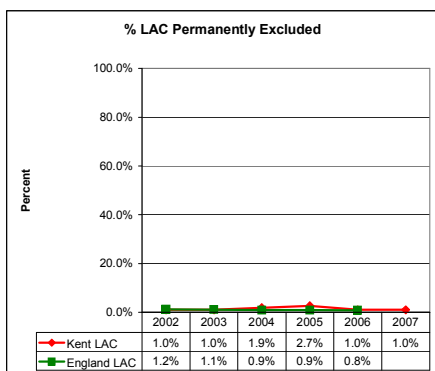
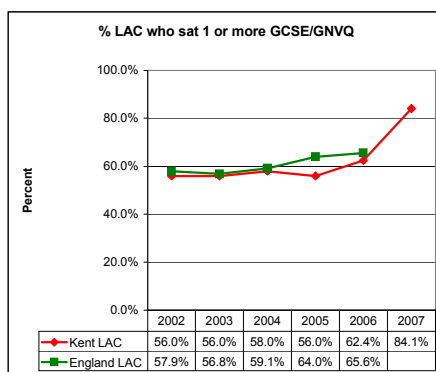
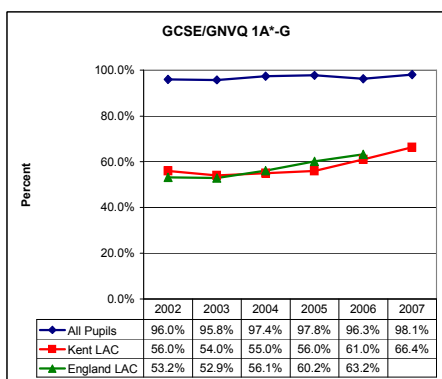
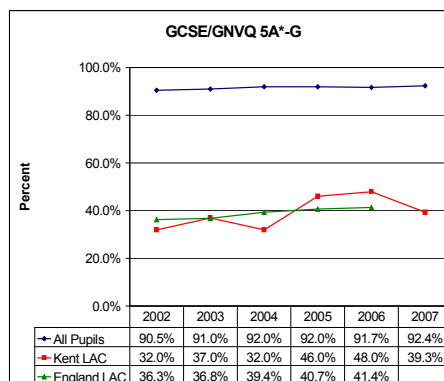
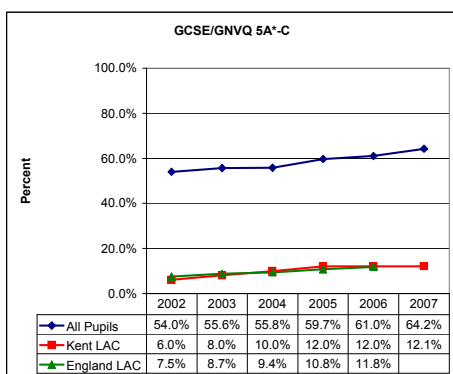
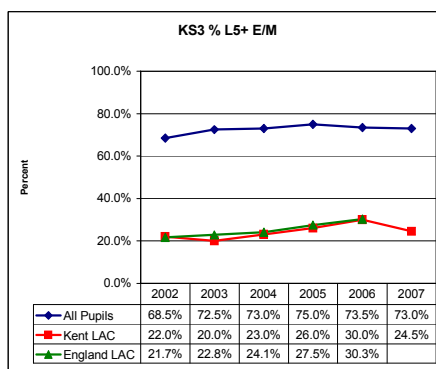
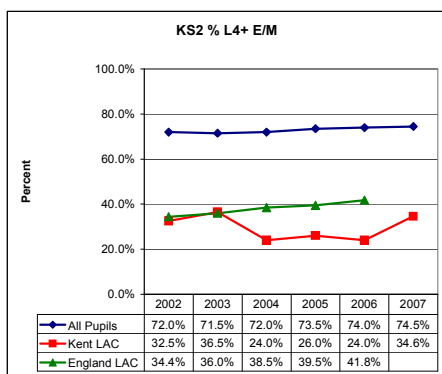
John Mitchell
Joint Commissioning Officer
01233 898540
john.mitchell@kent.gov.uk

Paul Brightwell
Policy & Performance Manager (LAC & care leavers)
01622 694308
paul.brightwell@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents:

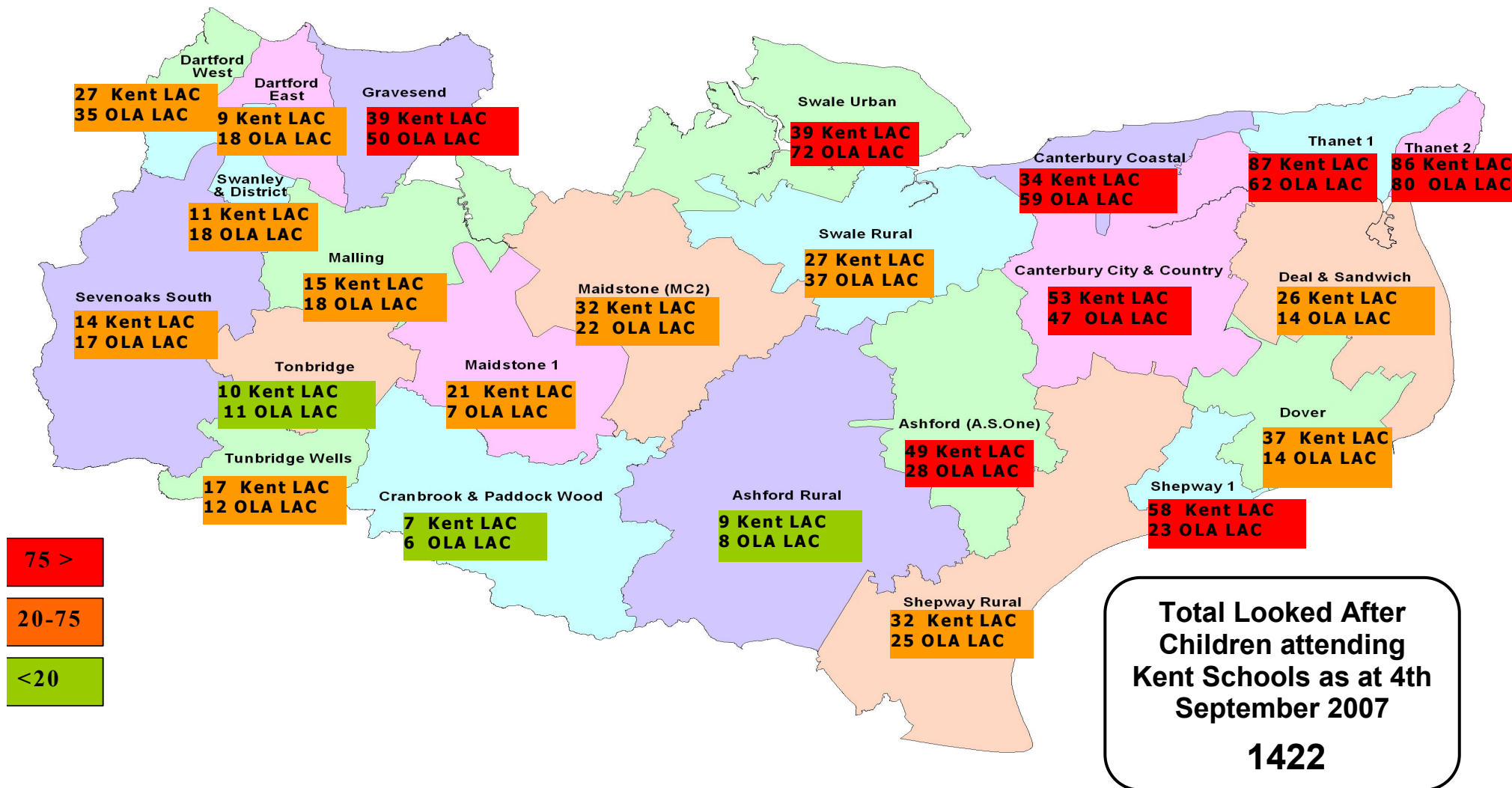
None

Appendix 1: Education of children looked after by KCC: attainment, absence and exclusions 2002 to 2007*



*Data taken from KCC OC2 statistical returns to DCSF. These record outcomes for children who had been looked after by KCC for at least 12 months at end September each year (e.g. 2007 figures cover the period 1/10/06 to 30/9/07). Children looked after by other local authorities, and those looked after by KCC for less than 12 months or who left care before end September, are excluded from these returns.

Appendix 2: Distribution of Looked After Children on roll in Kent schools by cluster (including Academies and excluding independent sector provision)



75 >

20-75

<20

This page is intentionally left blank

By: Marilyn Hodges, Director Strategy, Policy & Performance

To: Children's Champions Board - 5 December 2007

Subject: KENT CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS

Classification: Unrestricted

File Ref:

Summary: This paper sets out the development of children's trust arrangements in Kent and highlights the role of the Children's Champions Board in relation to the Kent Children's Trust and 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. All Local Authorities are expected to develop effective children's trust arrangements by 2008.

(2) Through the Children Act 2004 (section 10) the following services have a duty to cooperate 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.

Background

2. (1) The ECM framework describes children's trusts as 'a set of arrangements across children's services to provide integrated working at all levels, from planning to delivery, with a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people.' The need for better planning, working and communication between children's services was highlighted in Lord Laming's inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié. Through the Children Act 2004 children's trusts are put forward to address the fragmentation between services and to ensure that health, social care, education and other key agencies work better together to improve wellbeing and life chances for all children with a particular focus on vulnerable children.

(2) The Kent Children's Trust (KCT) has a responsibility to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Kent and has a close working relationship with Kent Safeguarding Children's Board which has a particular focus on vulnerable groups.

Progress in Kent

3. (1) The Kent Children's Trust was established in September 2006. The KCT meets the requirements of the Children's Act 2004 and operates as a directly linked working group of the Kent Partnership. Cabinet agreed the KCT Governance Framework on 26th November.

(2) The KCT agreed the Kent Children and Young People Plan: Positive about our Future (CYPP) as the single overarching plan for children's services in Kent. This plan has recently been reviewed and reported as part of the Annual Review for the Children, Families and Education Directorate 2006/7.

(3) It has been agreed that there will be one set of children's trust arrangements in Kent including county and local dimensions. The vision is of streamlined and strategic county arrangements with a focus on commissioning improved outcomes for children and young people delivered through a network of Local Children's Services Partnerships. Kent is investing in strong local arrangements to ensure that integrated planning and delivery is responsive to local need and built on meaningful engagement with children, young people, families and local communities.

(4) Through the Governance Framework Cabinet has agreed scrutiny arrangements for the work of Kent Children's Trust through:-

- (a) The existing Kent County Council Scrutiny committee; and
- (b) The Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee and the Children's Champions Board.

Local Children's Services Partnerships

4. (1) The KCT has committed to developing local arrangements across Kent from September 2008. 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.

(2) The pathfinders were asked to:

- (a) Establish a local partnership board.
- (b) Develop a shared understanding of local needs, issues and priorities using multi agency and 'new' data sources including MOSIAC community profiles.
- (c) Agree a local children and young people's plan within the framework of the Kent CYPP
- (d) Ensure the participation of children, young people and parents and or carers.

(3) 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.

(4) The interim evaluation report highlights learning in the following areas:

- Planning and commissioning
- Engagement of schools
- Integrated processes
- Integrated teams
- Participation of children and young people
- Engagement of parents
- Working with the voluntary and community sector
- Communications

The interim evaluation report is available at

http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Children/lct_evaluationreport.cfm

(5) Based on the pathfinder experience local children's trust arrangements will be introduced across Kent from September 2008.

Integrated Processes

5. (1) The government are requiring local authorities to implement a range of integrated working processes to facilitate information sharing, integrated working and 'joined up' support for children, young people and families. These processes include:

- (a) Common Assessment Framework
- (b) Lead professional function
- (c) Resource Directory
- (d) ContactPoint, previously know as Information Sharing Index

(2) Kent has established a multi agency Project Board to manage the introduction of these new processes and project managers have been appointed to co-ordinate training and implementation. Approximately 6,000 staff across children's services will be trained in the common assessment framework and the lead professional function during 2007/08.

Children's Health

6. The vision for children's trust arrangements in Kent includes developing a radical partnership with both Kent Primary Care Trusts. A new children's health commissioning team has been established within KCC, CFE Directorate to reflect the commitment to improving health for all children and young people and reducing health inequalities for vulnerable groups. Through the Kent CYPP the KCT is committed to integrated commissioning of child health services to improve health outcomes.

Joint Area Review

7. The Joint Area Review (JAR) of children's services in Kent will assess how effectively KCC and partners work together to improve outcomes for children and young people and the development of children's trust arrangements in Kent will be scrutinised as part of this inspection.

Recommendations

8. Members of the Children's Champions Board are asked to:
 - (a) Note this report and the role of the Board in reviewing the work of the Kent Children's Trust.

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

Background Documents:

- *National Evaluation of Children's Trust Pathfinders*
http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Children/kct_national_CT.cfm
- *Towards Local Children's Trust Arrangements; Guidance for the LCT pathfinders*
http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Children/lct_pathfinders.cfm
- *Local Children's Trust Pathfinders Evaluation Report*
http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Children/lct_evaluationreport.cfm

This page is intentionally left blank