

Accountability Protocol for the Director of Children Services

(As approved by the Council on 6 April 2011)

The Corporate Director for Families & Social Care (CDFSC) is also designated as the Council's statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS).

A range of services for children and young people are managed within other directorates of the Council. This protocol ensures the DCS is able to meet their statutory responsibilities and assures the effective integration of all services for children and young people.

The CDFSC, the Corporate Director for Education Learning & Skills (CDELS) and the Corporate Director for Customers and Communities (CDCC) are all members of the Corporate Management Team and are directly accountable to the Managing Director for the performance of their duties. In addition, the CDELS and the CDCC are accountable to the CDFSC for the functions specified below.

The CDFSC, as the statutory DCS, is accountable for ensuring that:

- there are sufficient financial, human and other resources available across the Council to discharge the authority's statutory children's services functions and maintain service standards in the future within the allocated budget;
- staff are supported and developed so that they are effective, competent and confident; and
- the Lead Member for Children's Services and other elected members are supplied with full and accurate information about children's services in the local authority area and for children outside the area for whom the authority is responsible.

This protocol is enacted through a regular series of meetings. The timing of meetings is determined by the DCS, as appropriate. These meetings:

- provide a regular and formal opportunity for the DCS to be assured that their statutory duties are being met;
- enable the DCS to check and challenge and also direct activity if necessary to ensure that the statutory duties are being met;
- are minuted and maintained as a formal record of assurance.

At all other times the three corporate directors referred to in this protocol will be considered as equal colleagues and equal and full members of the Corporate Management Team.

If there is any dispute recorded in these formal assurance meetings or any concerns registered by the DCS that their statutory duties are not being met, or that remedial action appears not to be being taken or that new direction to ensure those duties will be met is not being accepted, then the Managing Director must be informed immediately and required to resolve the situation.

The CDELS is directly accountable to the CDFSC in the following areas:

- working with local head teachers collectively to drive up standards in schools and ensuring that they work together and with others to improve children's well-being;
- interacting with and supporting local schools and encouraging them to play their full part as relevant partners of the Children's Trust and working productively with other services;
- ensuring services are available for all children within the local authority area, including those attending all types of schools (including independent schools);
- supporting looked after children, in particular by focusing on improving their educational attainment;
- narrowing the gap in outcomes between the most disadvantaged and other children and young people;
- ensuring there are effective arrangements for school improvement in the area, for instance by:
 - raising standards in schools in line with the National Strategy;
 - setting challenging but achievable targets for schools;
 - ensuring a clear and costed menu of support for school improvement;
 - using powers to address underperformance quickly, including warning notices, structural improvement models, creating of Interim Executive Boards and other alternative governance arrangements, and, where necessary, school closures.
- ensuring effective delivery of the authority's responsibilities for 14-19 provision, and liaising with the Young People's Learning Agency on all aspects of 14-19 provision;
- ensuring that there is clear leadership at all levels in schools and education partners;
- ensuring that there is an effective 14–19 Partnership for the area, which can deliver local targets on participation and attainment.
- ensuring that there are effective safeguarding arrangements in place in all schools and educational settings and within the workforce directly accountable to them and be a member of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board;
- ensuring, with the agreement of the CDFSC, that there are sufficient financial, human and other resources available to discharge the authority's statutory education and learning functions and maintaining service standards in the future within the allocated budget;

- being a member of the Children's Trust (or its successor) and ensure effective working across the partnership.

The CDCC is accountable to the CDFSC in the following areas:

- ensuring that young offenders have access to the services and support they need to reduce re-offending. This includes ensuring that there is a joined up approach to resettlement plans and that service are delivered appropriately;
- putting in place procedures which enable youth offending teams and the secure estate to escalate and resolve issues where resettlement services are not being delivered to young people leaving custody;
- facilitating closer links between youth justice and the wider crime and disorder agenda, taking into account the needs of the victim as well as those of the offender;
- ensuring that there are effective safeguarding arrangements in place in all youth justice settings and within the workforce directly accountable to them and be a member of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board;
- being a member of the Children's Trust (or its successor) and ensure effective working across the partnership.