

**The Strategy for Early Education and Childcare (0-5 years)  
2008 – 2013**



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## **Equality and Diversity**

Kent County Council is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment. We believe that access to services should be open to all regardless of social circumstances or background, gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, age, disability, sexuality, or religion. We recognise the importance of valuing the diversity of the workforce and that employees must be free from discrimination. We will strive to ensure that our principles of valuing equality and diversity are reflected in taking forward this strategy, whether this is on work that we undertake directly or through working with others. We are also very mindful of the need to meet particular legal responsibilities and for others to do so and we will work with schools, providers, agencies and others so that these are discharged.

For clarification purposes the use of the term 'we' and 'our' through this strategy refer to Kent County Council (KCC)

## **Executive Summary**

We want all our children to thrive and lead fulfilled, healthy and independent lives. With the early years being seen as crucial to influencing later life chances we must be clear about how we will support young children and their families. This strategy sets out the overall direction for the development of early education for 3 and 4 year olds, and childcare for children between 0 and 5 years.

While the Local Authority has a key role to play in supporting young children to be nurtured and, develop effectively both educationally and emotionally we cannot be seen in isolation:

- The early education and childcare providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sector are key to the delivery of appropriate and quality services;
- Parents and carers are important contributors to the development and life chances of the children they care for; and
- What is also important is the success of services working in a multi-agency framework through the Kent Children's Trust and the Local Children Services Partnerships to improve the outcomes of our children.

In setting out this strategy we are very mindful that while many children do well at school and go on to achieve economic well-being and make a positive contribution there remains a cohort of children who do not. Poverty and disadvantage blights the lives of too many of our children and this must not be ignored. This means that a key part of our strategy must be to take a targeted approach so that we can improve the life chances of this group of children. Of course, we are also mindful that there must be a balance between the provision of targeted services for particular groups of young children and the provision of universal services for all young children. This is why our strategy focuses on:

- Supporting those children most in need;
- Working with parents and families;
- Improving the quality of provision and support for the early years workforce; and
- Securing sufficient and accessible early education and childcare (0-5 years).

We have also set out particular areas of work to take forward, how we will work in a more joined up way with others in the delivery of services and the arrangements for the strategic overview of the strategy. Finally, we have included some contextual information for reference purposes.

## **Chapter 1: The purpose, vision and rationale of the development of early education and childcare in Kent**

### **The background to the development of this strategy**

The County Council has consulted extensively with those involved in designing, commissioning and delivering services for early education and childcare in order to develop this strategy.

### **The purpose of this strategy**

This strategy sets out to provide the vision and rationale for the development of early education for 3 and 4 year olds and childcare for children between the ages of 0 and 5 years. It is intended to be used by those involved in designing, commissioning and delivering services for early education and childcare.

In developing this strategy we are mindful of:

- The important aims that Kent County Council shares with Government in relation to Every Child Matters. That is, all children should be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. At the heart of this are the principles of equality of access, meeting differing needs, and valuing and respecting difference.
- The development of the Children's Trust approach to working in a co-operative multi-agency framework to improve the outcomes for children, young people and their families, and integrated working arrangements through Local Children Services Partnerships (LCSPs). Appendix 1 sets out more information on the Children's Trust approach.
- The important role that early education and childcare providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sector have to play in taking forward our vision.
- The statutory framework in relation to the provision of early education and childcare<sup>1</sup>. Appendix 2 sets out the national and statutory framework.

It is not intended to be a detailed action plan as this will be set out in local and operational plans by the appropriate LCSPs and services implementing this strategy.

This strategy is one of a suite of strategies that has been developed by Kent County Council to improve the outcomes of all children from birth to 19. It should be read in conjunction with KCC's strategy for the provision of services in and around schools and Kent Children's Trust Parenting Strategy. The former encompasses the provision of childcare which is principally for older children (5 – 14) offered as part of a range of services in and around schools, while the latter aims to support parents and carers so that all children fulfil their potential. The full suite of strategies falls under the umbrella of the Kent

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<sup>1</sup> To meet the requirements of parents in order that they can work or undertake education or training leading to work. For children up to the age of 14 and up to the age of 16 for those with special educational needs and/or a disability.

Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). This is the single, overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people in the county. Appendix 3 provides more information about the key strategies.

## The Vision

Kent County Council has set out its overarching vision:

"In Kent's successful communities, achievement exceeds aspiration, diversity is valued and every child and family is supported. Children and young people are positive about their future and are at the heart of joined up service planning. They are:

- Nurtured and encouraged at home
- Inspired and motivated by school
- Safe and secure in the community
- Living healthy and fulfilled lives"

*Kent Children and Young Person's Plan 2008 – 2011: Positive About Our Future*

"Providing our youngest children with the very best start in life is crucial. Early years/nursery education has an enormous impact in developing a child's willingness to learn from an early age, along with building essential social skills and good behaviour. With these key skills, a child's appetite for learning is considerably improved."

*KCC's Towards 2010 'Learning for everyone – Getting it right from the start'*

What is clear is that no child in Kent should be left to fail and that all children and young people should be supported to reach their full potential. The provision of, and access to, appropriate good quality early education and flexible childcare for young children is essential if all children are to thrive and make optimum progress in their learning and development. This is crucial to developing the intellectual, cognitive, social and behavioural development of all the young children in Kent.

Every child is unique and we want all our young children to enjoy their experiences in the early years in settings where they are nurtured, their individual needs are met and their differences are valued. Play is central to the well-being of young children and we especially recognise the importance of creativity. The child who practices creative play becomes socially competent and can learn and thrive. It is essential that the early education and childcare workforce is supported and developed to facilitate provision of the highest quality.

We cannot achieve this in isolation. We need to work with and support our partners in schools who offer extended services and nursery provision and in the private, voluntary and independent sectors which provide early education and childcare, as well as parents and our partners in Health, other agencies and voluntary groups.

## Rationale for change

### The national perspective

*The following narrative draws on a number of national research papers. Appendix 5 sets out the papers that have informed this section of the strategy.*

While many children do well at school and go on to achieve economic well-being there remains a cohort of children who do not. Research shows that children who grow up in poverty are likely to be disadvantaged in terms of lifestyle, education, future employment prospects and health. While the cost to the individual is essentially around the damage and disadvantage they suffer there is also a cost to society; for example, community safety and the financial burden arising from youth and adult offending, teenage pregnancy, healthcare and the provision of government benefits.

National policy has taken some families out of poverty but there are still too many families remaining in poverty. What is more, poverty levels in the UK are higher and families stay in poverty longer than most other European countries. In addition, the income levels of families are increasing at different rates with the income of the most disadvantaged families showing the least growth. That is the gap between those who are more well off and those who are not is increasing.

Particular groups affected by poverty are:

- Families with adults outside of work
- Children from black and minority ethnic families (including children in asylum seeking families and Gypsy/Traveller children)
- Families in low wages
- Lone parent families, particularly teenage mothers
- Families affected by disability
- Large families
- Children in poor housing (e.g. temporary accommodation and housing unfit for human habitation)
- Young people living independently.

We must also bear in mind there will also be groups of children who may not be living in poverty but would be termed 'vulnerable'. For example, those at risk<sup>2</sup> or in the care of the Local Authority<sup>3</sup> and those who are disabled or who have learning difficulties.

In terms of making a difference to disadvantaged children it is clear that:

- Early years are seen as crucial to influencing later life chances. Evidence shows that early experiences such as the quality of the home

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<sup>2</sup> Of abuse or neglect but this would also include for example, children living in households where there is domestic abuse.

<sup>3</sup> And those who have recently been adopted.

environment, family structure, pre-school care and relationships with caring adults produce a pattern of development in later life that is hard to reverse even through schooling.

- Educational attainment continues to be a strong predictor of social mobility and experiences in the early years are seen as being key to educational attainment.
- Work is the best way out of poverty although it may only be part of the solution. High quality and flexible childcare is crucial. Research indicates no adverse effects of maternal employment on the cognitive development of 3 to 5 year olds.
- Interventions that provide high quality care and education to children are more effective in changing outcomes particularly in the cognitive domain, than interventions aimed at improving home environments and parental behaviour. High quality interventions can produce substantial cognitive gains particularly for families from lower socio-economic groups.
- Quality that is sensitive and responsive to individual needs matters. Conversely there are adverse emotional and behavioural effects of being in poor quality provision for long hours.
- There are doubts at national level about the effectiveness of SureStart, including their failure to reach the most disadvantaged groups, although it is acknowledged that the full impact of Children's Centres will not be apparent for some time.
- Ethnic minorities do not, generally, use nurseries as much as white families and children of manual workers participate less in early years provision.
- Families affected by disabilities are poorly served and mothers of large families are deterred from entering the labour market.
- Flexibility and appropriateness to meet needs in provision is key but is often an issue as is cost of provision.

### The County Perspective

The County Council is committed to improving the quality of early education<sup>4</sup> and we have already been working to improve provision such as increasing the number of childcare places available and the numbers of young children taking-up their entitlement of early education. This is set out in more detail in appendix 6; this appendix also sets out information on levels of provision and the profile of the early years workforce. While what we are already doing will make a difference to the outcomes of the majority of the children of Kent, this is not sufficient if we are to realise our vision that no child in Kent should be left to fail and that all children and young people should be supported to reach their full potential. We need to ensure that we also take a targeted approach so that we make a difference to the life chances of disadvantaged and vulnerable children. For example, in terms of our priorities we should also be working towards:

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<sup>4</sup> KCC's Towards 2010



- **Increasing the number of 3 and 4 year olds who are from disadvantaged backgrounds taking up their free entitlement to early education.**
- **Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest.**
- **Increasing the percentage of families who are from disadvantaged backgrounds using Children's Centres and that families of young children who are not accessing the centres are visited as part of outreach work.**
- **Ensuring that there is sufficient and appropriate early education and childcare provision in the most disadvantaged areas of Kent and to specific groups such as children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and teenage mothers.**
- **Ensuring parents of disadvantaged families have access to information via the Kent Children's Information Service on early education and childcare provision and that information on funding available for childcare is provided to this group of families.**
- **Increasing the number of appropriately qualified staff at level two and level three in early years settings, particularly in settings serving the most disadvantaged families.**

It is these priorities that will make a difference to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young children and shape their lives for the better but we must bear in mind that we need to reach all disadvantaged children and not just those in disadvantaged locations. Equally, there must be a balance between universal and targeted services or we will not be able to achieve the aspirations of this strategy.

*The following chapters (2 – 5) of this strategy look at how we can make a difference to the outcomes of our young children while chapter 6 looks at how we will take the strategy forward.*

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## Chapter 2: Support for young children including those most in need

This chapter looks at arrangements to support:

- vulnerable early years learners (identification through the Leuven Model);
- children with LDD (learning difficulties and/or disabilities) and those with complex health needs;
- children at risk of abuse or who are in the care of a local authority;
- young carers; and
- teenage parents.

It also looks at:

- transition to primary school;
- the important role that health visitors and others have to play in improving the health and well-being of pre-school children and their families and how by working with them we can improve outcomes for children; and
- promoting healthy lifestyles in the early years.

### The Leuven Model

The Local Authority has developed links with Professor Ferre Laevers of Leuven University, Belgium to use the 'Leuven Model' to improve children's outcomes. This model applies to all children but it is particularly helpful in identifying vulnerable learners. The Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children is a process-oriented monitoring system, which provides professionals with a tool for quality assessment. It looks at how 'involved' the child is in their work and their 'emotional well-being' allowing professionals to highlight children who may need extra support in the classroom to help each child reach their full potential in terms of learning. In Kent, the Leuven Involvement Scale is being used on a trial basis and is targeted at specific areas with training provided to Local Authority staff and staff in early years settings. Appendix 4 includes more information about the Leuven Model.

### 2.1 We will evaluate and review the Leuven Project with a view for wider implementation across early education settings.

#### Children with LDD (learning difficulties and/or disabilities)

About one child out of every five, may at some stage during their education, require differentiated support in school or early years setting because of a special educational need. A very small percentage of these may need longer-term support and some with severe and complex needs may require a statement of special educational need. Within the Local Authority and school clusters, there are a number of specialist staff in post to support the education of pre-school children who have been identified as having special educational needs. These are:

- Pre-school Special Educational Needs teachers
- Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators

- Specialist teachers (physical and sensory)
- Home visitors (Portage)

Across Kent there is specialist expertise available to support meeting the needs of children under statutory school age with profound, severe and complex special educational needs. Where specialist provision is needed, this is available within the early years settings managed by the PSC District Special Schools. Children do not need a statement to access this expertise and local teams consider individual needs and ensure appropriate support is provided. This work complements the County Council's rollout of Early Support. This approach is based on joint working with the Health Services, where at a local level professionals across all agencies work collaboratively to co-ordinate support for the child and their parents to achieve the best outcomes for children between 0 – 5 years who have profound, severe and complex needs.

**2.2 We will ensure that there is:**

- (i) **co-ordinated and consistent training across all early years provision differentiated to reflect a range of skill and understanding;**
- (ii) **co-ordinated working between all early years providers and public and voluntary agencies involved in caring for vulnerable children. This may involve the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)<sup>5</sup>; and**
- (iii) **consistent and accountable quality assurance across provision.**

## **Safeguarding Children**

It's estimated that at least one child dies each week in England and Wales as a result of physical abuse<sup>6</sup>. Babies are particularly vulnerable, being much more likely to be killed than all other ages. Early education and childcare providers have a crucial role to play in the early identification of young children at risk.

**2.3 We will work with all the agencies involved to:**

- (i) **alert early education and childcare providers and their staff to the issues of child protection and provide training and advice;**
- (ii) **support early education and childcare providers and staff to make referrals and to contribute to the individual care plans of children identified as being at risk of abuse (the latter may involve the use of tools such as the CAF); and**
- (iii) **support and advise early education and childcare providers where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.**

## **Looked After Children**

<sup>5</sup> The mechanism to assess and plan support to vulnerable children or children with complex needs - 'The team around the child'.

<sup>6</sup> From NSPCC Key Facts and Figures.

There is a significant gap between the outcomes of looked after children and other children and evidence suggests that they are less likely to access their entitlement to early education<sup>7</sup>. As a corporate parent, the Local Authority must not accept any less for them than parents would for their own children and we are committed to ensuring that all 3 and 4 year olds in our care take up their entitlement to early years education<sup>8</sup>.

#### **2.4 We will:**

- (i) work with early education and early years childcare providers to raise awareness of particular issues, such as the effect of early trauma and encourage them to use early years personal education plans;**
- (ii) work with foster carers who care for children in the care of KCC to raise awareness of the importance of early education and play as a secure foundation for more formal learning;**
- (iii) identify, collect and share data for all looked after 3-5 year olds in the care of KCC as appropriate to improve access and take-up of pre-school education; and**
- (iv) track and monitor attainment and achievement of looked after children in the care of KCC, aged 0-5.**

While we are fully signed up to national and local policies to improve the outcomes for looked after children there are a significant number of these children who, while placed in care in Kent, come under the control of other local authorities<sup>9</sup>. This means that not all of what we have set out to do will apply to all looked after children in Kent. Some of it will apply to only those who are in the care of KCC. Clearly we would want to improve the outcomes of all children who are looked after in Kent regardless of who the corporate parent is and where this is appropriate and realistic we will do so.

### **Young carers**

Young carers are identified as a group of young people in need of support and that being a young carer may adversely affect their physical, or emotional well-being and can limit their social or educational opportunities. Research<sup>10</sup> shows that siblings cared for by young carers are much more likely to have learning difficulties. The Local Authority has developed a Young Carer Strategy in order to set out a clear framework as to how we will support young carers and enable them to fulfil their potential. A key strand of this strategy will be how we will work to ensure that the children of the parents of young carers are not disadvantaged.

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<sup>7</sup> The Government's Green Paper Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care – October 2006.

<sup>8</sup> This is part of KCC's pledge to looked after children in our care - adopted in 2008.

<sup>9</sup> These children would have been taken into care by other Local Authorities and the legal responsibility for the child's care remains with that Local Authority regardless of where they place them.

<sup>10</sup> By Loughborough University in 2004.

**2.5 We will work with agencies and providers to ensure that the parents of young carers have accessible and comprehensive information so that their children are able to take up their early education entitlement and are able to access childcare that meets their needs.**

### **Teenage Parents**

The incidence of early parenthood is considerably higher in lower social economic groups. Similarly the long term health and economic outcomes for young parents and their children are influenced by family history and experience. Kent County Council is working as part of the Kent Teenage Pregnancy Partnership<sup>11</sup> to help young parents to realise their social, academic and employment potential. The first stage of the support offered to young people concentrates on the well-being of the parent and the child whereas the second stage is to help the young person prepare and plan for the future. Short courses provided through this initiative are supported by good quality childcare provision at Children's Centres, with childcare funded through the Care2Learn scheme. This type of work is being piloted in Folkestone, Canterbury, Thanet, Maidstone and Ashford.

**2.6 We will build on this work and extend the services offered so that all young parents can access the Care2Learn scheme.**

### **Transition**

If we are to maximise the benefits of the early education experience then this strategy also needs to include a focus on successful transition. The beginning of primary school represents the true beginning of formal education for all children and their families. It is a time of excitement and curiosity but this event can bring many uncertainties and worries for both children and adults involved, especially if the child has more complex needs. Building relationships between schools and early years settings is crucial to bringing about successful transition.

**2.7 We will work with schools and early education and childcare providers to facilitate effective transition and, where children have more complex needs we will identify and involve key people to support this<sup>12</sup>.**

### **Working with health professionals**

Health services play a vital role in the earliest months and years of a child's life. Health Visitors and midwives in particular have a high credibility with families and are the earliest point of contact with parents. They are in the unique position of being able to have universal access (without stigmatisation of families) to homes where there are babies and children under four years of age. National policy sets out that the focus of the Health Visitor's work is on

<sup>11</sup> A key role of this Partnership is to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies.

<sup>12</sup> For the latter this may involve the use of the Common Assessment Framework.

pre-school children and that their primary role is to lead and deliver the Child Health Promotion Programme, using a family focused public health approach and to deliver intensive programmes for the most vulnerable children and families. They and their teams will take the lead in working with the whole family and early intervention, promoting infant, child and family health, and supporting the capacity for better parenting, including safeguarding children and addressing domestic violence. As highly trained professionals they will be responsible for more challenging areas such as building therapeutic relationships and addressing difficult issues in families with more complex needs, identifying existing and future vulnerability and engaging with hard to reach groups and individuals.

It is crucial that if we are to support the most disadvantaged families that we work with Health Visitors, midwives and school nursing teams so that we can identify those in need at the earliest stage of a child's life and support them to access appropriate childcare and early education.

**2.8 We will work with health visitors, midwives, school nursing teams and other health professionals as appropriate so that the most disadvantaged families are able to access appropriate childcare and early education.<sup>13</sup>**

### **Promoting healthy lifestyles in the early years**

The first five years of a child's life is a critical time for establishing a healthy start to ensure positive health outcomes throughout adulthood. It also provides many opportunities to work with parents and carers in a fun and positive way on their own health and well-being. Evidence suggests that parents and families are at their most receptive to external advice and support following the birth of their first child and this provides a unique time to work with the whole family. The recent Supporting Parents in Kent Strategy consultation found that:

*“While parents felt confident in their ability to support their children, this did not preclude them from seeking advice, information or guidance to support them in making decisions. 72% had sought information or advice at some point. Health and well-being of their child was the most likely area.”*

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Obesity Guidance (2006) identified Early Years settings as having a key role to play in tackling overweight and obesity making a series of recommendations including:

- Minimise sedentary activities during playtime, and provide regular opportunities for active play and structured physical activity sessions;

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<sup>13</sup> The Local Authority has, under the umbrella, of the Kent Children's Trust developed a Parenting Strategy. This strategy sets out in more detail the work that the Local Authority is undertaking with health professionals and others to improve the outcomes of families and young children.

- Implement guidance on food procurement and healthy catering from DCSF, the Food Standards Agency and the Caroline Walker Trust;
- Make sure that children eat regular, healthy meals in a supervised, pleasant, sociable environment, free from distractions such as television. Children should be supervised at mealtimes and, if possible, staff should eat with them;
- Involve parents and carers in activities aimed at preventing excess weight gain and improving children's diet and activity levels;
- Interactive cookery and physical activity demonstrations; and
- Opportunities for active play.

**2.9 We will run a pilot Healthy Early Years Programme in the later part of 2008/early part of 2009.**

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### Chapter 3: Working with parents and families

Appropriate quality provision which is accessible to parents is key but we must not underestimate the important influence and impact that parents and carers have on the emotional, social and intellectual development of their children. We need to empower them so that they<sup>14</sup>:

- are active contributors to the learning and development of their child;
- can inform and shape services for their young children, and they can form strong relationships with providers; and
- are able to make informed decisions about their child's early education and childcare.

At a more operational level we have already embarked on work to promote early education and childcare provision to parents and carers across the County, by providing a range of information to them through our promotional campaigns and the Kent Children's Information Service, and this work will continue. However, we must be mindful that Kent is made up of diverse communities and for some groups of parents/carers language, culture, disability, disadvantage, differing family circumstances and lifestyles or location may be a barrier and we will need to provide additional support. For example this would include:

- raising awareness with particular groups of parents and carers who may be hard to hear;
- helping parents and carers who are having difficulty finding appropriate childcare such as those who have a child with a disability or live in a rural area;
- raising awareness with early education and childcare settings so that all families feel included and valued; and
- helping parents and carers with the paperwork and processes to be worked through to access their child's free entitlement.

#### **3. We will:**

- (i) involve parents in the planning and review of services;**
- (ii) ensure that our campaign to promote early education and childcare across the county also focuses on disadvantaged families and where there is low take-up, including providing information in community languages and alternative formats where this is appropriate to do so;**
- (iii) work to recognise and understand differing needs through outreach work and raise awareness of the free entitlement through this work with disadvantaged groups and those where take-up is low;**

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<sup>14</sup> The Local Authority has, under the umbrella, of the Kent Children's Trust developed a Parent Support Strategy. Work to engage with parents and carers to shape services and support their child's learning and development is a key strand of this strategy.



- (iv) provide a “brokerage” service for those parents who are finding it difficult to get appropriate provision or finding it hard to access help; and**
  - (v) raise awareness with early education and childcare providers to help them support the specific needs of disadvantaged groups and hard to reach groups.**
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## **Chapter 4: Quality of provision and supporting the early years workforce**

### **Quality of provision for young children (0-5 years)**

We have a vision for learners. It is that they will be self-confident and enjoy high levels of self-esteem. They will be able to organise themselves and demonstrate a strong drive for exploration, leading to entrepreneurship. As effective communicators, they will have the capacity to understand, react and represent their communication in a variety of forms, including artistic, numeric and linguistic. They will be socially competent with well developed interaction skills, acting on knowledge of consequences. They will make optimum progress in their learning and development.

Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn possible next steps in their development and a clear understanding of learning. Individual pupil progress will be central to children developing skills and attitudes for further learning. Young children learn best through active, engaged, meaningful learning with play being the way most children will do most of their learning for most of the time. Learning for young children should not be formalised and should incorporate children's natural styles of learning. It needs to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. Practitioners will need to provide an environment that allows a wide range of choices and opportunities for self initiated activity for children to be confident to try new activities and initiate new ideas.

Our aspirations are that there will be powerful learning environments with:

- early education and childcare settings that are well planned and provide effective learning and play environments both inside and outside, and that these are evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis;
- children being observed to discover what fascinates them and finding activities to meet these interests;
- activities which help children to explore the world of behaviour, feelings and values, and the relationships between children being explored to improve them;
- staff in settings being able to identify children with emotional and developmental problems and apply interventions to support them; and
- high quality care where children are nurtured, with effective relationships between staff, children and parents/carers.

As a strategic leader it is critical that we bring about change so that in terms of high-level outcomes there is an increasing proportion of settings judged to be good or outstanding and an improvement in the quality of teaching, leadership and management. Equally important, is the need to ensure that we close gaps in attainment at the Early Years Foundation Stage between those children who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and those children who are not. In view of this, the Local Authority has developed a Strategy for the

Quality Assurance of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This strategy is intended to guide leaders, managers and staff in all early years settings as well as Local Authority staff and those involved in the delivery of children's services. This strategy sets out that we will work in partnership with settings, practitioners and agencies to improve outcomes for all children.

**4.1 We will:**

- (i) monitor provision and children's outcomes throughout the early years, and across settings and school using performance indicators that are capable of measurement and can demonstrate value-added;**
- (ii) support settings through audit and self-evaluation processes and recognise quality provision through accreditation of a Kent Quality Mark;**
- (iii) set up an improvement partner programme and a recovery programme to support those settings that are deemed inadequate; and**
- (iv) develop closer link with health and other agencies, and build on localised partnerships to improve delivery of services for settings including supporting joint working between maintained nurseries and the PVI sector.**

### **Supporting the early years workforce**

Our vision for our early years and childcare leaders is that they will be ambitious for their learners and nurture the children they care for. They will be appropriately qualified and committed to the professional development of themselves and their staff, and operate effective recruitment and retention policies. They will also have good business acumen and managerial skills, and have a good knowledge of the principles and practices of the National Day Care Standards and for early years leaders, the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our vision for our early years and childcare practitioners is that they will have a sound knowledge of child development and form strong relationships with children and their parents/carers. They will have excellent communication skills, high levels of self-confidence and organisational ability, and the ability to work collaboratively. They will also understand what makes for good leadership and management, and set out a professional development path for themselves to improve what they do and increase their knowledge about children's needs and learning. Overall, they will be clear about their role and the contribution they can make towards creating a strong and positive environment for learning and play; they will feel supported, trusted and know that their views are valued.

In summary, practitioners should develop their abilities across the Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEP). They should improve their relationships with both children and adults and develop an understanding of the individual and diverse ways that children develop and learn. They should actively support and extend children's learning in and across all areas and

aspects of learning and play, taking account of all children's needs, learning styles and interests. They should also work with parents/carers and the wider community.

Clearly we cannot under estimate the importance of supporting the retention, training and professional development of leaders, managers and staff in early years settings and we need to work in partnership with them so that our vision becomes reality. We have set out how we will do this in the Kent Strategy for the Quality Assurance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (as mentioned earlier in this chapter).

#### **4.2 We will:**

- (i) ensure that training and support offered to settings is inclusive of all children's needs and will support settings in meeting effectively the needs of all and improving the outcomes of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, vulnerable groups and those at risk of underachievement;**
- (ii) develop and implement an overarching workforce development plan that links all forms of professional development with training and covers all aspects of a setting's needs in line with both education and care standards;**
- (iii) develop and implement a leadership strategy;**
- (iv) commission appropriate levels of training by analysing the needs of settings by cluster, allocating resources, both internal and external training against prioritised needs, monitoring delivery of training, evaluating impact and adjusting training in the light of outcomes;**
- (v) maximise the impact of the Government's funding streams to improve qualification levels of those working in early years settings, particularly those serving the most disadvantaged families;**
- (vi) support the retention of the early years workforce through the Early Years Professional Status and improve the skills of the workforce to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities; and**
- (vii) work with Higher Education and Further Education colleges to identify training and career development opportunities.**

### **Childminders**

This chapter has tended to focus on the quality of provision and supporting the early years workforce in nursery and centre type settings. However, we must not forget that accredited childminders make up a significant part of childcare market and are an important contributor in young children's learning and development. For many parents they would be their preferred choice of provider; for example, this may be because of their locality or because the parent or carer has a child with particular needs. Clearly, our aspirations must also apply to those childminders who are caring for young children and we must take account of them in developing the quality of provision and supporting the early years workforce.

## Chapter 5: Securing sufficient and accessible early education and childcare (0-5 years) in Kent

### Sufficient and accessible early education and childcare

A key area of the Local Authority's work is to ensure that there is sufficient and accessible early education and childcare. We have embarked on the four practical steps to develop the early education and childcare market. These are to analyse demand, map supply, map demand to supply and secure sufficiency. We have already undertaken extensive research through a survey conducted across Kent during 2005-06 and through the Kent Parents Consultation Project. The latter has been highlighted, nationally, as a model of good practice<sup>15</sup>.

Our analysis has helped the County Council to understand the early education and childcare market, the needs of families and how to develop sustainable provision that meets local needs and increase the take-up of the free entitlement. What we have found is that:

- the main factors influencing parents' choice in using childcare are access to information, employment status and size of family;
- income was found to correlate most closely with take-up of childcare in Kent, i.e. more affluent families were more likely to take-up childcare; and
- there is scope for expansion in existing settings<sup>16</sup>.

In developing the market it is also important that we take account of particular issues and needs. For example:

- families living in rural areas of Kent;
- children who have a learning difficulty or disability;
- young parents;
- families where English is not their first language; and
- the expected decline in number of Kent children over the next decade by some 9,500 pupils (about 4.5%).

In summary, we must ensure that provision is flexible to meet parents and carers needs and that they have choice.

#### **5.1 We will:**

- (i) work with providers and potential providers to support capacity building so that gaps in provision are filled, including ensuring that there is sufficient and appropriate provision for disadvantaged groups of children;**
- (ii) aim to ensure a mixed economy of private, public, voluntary and independent providers so that there is vibrant provision but where**

<sup>15</sup> As part of a case study in the Government's document - Choice for parents, the best start for children: Making it happen.

<sup>16</sup> 21% of settings have scope to expand the number of places offered and 34% of settings have scope to expand the number of hours offered.

- we identify specific gaps in provision e.g. to disabled children we will need to take direct action so that these children are not disadvantaged; and**
- (iii) where appropriate, necessary and possible give priority to using excess space which becomes available in our primary schools due to falling rolls for the provision of early education and childcare facilities alongside other community provision<sup>17</sup>.**

### **Free early education for 3 and 4 years olds**

From April 2007 the Government is gradually extending the core offer of free early education and care for all 3 and 4 year olds to 15 hours a week so that by 2010 all children across the country will receive this entitlement<sup>18</sup>. These changes have been introduced in a small number of 'pathfinder' areas in 2007. The aim of the pathfinders is to inform best practice models by looking at:

- expanding the range of hours when the free provision is available;
- increasing the length of session times beyond the current period of 2.5 hours; and
- supporting partnerships between different providers so that parents can access the free entitlement between 8am and 6pm.

While the work of the pathfinders will help to inform the development of provision in Kent a key part of our work has been to increase the numbers of 3 and 4 year olds taking up their entitlement to early education. However, take-up varies across the County so we need to build on this work and develop more collaborative working with others such as health professionals, schools and voluntary organisations to increase levels of take-up by all groups of young children, including the most disadvantaged.

Finally, we must be mindful that there will be some parents and carers who do not wish to take up their child's early education entitlement and we fully respect their wishes<sup>19</sup>. However, we must ensure that all parents and carers are aware of the entitlement and understand the benefits so that they are able to make the best choices for their child. This is mentioned in more detail in chapter 3.

#### **5.2 We will:**

- (i) increase the entitlement of free early education in Kent in April 2010;**
- (ii) learn from the best practice models and work with providers to extend the flexibility of free provision that is available; and**
- (iii) increase levels of take-up, particularly where there is low take-up by disadvantaged families.**

<sup>17</sup> Recommendation 30 of Kent Primary Strategy.

<sup>18</sup> The Government is also intending to extend this entitlement to 2 year olds in disadvantaged areas. This may take effect at the end of 2009.

<sup>19</sup> This may be more relevant for particular groups, e.g. some ethnic minority groups or where the child has a disability.

## Children's Centres

The development of Children's Centres is a key priority for the Local Authority and are crucial for improving services to children and families. They bring together a range of services for childcare, early education, health and family support in convenient community settings for use by families, parents and carers of children under five. Public, private and voluntary organisations are intended to work together in the centres to provide services to all young families but with a particular emphasis on improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged children.

What is important is that these centres should be seen as belonging to and serving the needs of their local community and their needs must inform provision. They are not intended to compete with early education and childcare provision in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector. Indeed for some centres this type of provision may be provided by the PVI sector on nearby sites. This is an opportunity for providers and the centres to work in a collaborative and integrated way as part of an overall package of care for children and families.

Appendix 7 sets out more information on Children's Centres including the timetable for their development and the range of services provided.

### **5.3 We will:**

- (i) take account of the views of children and parents/carers as part of planning and evaluating service provision in Children's Centres;**
  - (ii) develop a robust framework for improved partnering arrangements between KCC, our statutory partners, children's centres, childcare settings and the PVI providers to achieve improved outcomes for children and their families through collaborative multi-agency working; and**
  - (iii) work with health professionals and our schools to increase the numbers of families who are from disadvantaged backgrounds accessing the Children's Centres.**
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## Chapter 6: Taking the Strategy Forward

### Next Steps

We need to put in place a framework for taking the aspirations of this strategy forward and those key areas of work which appear throughout this document in boxed emboldened text.

### Working with partners

Kent County Council will work with partners in schools, the statutory agencies and voluntary organisations, parents and early years providers from the private, voluntary and independent sector to implement this strategy. The aspirations of this strategy will inform our own action planning, within the delivery of our services through Local Children Services Partnerships (LCSP).

It will be for the LCSPs to:

- build up an overall picture of children's needs within an area;
- define priorities and choices, and determine how they are best delivered;
- develop provision through public, private, voluntary and community providers to respond to those needs; and
- monitor implementation, evaluate impact and learn from the process.

In summary, working as part of the LCSPs will be key to implementing this strategy. The local partnerships fall under the umbrella of the Kent Children's Trust and appendix 1 sets out more information on both the Children's Trust and the LCSPs.

### Implementation and the strategic overview

KCC has established the multi-agency Kent Early Years, Childcare and Extended Services Board (EYCESB). The Board will take the strategic lead to achieve the aspirations of this strategy. It will also take the lead role in meeting our statutory requirements in relation to the provision of early education and childcare (see appendix 2). As part of the new arrangements for working in the Children's Trust approach, this Board reports to the county level Children's Trust (see appendix 1).

The EYCESB has set up four working groups to take forward specific areas of work in relation to the provision of early education and childcare. The Board will oversee the monitoring and review process of this strategy and as part of the monitoring process we will be measured at a national level by the following indicators<sup>20</sup> which relate to early years provision:

- Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and NI 72

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<sup>20</sup> NI 72 and NI 92 are also subsumed as targets within the Kent Agreement 2.



Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL).

- Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest. NI 92
- Number of Sure Start Centres. NI 109
- Take up of formal childcare by low income working families. NI 118

Appendix 8 sets out the terms of reference of the Board, its membership and the responsibilities of the working groups.

Finally, while this strategy sets out our vision and rationale for the development of early education and childcare for young children we are mindful that its delivery will need to be balanced against emerging national and local priorities, and that we may need to vary what we do over time.

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### **The new arrangements for working The Children's Trust approach and LCSPs**

The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities who have responsibility for Education and Social Services to make arrangements for co-operative working between themselves and relevant partners. The vision is built on integrated service delivery to children, young people and their families supported by integrated strategy, planning, commissioning, resourcing and governance. The strategic and operational framework for all agencies to work together to improve outcomes for children is brought together under the umbrella of a Children's Trust. The Children's Trust is a sub-group of the Kent Partnership and takes ownership of the associated Local Area Agreement outcomes and Vision for Kent priorities.

The three guiding principles of the Kent Children's Trust are:

- Streamlined and highly strategic county arrangements with a key focus on commissioning improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Presumption in favour of decision making at the most local level that is consistent with excellent performance (outcomes for children) and value for money (quality and infrastructure).
- A focus on early intervention and preventative services for children, young people and families.

These principles will underpin all commissioning decisions at individual, operational and strategic levels across children's services in Kent.

Agencies within Kent have initially focused work to develop the Children's Trust approach on four pathfinders in Maidstone, Shepway<sup>21</sup> and Tunbridge Wells. The pathfinders are managed at a local level by multi-agency Local Children Services Boards and they have informed the development of Local Children Services Partnerships (LCSPs) across the whole of Kent. The role of the partnerships is to identify priorities relating to their own locality, develop plans<sup>22</sup> and take differentiated approaches to improve outcomes according to the differing needs of children in their localities. The LCSPs will have a key role to play in the delivery of the aspirations of this strategy in localities.

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<sup>21</sup> There are two pathfinders in Shepway.

<sup>22</sup> Through a Local Children and Young People's Plan.

### The National and Statutory Framework

In 2005, the Government produced its *Ten Year Strategy for Childcare*, followed by the Childcare Bill (published 8 November 2005) as the statutory underpinning to this. It confirms the vital role of local authorities as strategic leaders, and enshrines in the law a parent's expectation that high quality childcare will be available for all those who wish to work.

Before that the *Every Child Matters* green paper, later to become the basis for the *2004 Children Act*, identified the five outcomes that the Government considers most important to children and young people. These are:

- Be healthy;
- Stay safe;
- Enjoy and achieve;
- Make a positive contribution; and
- Achieve economic well-being.

The outcomes are universal, and should benefit every young child and person, regardless of their background or circumstances. The outcomes are also concerned with narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. There is a necessary focus on improving outcomes for looked after children and those with special educational needs and disabilities. Government also wishes to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and the number of people not in education, employment or training. Kent shares these important aims.

Government has also published an Action Plan, '*Choice for parents, the best start for children: making it happen*' to provide the framework and advise on implementation. This framework sets out two key national objectives:

- All children up to five will have high-quality early learning and care and better access to early childhood services – giving them the best start in life.
- All working parents will have access to a wide range of childcare where they can be confident that their children will thrive and be well cared for, enabling them to have greater choice about balancing work and family life.

The Government's vision is that by 2010, in every area, parents and children should find the following available to them:

- high quality integrated, accessible and flexible early education and childcare<sup>23</sup> services that meet parents' individual needs;

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<sup>23</sup> To meet the requirements of parents in order that they can work or undertake education or training leading to work. For children up to the age of 14 and up to 16 for those with special educational needs and/or a disability.

- a children's centre accessible by all children in most disadvantaged areas by March 2008, and in every community by 2010;
- access to information and advice about locally available childcare and other services in accordance to local need;
- the free early-education entitlement of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks per year is in place for all 3 and 4 years olds<sup>24</sup> (with a longer term goal of 20 hours a week for 38 weeks), integrated with childcare for 0-5 year olds;
- all schools offering access to extended services that will enable parents to access an out-of-school childcare place for all children aged 3-14;
- increased involvement of local parents and partner organisations in the planning and delivery of local early years and childcare services; and
- a raise in quality standards, whilst ensuring childcare remains affordable and sustainable.

The Childcare Act 2006 has introduced a new regulatory and quality regime for early years provision which will support the delivery of quality integrated education and care for children from birth until the point when they begin Key Stage 1. The new requirement, which incorporates the Guidance Birth to Three Matters; Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage; and Care Standards for under 8's into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will be statutory from September 2008. This requirement tracks development from birth across six areas of learning and development:

- Personal, social and emotional development;
- Communication, language and literacy;
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy;
- Knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Physical development; and
- Creative development.

All childcare for school age children from the beginning of Key Stage 1 to age 8 will have to comply with streamlined standards that ensure provision is safe and secure and that providers are suitably qualified and adhere to child:adult ratios. These criteria will be the requirements for entry on to a new Ofsted Childcare Register (OCR).

The Act has also introduced a reformed and simplified childcare and early years regulation framework which focuses on quality, ensures children are safe and simplifies the existing bureaucratic regime. This means that all early years settings will be required to deliver and be inspected against the EYFS.

The Act also places a duty to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the requirement of working parents (particularly parents on low incomes or who have a disabled child). **In particular, local authorities will need to:**

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<sup>24</sup> From April 2006 the free early education of 12.5 hours a week was extended from 33 to 38 weeks for all 3 and 4 year olds and from April 2007 the Government is gradually introducing the new entitlement of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks.

**i.) Carry out an initial assessment<sup>25</sup> to determine how much, what types and in what patterns childcare is needed, having regard to:**

- **the views of parents;**
- **current childcare provision; and**
- **socio-economic data and labour marketing patterns, including working hours.**

**The assessment must be kept under review and a full assessment should be repeated at least every three years in line with regulations and guidance.**

**ii.) Work with local partners to fill gaps in the market as far as is reasonably practicable, by continuing to shape and support the market using a range of mechanisms such as:**

- **business and financial planning advice and support and training;**
- **start up funding (capital and revenue); and**
- **other subsidies including sustainability training.**

**iii.) Provide an information and advice service for parents and prospective parents on the range of support services available to them in caring for children and young people aged up to 20.**

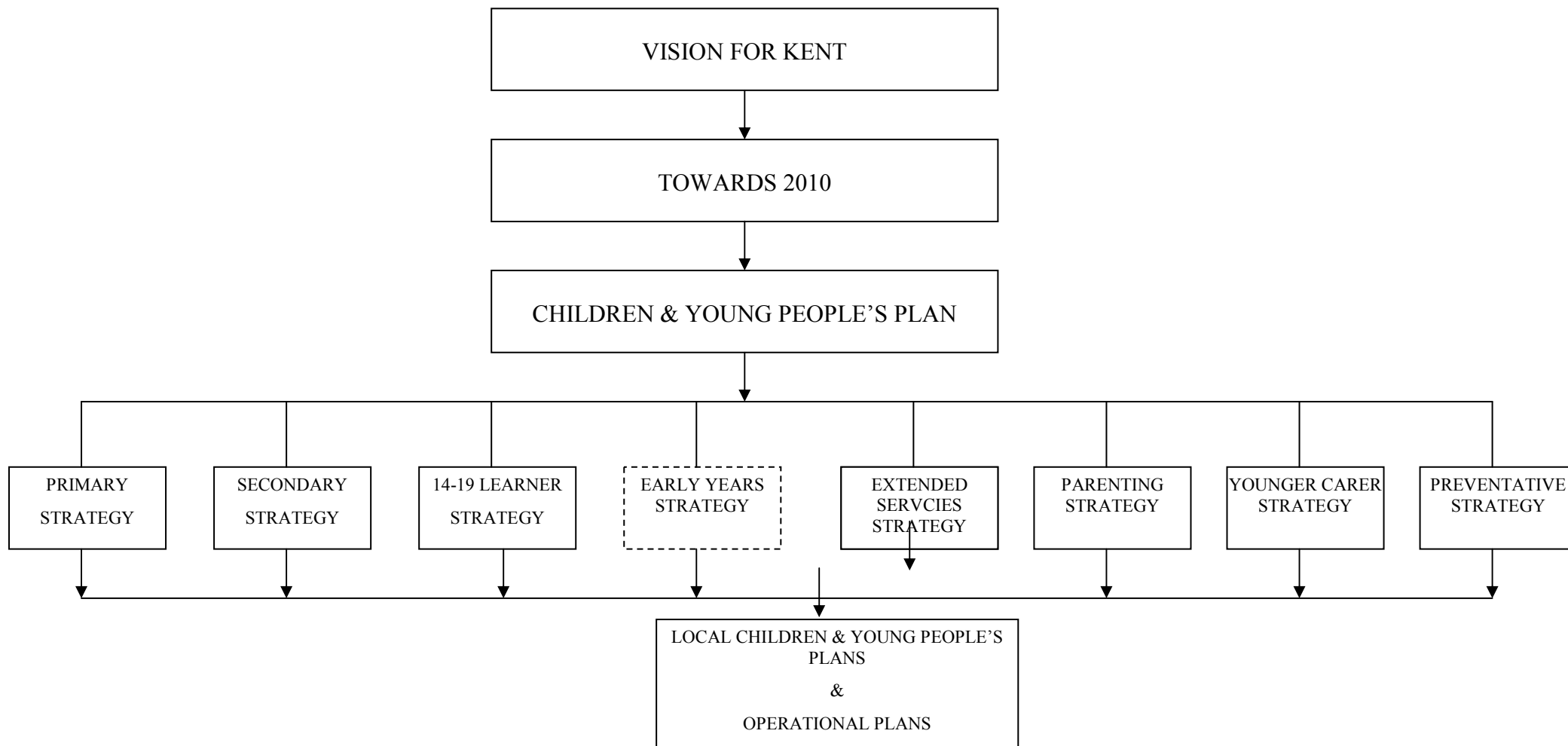
In autumn 2007, the Government published its ten year Children's Plan: Building brighter futures. This is the first ever national Children's Plan and it is intended to build on a decade of reform and strengthen support for all families during the formative early years and beyond. In relation to the early years the plan commits to:

- **extending the offer of up to 15 hours of free early education and childcare to 20,000 2 year olds in the most disadvantaged areas;**
- **investing funding in the early years workforce so that staff can take up CPD and for every full daycare setting to be led by a graduate by 2015, with 2 graduates per setting in disadvantaged areas; and**
- **easing the transition from play-based learning in the early years into primary school.**

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<sup>25</sup> This comes into force in April 2007 and authorities are required to complete their first assessment during 2007-08.

### KEY STRATEGIC PLANS AND STRATEGIES



## The Leuven Model

The Leuven Involvement Scale is a methodology that is used to assess children on the level of their well-being and involvement in relation to learning. Professor Laevers bases his theories on the premise that the most productive learning occurs when we are so involved with something that we lose ourselves in it.

The methodology utilises observations of a child when he or she is in *The High/Scope Curriculum (active learning through key experiences)* setting, with the observer looking for a list of signals that are recorded on a five-point scale. These signals range from level one “where a child may seem absent and display no energy, activity is simple, repetitive and passive”, to level five “where a child is concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent with intense activity revealing the greatest involvement”.

When a child exhibits low levels of well-being and/or involvement, staff plan interventions to improve the situation. No blame is attributed to the child, with the staff taking responsibility for adjusting the situation in order to enable the child to achieve higher levels of engagement. By using the Leuven scales again staff can judge the efficacy of their interventions. In many cases by putting the ten action points in place higher levels of well-being and involvement are achieved. If the child is still exhibiting low levels of well-being and/or involvement the support of other agencies would be sought.

The methodology and processes of this work are similar in conception to that operated by the national strategies in both mainstream and special schools. That is, by staff having the skills, knowledge and understanding to provide:

- quality teaching and learning opportunities – Wave One;
- adjust teaching and learning for identified group needs – Wave Two; and
- provide individual support and intervention - Wave Three.

This approach is one which is inclusive of needs but also targeted and specific to individual needs. The project that has been developed in Kent has been targeted at specific areas with training provided to Local Authority staff and staff in early years settings.

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## Appendix 5

### National Research Papers which have informed this Strategy

It doesn't happen here – the reality of child poverty in the UK – Barnardos 2007

What will it take to end child poverty? Firing on all cylinders – Joseph Rowtree 2006

Unequal Choices: Voices of experience exposing challenges and suggesting solutions to ending child poverty in the UK – a report published by End Child Poverty 2006

Breakdown Britain – Interim Report on the state of the nation – Social Policy Justice Group, on behalf of the Conservative Party 2006

Social mobility, life chances and the early years – Jane Waldfogel from Maintaining Momentum IPPR 2005

Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006 by the Rowntree Foundation

Factors influencing social mobility – a report by the Department of Work & Pensions 2007

Sure Start Children's Centres: Finding on Phase 1 – House of Commons Report 2007

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## Baseline Information

### Recent Achievements

The Local Authority has:

- exceeded Government targets by almost 40% to increase the number of childcare places available<sup>26</sup>. This has created an increase of 2,787 places;
- met Kent's target to double the number of Kent County Council maintained nursery units from 35 to 70 by September 2006; This has created an additional 1,820 places; *2002/06 Next 4 Years target*
- met our target<sup>27</sup> to increase the number of 3 and 4 year olds taking up early education a year early. This means we have 2,000 more 3 year olds taking up their free entitlement;
- developed a quality accreditation mark covering all aspects of provision to be offered all early years settings<sup>28</sup>;
- delivered a full training programme and a range of conferences to early years and childcare professionals covering a range of areas including inclusion and equalities issues;
- promoted equality of access through outreach projects in Ashford, Dover and Gravesham;
- implemented a procurement framework for training to be delivered by other providers to the private, voluntary and independent sector;
- a Children's Information Service which has achieved the Matrix Quality Award for its internal and external services to customers;
- been successful to date in our implementation of the children's centre agenda. Specifically, in Round One (2004-2006) there are 20 centres and from our target of 52 additional centres in Round Two (2006-2008), 52 sites are identified of which 50<sup>29</sup> have already designated;
- increased provision for 3-5 year old children with profound and severe learning difficulties to ensure equity of access across the County. Nine of the eleven PSC District Special Schools now manage an early years provision (increased from six) and proposals are being developed to include this provision in the remaining two PSC schools; and
- committed to improving the quality of early years education by strengthening the links between pre-schools/nurseries and primary schools, thereby improving children's ability to learn when they enter primary school (KCC's Towards 2010).

### Early Years Provision in Kent

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<sup>26</sup> This relates to targets set for the period April 2004 to March 2006 and they do not take account of any subsequent closures of provision.

<sup>27</sup> The Kent Area Agreement (outcome 1) – target delivery date March 2008.

<sup>28</sup> The accreditation will be piloted in September 2007.

<sup>29</sup> The DCSF has agreed that the designation of the remaining two centres should be deferred until Round 3.

In Kent there are around 2,600 registrations on the OfSTED Early Years Register<sup>30</sup>. Childcare and early education provision around the county includes:

- private, voluntary and independent providers of early education and/or early years childcare
- children's centres
- maintained nursery classes/nursery school
- maintained schools with reception classes
- childminders, some of whom are accredited to offer early education
- settings offering all year round provision
- holiday schemes
- early years provisions managed by the PSC District Special Schools.

#### Take-up of the early education offer

There are around 30,000 3 and 4 year olds in receipt of early education with 90% of 3 year olds and 95% of 4 year olds taking up at least three sessions per week of funded education. However, take-up varies widely across the county. When provision is mapped against estimated numbers of children up to 4 years old, penetration<sup>31</sup> ranges from 29% in Tunbridge Wells to 59% in Dartford. This is an aggregated district figure so there are some wards where penetration exceeds 100%. There are, however, a minority of wards where penetration is as low as 0%.

#### The quality of early years provision

Standards in childcare in Kent from OfSTED inspections for the period April 06 - March 07 showed that 93.8% of settings were satisfactory or better. The national comparison is 96%.

#### The Early Years Workforce Profile

Our research on the Kent workforce profile<sup>32</sup> shows that:

- 91% of leaders are educated to level 3 or above and leaders are more likely to undertake training than other paid staff;
- 68% of paid staff excluding leaders are educated to level 2 or above;
- 70% of staff have undertaken first aid training, 48% of staff have undertaken child protection training and 23% of staff have attended equality and diversity training;
- part time staff make up 31% of the workforce;
- both men and people with disabilities are underrepresented in the workforce;

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<sup>30</sup> For care related to children under eight years old.

<sup>31</sup> The penetration rate is defined as the number of places divided by the number of children multiplied by 100. Where penetration exceeds 100%, this means that there are more places available than there are children and for a penetration rate of 0% there are no childcare places available.

<sup>32</sup> From KCC's annual analysis of pre-school (early education and childcare) providers 2005 – 06 and is based on a response rate of 67%.

- 65% of staff are aged 35 or above; and
- staff who are from ethnic minority groups<sup>33</sup> are slightly underrepresented.

## Appendix 7

### Children's Centres

In the context of the Every Child Matters agenda it is a requirement to provide services for children and families in a more seamless and "joined up" way. Children's Centres are a key part of this way of working for professionals developing children's services. The development of these centres is a key priority for the County Council and the aim is to ensure that all children will have access to a children's centre by 2010. Alongside our partnership working with the early education and childcare providers we will be working with the Health Services and Jobcentre Plus so that early childhood services are delivered in an integrated way as part of an overall package of care and services provided through Children's Centres. In Kent the timetable for the development of Children's Centres is as follows:

- Round One (2004-2006): Twenty Centres of which nine were originally Sure Start Local Programmes, reaching at least 39 of the 48 wards in the top 20% most disadvantaged nationally.
- Round Two (2006-2008): An additional 52 Centres, reaching as a minimum the top 30% disadvantaged areas based on (now) Lower Super Output Area data.
- Round Three (2008-2010): A further 30 more Centres, leading to a total of up to 102, providing countywide coverage.

Children's centre will offer:

- Integrated early learning and childcare<sup>34</sup> (early years provision) for a minimum of 10 hours a day, five days a week, 48 weeks a year; and support for a childminder network<sup>35</sup>;
- drop-in activity sessions for children, such as stay and play sessions;
- family support, including support and advice on parenting, information about services available in the area, access to specialist targeted services and parental outreach;
- child and family health services, such as antenatal and postnatal support, information and guidance on breastfeeding, health and nutrition, smoking cessation support, speech and language therapy and other specialist support;
- links with Jobcentre Plus to encourage and support parents and carers who wish to consider training and employment; and
- quick and easy access to wider services.

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<sup>33</sup> Within the KCC Area about 3.1% classify themselves as non-white (the Kent census 2001).

<sup>34</sup> Early years provision may be located in or around the centre.

<sup>35</sup> This provision, as part of the core offer, applies only to the centres in the 30% most disadvantaged areas.

### The Kent Early Years, Childcare and Extended Services Board

The terms of reference of the Kent EYCESB are:

- Developing and sustaining accessible inclusive early education for all 3 and 4 year olds (integrated where appropriate and possible with pre-school childcare).
- Developing and sustaining accessible inclusive pre-school childcare for children under 5.
- Developing and sustaining accessible inclusive Children's Centres ensuring congruency with resource centres, family centres, other agency centres and the Extended Schools programme.
- In liaison with the extended schools programme, developing and sustaining accessible and inclusive out of school childcare for children and young people aged 3-14 years and up to 16 years for those with special educational needs and/or with a disability and Looked After Children<sup>36</sup>.
- Developing and sustaining the delivery of, on an accessible and inclusive basis, the extended schools core services, in particular liaison with the development of out of school childcare.
- Having strategic oversight over the development and delivery of Kent's national piloting of Parent Support Advisers<sup>37</sup>.
- Developing the early years, childcare and extended schools workforce through the provision of high quality training.
- Co-ordinating the provision of family support / social care and health support for families with children from conception to entry into school.
- The provision of information to parents/carers, settings, schools and all professionals, in line with legislation, government guidance and local initiatives, including contributing to the Kent Resource Directory.
- Monitoring and evaluating improvements in the quality of all provision and services integral to the terms of reference set out above.
- The monitoring of outputs in relation to the terms of reference set out above, and the evaluation of the impact of the Strategy in Kent as a whole.

Membership of the Board includes:

- Representatives from Kent County Council (A KCC Member and officers from Children, Families, Health & Education; Communities; and Environment and Regeneration Directorates)
- The Health Services
- The Learning and Skills Council
- National Childminding Association
- Jobcentre Plus
- Kent Schools (Cluster Chair)
- Pre-school Learning Alliance
- Kent Children's Centres

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<sup>36</sup> Central Government directs that childcare must include children from these groups.

<sup>37</sup> This initiative is around supporting families of children of statutory school age.

The four working-groups and their areas of responsibilities are:

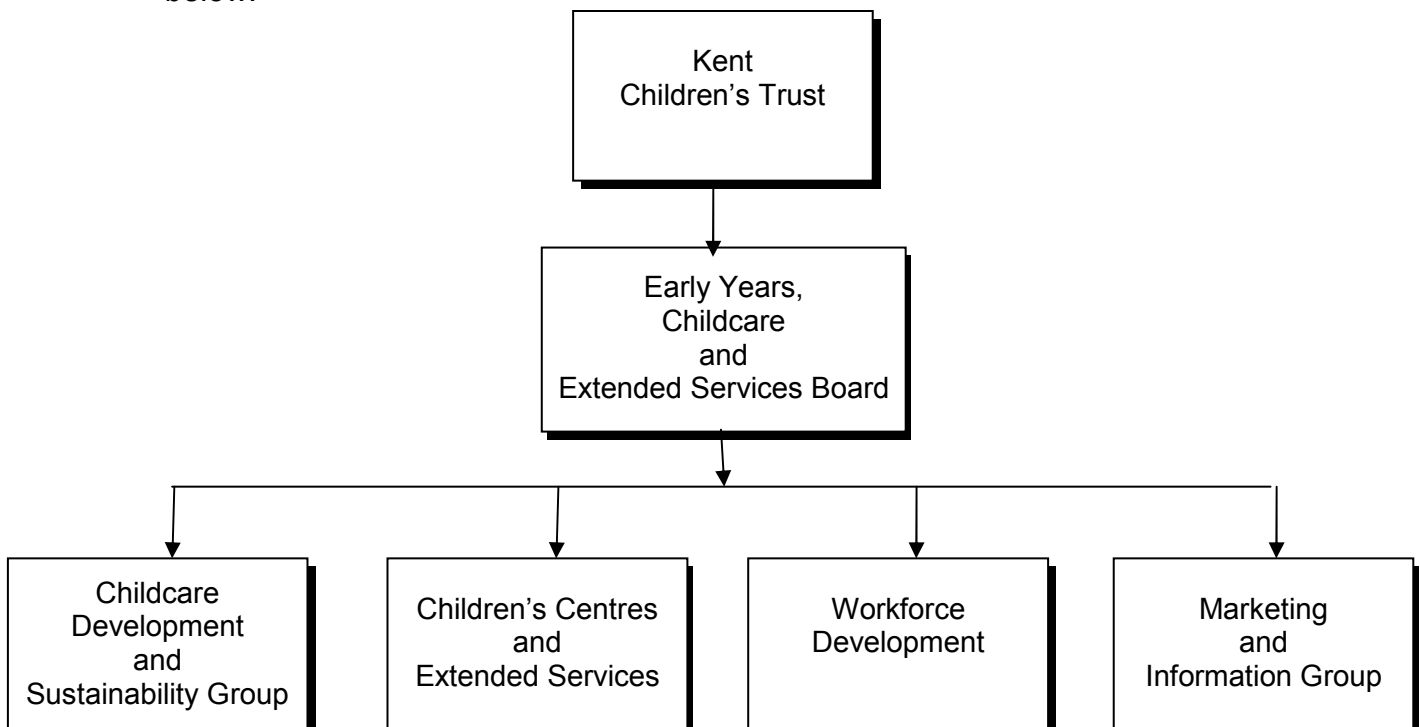
Childcare Development and Sustainability Group, responsible for steering the extension of the free entitlement to early learning and care for 3 and 4 year olds to 15 hours, and to make it more flexible and to steer the provision of “sustainable childcare markets”<sup>38</sup>.

Children’s Centres and Extended Services, (in liaison with the steering body for extended services in and around schools), responsible for working with a range of local partners to roll out Children’s Centres and support the extended schools programme.

Workforce Development and Quality, responsible for setting clear expectations for children’s development at 5 within the framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning what works, particularly in relation to underachieving groups and improving management and leadership through training and development.

Marketing and Information Group, responsible for a detailed childcare sufficiency assessment, taking in the needs of families on low incomes and families with children with disabilities, and, providing parents with the information and advice they need to make choices for their families. This group will also look at how we communicate with the full range of stakeholders.

The structure for the EYCESB and its working group is set out in the diagram below:



<sup>38</sup> In order that there is sufficient and accessible childcare for children aged 0-14, and up to 16 where a child has a SEN and/or disability and/or is looked after.

## Glossary of terms

**Children's centre** – a place where children under 5 years old and their families can receive seamless holistic integrated services and information.

**Children, Families, Health and Education** – a Directorate (department) of Kent County Council delivering education and welfare (social services) services to children and young people.

**Children's Trust** – the strategic and operational framework for all agencies to work together to improve the outcomes for children and young people.

**Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)** – a single overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people in the county. The plan can be found at:

{link to be inserted}

**CLL** - part of the Early Years Foundation Profile. The assessment scales which fall within Communication, Language and Literacy are Language for Communication and Thinking; Linking Sounds and Letters, Reading and, Writing.

**Cluster** – a group of Kent schools (Kent is made up of 23 clusters of schools).

**Common Assessment Framework (CAF)** - the CAF is an assessment tool that can be used by any agency to promote early intervention. The process for the Kent CAF is based on solution-focused practice and enables practitioners and families to work in partnership to start to bring around change at the first sign of difficulty.

**Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)** - the Government department with responsibility for children's services, families, schools, 14-19 education, and the Respect Taskforce (responsibility for these services was with the former Department for Education and Skills).

**Early Support** – a central government mechanism for achieving better co-ordinated, family focused services for young disabled children and their families.

**Early Years Professional Status** – a professional status for graduates working in early years settings.

**Every Child Matters** – the green paper that later became the Children Act 2004.

**Extended Schools** – schools who provide a range of services that go beyond the school day.

**EYFS** – Early Years Foundation Stage.

**EYFE** – Early Years Free Entitlement.

**EY SENCO** – Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

**Free entitlement** – all three year old children are guaranteed a free early education entitlement, based on the Foundation Stage Curriculum for 38 weeks during each academic year for two years from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> April or 1<sup>st</sup> September following their third birthday.

**Jobcentre Plus** - provides help and advice on jobs and training for people who can work and financial help for those who cannot.

**Kent Area Agreement/Kent Agreement 2** – An agreement between Kent Partners and the Government around increasing independence and raising personal fulfilment.

**Kent Children’s Information Service** - this service provides free, confidential, impartial information and advice to parents, carers and members of the public about early education and childcare services in Kent through the Kent Children’s Information Service (CIS). The service has information on all the registered childcare in Kent including early education and early years childcare provision.

**Kent County Council (KCC)** – the Local Authority which provides a range of services (statutory and non-statutory) to the community of Kent. This includes education and children’s social services, which fall under the remit of the Children, Families and Education Directorate.

**Kent Early Years, Childcare and Extended Services Board (KECESB)** – a multi-agency board established to oversee KCC’s commitments set out in this strategy.

**Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEP)** – guidance by the former Department of Education and Skills (now known as the Department of Children, Schools and Families) on the Primary National Strategy: Curriculum & Standards.

**Kent Early Support Programme** – education and children’s social services (these are services from the Children Families and Education Directorate of KCC) working with health services to achieve the best possible outcomes for young children between 0-5 years who have profound, severe or complex needs.

**Kent Primary Strategy** – Kent County Council’s review and agreements made in relation to the way primary schools work.

**Kent Quality Mark** – an accreditation mark covering all aspects of quality provided in early years settings.

**Key Stage 1** - key stage 1 covers children aged 5-7 years old in years 1 and 2 at school.

**LDD** – Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

**Local Authority** – a unitary, county, metropolitan or district council which provides statutory (and non statutory) services to the local community. In Kent it is Kent County Council that has responsibility for the provision of early education and childcare.

**Looked After Children** – children who are in the care of the Local Authority or who are in the care of another local authority.

**Lower Super Output Area** - Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a geography designed for the collection and publication of small area statistics by the Office for National Statistics. They are made up of three layers: lower, middle and upper.

**Maintained Nursery Unit** – a school based premises for three year old children who are offered the place for either 5 morning or 5 afternoon sessions (regardless of take up), maintained by the Local Authority.

**Next Four Years** – the aspirations and targets set by KCC between 2002 – 2006.

**Non-maintained sector** – private, voluntary or independent providers or an accredited childminder, registered by their Local Authority to deliver the free entitlement. The premises of a non-maintained (PVI) provider may be on the site of a maintained school but is wholly independent of the maintained school.

**OfSTED** – Office for Standards in Education, the regulatory body and inspectorate for children and learners in England.

**OfSTED Childcare Register (OCR)** - a register of childcare providers. Childcare providers who care for children aged 5 and over will have to be registered on the OCR and those who care for children aged 8 and over will be able to apply voluntarily to be registered.

**Parents and Carers** – adults with significant caring responsibilities. This might be, for example, birth mothers and fathers, adoptive parents, foster carers, stepparents, members of the extended family and grandparents.

**Portage** – a home visiting service to support children with LDD.

**PSC District Special School** – A school serving those children with profound, severe and complex needs (these schools are based in different



localities across Kent and also have pre-school provision for this group of children).

**PSED** – part of the Early Years Foundation Profile. The assessment scales which fall within Personal, Social and Emotional Development are Dispositions and Attitudes, Social Development; and Emotional Development.

**PVI Provider** – any private, voluntary, independent provider or accredited childminder. Sometimes referred to as non-maintained providers or the non-maintained sector.

**SEN** – Special Educational Needs.

**SENCO** – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

**Setting** – any maintained or non-maintained provision that provides early education and childcare.

**Special School** – provision for children with a severe learning or physical disability maintained by the Local Authority.

**Statement of Special Educational Need** – a statement of special educational needs (SEN) may be issued following a statutory assessment. It details a child's special educational needs and the provision and resources required to meet these needs.

**SureStart** – the Government programme to deliver the best start in life for every child, bringing together, early education, childcare, health and family support.

**Sure Start Unit** – the Sure Start Unit is an integral part of the Department of Children, Schools and Families. The Unit works with local authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, local communities and voluntary and private sector organisations.

**Towards 2010** – Kent County Council's aspirations and targets for 2006-2010.

**Vulnerable child** – a child who is professionally identified as belonging to a group of children who are disadvantaged. For example, this **might** include:

- children with special educational needs, disabled children and children of disabled parents;
- children from some ethnic minority groups for example those from Gypsy, Roma, traveller heritage, Asylum Seekers and Refugees;
- children affected by domestic violence, temporary accommodation, offending parents and workless households;
- looked after children or those who are cared for by young carers;
- children of teenage parents; and

- children in disadvantaged areas and those living with families below the poverty line.

**Young Carer** - a child or young person (under the age of 18) who is carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility, which would usually be undertaken by an adult. This could be caring for a parent(s) or sibling(s).

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- The Kent Children's Trust
- The Race Equality Forum
- KCC elected Members and officers
- Parents and community groups
- Health Professionals
- Staff Union Groups.

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