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To: Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee -
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Subject: KENT CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS

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Summary: This paper sets out progress made in developing Kent's children's trust arrangements and highlights the introduction of Local Children's Services Partnerships from September 2008.

Introduction

1. (1) The development of children's trust arrangements is part of a national programme of reform to improve outcomes for children and young people in line with the Every Child Matters (ECM) framework. This programme of reform is set out in the National Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures, and in the recently published Children's Plan implementation pack.

(2) Following the launch of the national Children's Plan in December 2007 the DCSF has issued new statutory guidance on inter-agency co-operation through children's trusts, published April 2008. This statutory guidance strengthens the framework for children's trusts by stressing the importance of robust partnership arrangements under the section 10 "duty to co-operate" and also the co-operation of "relevant partners" including schools. The DCSF is inviting views on the statutory guidance by 26th June 2008. The guidance can be viewed at the following link:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Childrens%20Trust%20Statutory%20Guidance.pdf>

Background

2. (1) The ECM framework describes children's trusts as 'a set of arrangements across children's services to provide integrated working at all levels, from planning to delivery, with a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people'. The statutory guidance on inter-agency co-operation identifies 5 essential features of children's trusts, which are as follows:

- A child-centred, outcome-led vision: a compelling outcome-led vision for all children and young people, clearly informed by their views and those of their families.

- Integrated front line delivery organised around the child, young person or family rather than professional boundaries or existing agencies.
- Integrated processes: effective joint working sustained by a shared language and shared processes.
- Integrated strategy: joint planning and commissioning, pooled budgets.
- Inter-agency governance, with robust arrangements for inter-agency co-operation.

(2) Children's trusts are set out as the key delivery mechanism for the ambitions in the national Children's Plan, and the Government's commitment to reduce childhood poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020.

(3) The statutory guidance strengthens the framework for children's trusts by stressing the importance of robust partnership arrangements under the Children Act (section 10) 'duty to co-operate' and also the active engagement of 'relevant partners' including schools. The guidance, states that "schools must be at the heart of children's trust arrangements, as partners at the strategic level and as drivers of front line delivery; responding effectively to their new duty to promote well-being will only be possible through their full engagement with the work of the children's trust in their area."

Progress in Kent

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

(2) To support the effective operation of the KCT a partnership agreement has been developed which sets out terms of reference, meeting protocols and responsibilities of partner agencies. A KCT Executive Group has also been established to manage the agenda planning for the Kent Children's Trust.

Kent Children and Young People's Plan (KCYPP)

4. (1) The Kent Children and Young People's Plan: Positive about our Future (KCYPP) is the single overarching plan for children's services in Kent. The Kent Children's Trust have identified the following eight high level priorities as part of the KCYPP:

- (i) To reduce the impact of poverty (generational and situational) on children's lives by tackling the underlying causes and mitigating the effects.
- (ii) To draw on and improve resilience in C&YP to help them make informed and healthy/safe choices and develop coping strategies. To include a focus on C&YP with emotional and/or mental health problems.
- (iii) To improve parenting by implementing Every Parent Matters and developing more effective multi agency support and early intervention for families experiencing problems. To include:

- taking action to increase fathers involvement in their children's upbringing;
 - reducing the incidence & impact of domestic violence and substance misuse on children and families; and
 - improving the communication & interaction development of younger children.
- (iv) To improve the quality and stability of housing provision for vulnerable C&YP through to early adulthood.
- (v) To improve the achievement and quality of life for young carers by implementing the Young Carers Strategy.
- (vi) To ensure more young people have things to do and safe places to go in their leisure time and improve outcomes for adolescents at risk to themselves and potentially others through, for example, implementation of the Integrated Youth Strategy.
- (vii) To increase engagement and participation by young people in education, employment and society in order to prevent disaffection and improve security.
- (viii) To take action to reduce the incidence and impact of bullying in schools and the community.

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

Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs)

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

(2) Key elements of LCSP Working - being introduced from September 2008

(i) Local Children and Young People's Plan

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

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/kct_localdata.cfm

(ii) Local Children's Services Partnership Board

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

(iii) Local Children's Services Partnership Manager and Teams

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

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

(3) LCSP Pathfinders

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

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

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

An interim evaluation of pathfinders was conducted in July 2007. The purpose of the evaluation was to enable the sharing of knowledge, learning and experience from the pathfinder localities. A final evaluation of the pathfinders is being completed and will inform the development of LCSPs across Kent. Early indications from the evaluation indicate positive impact on professional practice and early evidence of improving outcomes for children and young people. The final evaluation will be published from mid June 2008.

Children's Health

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

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

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

Recommendations

7. Members of the Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee are asked to:

- (a) Note this progress report and agree to further updates at future meetings.

Joy Ackroyd
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Background Documents:

National Evaluation of Children's Trust Pathfinders

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

Children's Health: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenhealth_policy.cfm

National Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures

<http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenstrust.cfm>

Children's Trust: Statutory guidance on inter-agency co-operation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families.

[<<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1544>>](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1544)

Other Useful Documents:

None