

**From:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

**Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education**

**To:** Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 8 May 2018

**Subject:** The Role of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) and other district governance structures in place for 0-19 (and up to 25) services

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:**

Across the Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) universal, targeted and additional offer of support, provided by open access settings (such as children's centres and youth hubs), key strategic governance structures help to ensure that local service delivery is joined up. These Governance Structures include Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs), District Advisory Boards (DABs) and Local Children's Partnership Groups (LCPGs).

Note: This paper only focuses on governance arrangements at a district level rather than overarching responsibilities and remit of whole county boards (e.g. 0-25 Health and Wellbeing Board)

**Recommendation:**

Members are asked to support a review into the governance structures and remit of Local Children's Partnership Groups, Youth Advisory Groups and District Advisory Boards.

This review would explore all current structures and where agendas have crossover develop a range of options with the aim of producing a proposal to improve effectiveness of service delivery and governance across all 0-19 (and up to 25) years non-statutory Children's Services.

**1. Introduction**

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to outline the current arrangements of the YAGs across Kent and to seek agreement for a review of the Local governance arrangements in place for 0-19 (up to 25) services across the county.

1.2. YAGs give a focus on the strategic needs of young people aged 8-19 (and up to 25), and help develop a district-wide strategy, with a clear set of priorities, whilst also facilitating and maintaining a networking forum for partner agencies, young people and other interested parties to address youth issues.

Core membership of YAGs includes young people.

- 1.3. DABs give a focus on the strategic needs of children aged 0-8 and are designed to work in partnership to identify district priorities, provide challenge and support on meeting those priorities and ensure the services on offer are joined up and co-ordinated to meet local needs. The key role of the DAB is to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the achievement of the 3 essential core elements for children's centres: school readiness; health and wellbeing; and support for vulnerable parents.
- 1.4. The LCPGs, which have been subject to a number of iterative changes over recent years, hold local knowledge across a range of service areas and help services to identify joint priorities and work in partnership to address them across the full 0-19 (and up to 25) age range.

## **2. Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs)**

YAGs were implemented in March 2003 through the leadership of the then Lead Member, Cllr Mike Hill (OBE) as part of the governance of the range of services held within the then Youth Service.

Whilst the YAGs are not a performance or contract management group, they do offer a good opportunity to facilitate and support local engagement, cohesion and multi-agency working, as well as providing challenge and support on meeting district priorities.

In March 2016, a comprehensive review of YAGs took place and the conclusion of the review was that YAGs remain critical to the governance of the local youth offer. Following the review, revised terms of reference were published (Appendix A).

### **2.1. Responsibilities include to:**

- i. Focus on the strategic needs of young people, aged 10-19 years, in their respective district. This would include ensuring young people's voices are heard and youth forums and other groups are able to contribute to the meeting. Although the YAG is not a youth forum, it is important that young people's voices are fully represented.
- ii. Develop a district strategy, with a clear set of priorities for meeting the needs of young people. This includes using a range of centrally supplied data sets and taking into account local intelligence to agree district priorities, including geographical areas of concern. This requires the YAGs to be sighted on youth provision in their area, including KCC commissioned. Critical within the strategy is a published youth offer, which is a statutory duty on local authorities, described in the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- iii. Provide a networking forum for partner agencies, young people and other interested parties to address youth issues.

2.2. One of the key strengths of the YAG is the recognition of the importance of the 'Voice of the Child'. As part of the core membership, each YAG is expected to have young people at the meetings, to enable a reflection of what provision looks and feels like within the district to young people. Largely this is achieved across the county, with young people taking an active membership.

### **3. Other Local Governance Arrangements/Boards under the 0-19 (and up to 25) Service (with a district-based responsibility)**

3.1. Other strategic partnership groups are in place across the county, which help set priorities for children and young people, at a local level. LCPGs and Children's Centre DABs form an important part of the wider network and provide some overlap in the scope of these groups.

3.2. The DABs have been a requirement within an Ofsted Framework, since the original Sure Start Local programmes, from 2010. Ofsted describes a DAB as 'Good' where governance arrangements are well embedded, provide effective challenge and are demonstrably driving the centre's continuous improvement.

3.3. Kent County Council (KCC) has produced Terms of Reference (reviewed and amended during 2016) to ensure that we comply with Ofsted guidance (Appendix B).

3.4. DABs are required to:

- i. Work with the Early Help District Manager and Children's Centre Delivery Manager to identify priorities, through effective consultation with partners.
- ii. Monitor progress and provide challenge/support.
- iii. Contribute to setting challenging targets, through an Annual Conversation process.
- iv. Ensure the services on offer meet local needs and contribute to improving children's outcomes, particularly those in need.
- v. To support the development of integrated working.

3.5. LCPGs were first established in 2016, as the result of attempts to co-ordinate, at district level, partnership arrangements and services across a range of local key performance indicators and priorities, with the primary aim of driving forward the improvement of specific outcomes relating directly to local children and young people. Terms of Reference for the way in which each LCPG should operate at a district level are attached as Appendix C.

3.6. LCPGs work in partnership to:

- i. Share information to provide understanding of local services and thresholds.
- ii. Provide a vehicle for identifying and addressing local needs and priorities and gaps in service provision.

- iii. Facilitate and pool resources to meet the needs of local children and families.

3.7. The LCPG currently report to the 0-25 Health and Wellbeing Board, with the intention of linking into the Local Health and Wellbeing Boards, aligned to the 7 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

#### 4. Conclusion

4.1. It is recognised that Local Children’s Partnership Groups, Youth Advisory Groups and District Advisory Boards present a significant crossover regarding priorities, purpose and agendas. In particular, it has been identified that:

- Current arrangements have resulted in some areas of duplication and confusion
- Many of the groups have very similar organisational and individual membership, which can be both time consuming and unnecessary for attendees.
- Annual Conversations, where priorities are discussed and agreed, are not consistently using the same baseline data packs and information, resulting in varied and sometimes conflicting district priorities.
- Four districts have been trialing aligned 0-19 annual conversations, led by key senior officers with partners attending relevant sessions.

**Recommendation:**

Members are asked to support a review into the governance structures and remit of Local Children’s Partnership Groups, Youth Advisory Groups and District Advisory Boards.

This review would explore all current structures and where agendas have crossover, with the aim of producing a proposal to improve effectiveness of service delivery across a 0-19 (up to 25) years for non-statutory Children’s Services.

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