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To: CFE: Vulnerable Children and Partnerships, Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 6 November 2009

Subject: **Kent Children's Trust (KCT) Commissioning and Delivery Review**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report presents initial findings from the KCT Commissioning and Delivery review. These findings will inform options for change to strengthen our integrated commissioning and delivery arrangements to improve outcomes for children and young people in line with the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Children's trust arrangements are central to improving children's services. The policy, developed in Every Child Matters, the Children Act 2004, and The Children's Plan aims to improve outcomes for all children by redesigning services and ensuring active partnership and integrated commissioning and delivery across key agencies.
- 1.2 The vision for children's trust arrangements is for whole system integration and change, across all children's services, to radically improve the experience of childhood in the UK and most notably to eradicate childhood poverty by 2020. This is a long term programme requiring all children's services to work in closer partnership and to increasingly shift resources towards preventative and early intervention approaches.
- 1.3 Through the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Bill the government is seeking to strengthen children's trust arrangements to deliver this ambitious programme of change. The Bill aims to:
- extend the 'duty to cooperate' to Jobcentre plus and to all front line providers of education (including academies); and
 - place Children's Trust Boards on a statutory basis with a joint responsibility to own and resource the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

New guidance and CYPP regulations are expected in October /November 2009 and the Bill should receive Royal Assent in November.

2. Why is the Kent Children's Trust undertaking a review?

- 2.1 All local authorities are being encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of their local arrangements in readiness for the ACSL Bill and a national Commissioning Support Programme (CSP) has been established to support this process. KCT is working with the national CSP and has used the self analysis tool provided through the programme to identify current strengths and areas of development.
- 2.2 In June the KCT Board considered findings from the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) annual review. It was agreed that the KCT needed to build stronger commissioning arrangements that harness the ambition in our CYPP and shape new and improved integrated services that really make a positive difference. This particularly applies in the priority areas where we need to make more progress for example teenage pregnancy and substance misuse.

In July the KCT Executive agreed that there should be a review of our children's trust arrangements at county and local levels with a particular focus on how we commission and deliver services.

3. What is the purpose of the review?

3.1 The purpose of the KCT Review is to:

- Gather views on progress to date.
- Develop options to strengthen our commissioning and delivery arrangements at county and local levels.
- Implement changes that will enhance partnership working and most importantly improve outcomes for children and young people.

Specifically the review is designed:

- To ensure that the KCT Board, Executive and sub structure are fit for the purpose of effective strategic integrated commissioning and delivery across children's services in Kent.
- To identify commissioning strengths and areas for improvement by completing the national commissioning self-evaluation with a wide range of groups.
- To seek feedback on the effectiveness and capacity of local partnership arrangements to commission and deliver on a locality basis within a KCT overarching strategic framework.
- To develop a strategic commissioning plan (setting out how the key priorities in the CYPP will be commissioned) including any infrastructure development for the KCT arrangements.
- To inform the long term development of all elements of children's trust arrangements.

3.2 Methodology and timescales are set out in: KCT Commissioning and Delivery Review – Overview – Appendix 2.

4. What are the main messages as at 7th October 2009?

- 4.1 The main findings to date are set out on Appendix 1. These are an analysis of the self evaluation ratings to date undertaken by a range of planning/strategic groups and through on line survey. The qualitative data gathered to date is being analysed and an initial summary is shown alongside the ratings. Quotes have been included to highlight particular themes.
- 4.2 Findings from previous assessments and surveys have also been drawn together to inform the KCT review, sources include the recent annual needs assessment, the teenage pregnancy review, and key messages from national research including the DCSF report: Commissioning Services for Children and Young People and families: a study of six local authority areas, July 2009 and the Audit Commission Report – Are We There Yet? Themes arising from this secondary research reinforce the feedback shared in our self evaluation and demonstrate synergy with other children's trusts across the country. This secondary research will be set out in the final review report.

5. Areas of focus for further consideration

- 5.1 On the 6th October the KCT Board were invited to discuss initial feedback set out in Appendix 1 and consider additional proposals to strengthen KCT arrangements.
- 5.2 The KCT Board agreed that we need to streamline current partnership arrangements at strategic and local levels and provide greater clarity about accountability and priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people across Kent.

Options discussed included a much stronger commissioning role for the KCT Executive group, a reduction in the number of strategic planning and coordinating groups and as smaller number of Local Children Services Partnership Boards.

There was also a real commitment to strengthen local integrated teams to support universal and targeted provision for children and families.

6. What happens next?

- 6.1 A final report of the commissioning review will be agreed by the KCT Executive on 11 November and reported to the full Board on 16 December.
- 6.2 A strategic development plan for the Children's Trust will be drafted to carry forward the changes identified through the review process. Implementation across partner agencies will be from early 2010 depending on the extent and nature of the changes agreed.

Recommendations

Members of the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships, Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee are asked to:

1. Note the initial findings from the review set out in Appendix 1.
2. Commit to a programme of development and change across all partner agencies of the Kent Children's Trust.
3. Agree to receive a full report on the review and final recommendations for commissioning arrangements at the next Policy Overview Committee.

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Background Documents: None

Other Useful Information: None

KCT Commissioning and Delivery Review - Main Messages and Options (at 6/10/09)

Main Messages		
	CSP standard	Going Well scores of 4
a	Clarity and agreement on outcomes to improve CSP standard 1	The KCT has taken an outcomes approach and there is broad agreement about outcomes that need to be improved. However common outcomes are not successfully driving commissioning and service development for all partners. <i>"Good articulation and clarity re strategic focus in the CYPP"</i> <i>"outcomes have been identified and prioritised but who are the commissioners?"</i>
b	Understanding the needs of CYPP and families CSP standard 5	Partners are working closer together to share and analyse information about needs. More work is needed to understand the needs of particular groups of CYPP. <i>"Needs assessment is comprehensive and insightful"</i> <i>"Not really sure we understand the need of vulnerable families particularly those who do not access our services"</i> The engagement of CYPP and families was also identified as an area where significant improvements were being made.
c	Partnership culture to promote development of commissioning skills, knowledge and expertise at all levels CSP standard 12	There is an understanding of the potential of commissioning to secure better outcomes and a commitment to improve joint commissioning arrangements. However more work is needed to achieve common and agreed approaches to commissioning at strategic and local levels. <i>"There is now a dialogue that extends beyond children's social and education services. The breadth of the agenda is better understood and the engagement of children, young people and families, and communities in this has been highlighted."</i>

Main Messages		
	CSP standard	Steady progress (scores of 3)
d	Governance arrangements to improve outcomes through commissioning CSP standard 3	There is recognition that governance arrangements are in place but more work is needed to ensure they are fully understood. <i>"Not clear who/which body is accountable for what – this needs greater clarification"</i> The current governance arrangements do not necessarily impact on how partners work together this was particularly felt to be the case for pooling resources.
e	Monitoring impact and managing the performance of services to improve outcomes CSP standard 7	There is evidence of managing performance but this is not sufficiently integrated – much good practice exists but generally on a single agency/issue basis. Improvements in the availability of multi agency data were reported but more local data was requested <i>" county level data helps and has got a lot better over the last year"</i> It was felt that there is an over emphasis on monitoring and a stronger focus is needed on evaluating impact. <i>" we weigh the pig a lot"</i>
f	Having the right people with the right skills, knowledge and expertise to improve outcomes through commissioning CSP standard 11	Commissioning skills, knowledge and experience is present across the partner agencies but tends to be 'locked up' in particular services. There is a sense that some services are 'rich' in skills and expertise while there are significant capacity issues in other areas; more sharing is needed. Capacity issues for effective commissioning were particularly highlighted by respondents from LCSPs. <i>"Agencies holding onto people, funding and knowledge, this needs to be shared"</i> <i>"Strong in single agencies – poor in multi agency aspects of commissioning"</i>

Main Messages			
	CSP standard	Needs improvement scores of 1 - 2	Options for KCT improvements (for consultation and further development)
g	<p>Robust up-to-date joint commissioning arrangements which allow the KCT to improve outcomes</p> <p>CSP standard 2</p>	<p>Some work has been done to agree a joint commissioning framework but this is not yet working in practice. <i>"commissioning is still only a word"</i></p> <p>Outcomes priorities in the CYPP are not systematically translated in commissioning plans.</p> <p>Partners are agreed that we need to improve in this area at strategic and local levels but there has been limited progress to date <i>"Some partners still do not understand the commissioning cycle but most now aware and starting to engage"</i></p>	<p>Joint commissioning arrangements and structures to be fully explored, agreed and implemented <i>(e.g. reconsider KCT substructure, including LCSPs, as a commissioning model reporting to the Executive)</i></p> <p>Outcome based joint commissioning plans should be developed for key priority areas <i>(e.g. agree joint commissioning plans in these areas that guide strategic decisions and local delivery)</i></p>
h	<p>Partners understand commissioning and have effective joint commissioning arrangements</p> <p>CSP standard 4</p>	<p>A range of commissioning approaches are active across partner agencies but these are not generally understood by other partners.</p> <p>There is no common understanding of the joint commissioning arrangements needed to improve outcomes.</p> <p>There is a strong sense of disconnect between strategic and local levels of the trust arrangements.</p>	<p>Clearer joint commissioning arrangements at all levels.</p> <p>Stronger leadership to ensure agreed commissioning arrangements are embedded across all partners <i>(e.g. KCT Board to develop a stronger role in championing a joint commissioning approach, offering constructive, challenge and feedback to partners)</i></p>

i	<p>Wise investment and market development</p> <p>CSP standard 6</p>	<p>Resources and budget allocations between partners is not clear and arrangements for pooling funds are not clear</p> <p>Information about service providers/provision is not systematically maintained and used to inform commissioning decisions and market development</p>	<p>Agreed arrangements to systematically collect and analyse information about resources and markets across children's services</p> <p><i>(e.g. strengthen KCT substructure to ensure information on resources and markets are generated, shared and developed)</i></p>
j	<p>Commissioners working effectively together at strategic and local levels</p> <p>CSP standard 8</p>	<p>Joint commissioning at the strategic level is not being systematically driven by the children's trust arrangements.</p> <p>The focus of local commissioning is unclear and there is a perception of insufficient capacity to effectively commission at the local level.</p>	<p>Stronger strategic commissioning arrangements to drive service development to improve agreed outcome areas</p> <p><i>(e.g. Executive to become a more strategic commissioning group to drive joint commissioning throughout the whole children's services system)</i></p> <p>Clarity at local levels about commissioning responsibilities and partner resources to support local commissioning activity</p> <p><i>(e.g. stronger focus on local joint commissioning arrangements and pooled/ aligned resources to support commissioning activity)</i></p>
k	<p>Successfully secure major service reconfiguration and change to improve outcomes through commissioning</p>	<p>There was some confusion articulated with the groups about what constituted major service reconfiguration and a sense that it was too early to judge?</p> <p>The introduction of LCSPs was identified as a major</p>	<p>Agree a partnership commissioning-led approach to major service change</p> <p><i>(e.g. major change or service configuration is evidence based and outcomes focussed within the framework of the CYPP. Partners have an open approach sharing</i></p>

	CSP standard 9	<p>change by some groups but generally it was felt that major change was not managed on a partnership basis but within single agencies.</p> <p><i>"LCSPs were a successful service reconfiguration but need more time to fully develop"</i></p> <p>It was not felt that a commissioning approach was systematically used to manage change.</p>	<p><i>information about major change and wherever possible seeking active engagement in decision making. Robust monitoring and evaluation leads to decommissioning of services.)</i></p>
I	<p>Joint working and common understanding at a leadership level for effective commissioning</p> <p>CSP standard 10</p>	<p>Some work has taken place to build a shared understanding of commissioning at strategic levels. There is a perception that more work is needed to ensure that strategic leaders have a common understanding and approach.</p>	<p>Set out clearer roles and responsibilities for the strategic joint commissioning across the trust.</p> <p><i>(e.g. DCS role of lead commissioner across Children's Services understood and supported by a strong commissioning executive)</i></p>

Kent Children's Trust (KCT) Commissioning and Delivery Review Overview

1. Introduction

Children's trust arrangements are central to government policy for improving children's services. The policy, developed in [Every Child Matters](#), the [Children Act 2004](#), and [The Children's Plan](#) aims to improve outcomes for all children by redesigning services and ensuring active partnership across key agencies.

Through the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill the government is now seeking to strengthen children's trust arrangements. All local authorities are being encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of their local arrangements and a national [Commissioning Support Programme](#) has been established to support this process.

In Kent we need to build stronger commissioning arrangements that harness the ambition in our Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and shape new and improved integrated services that really make a positive difference. This particularly applies in the priority areas where we know we must make more progress for example teenage pregnancy and substance misuse. To this end the KCT Executive has initiated a review of our commissioning and delivery arrangements at county and local levels.

2. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the KCT review is to:

- Gather views on progress to date.
- Develop options to strengthen our commissioning and delivery arrangements.
- Implement changes that will enhance partnership working and most importantly improve outcomes for children and young people.

Specifically the review is designed:

- To ensure that the KCT Board, Executive and sub structure are fit for the purpose of effective integrated commissioning and delivery across children's services in Kent.
- To complete the national commissioning self-evaluation with a wide range of groups to identify commissioning strengths and areas for improvement.
- To seek feedback on the effectiveness and capacity of local partnership arrangements to commission and deliver on a locality basis within a strategic framework.
- To develop a strategic commissioning plan (setting out how the key priorities in the CYPP will be commissioned) including any infrastructure developments for the KCT arrangements.
- To inform the long term development of all elements of children's trust arrangements.

3. What is Commissioning?

The national Commissioning Support Programme (CSP) defines commissioning in relation to children's trusts as follows:

“Commissioning is the process for deciding how to use the total resource available for children, young people and parents in order to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way.”

The Kent Children's Trust is committed to developing robust arrangements to enable partners to commission services together; progress to date includes:

- The Kent Integrated Commissioning Framework, setting out principles and standards to underpin integrated commissioning.
- Draft integrated commissioning guidance for Local Children's Services Partnerships.

For more information see

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

4. The Review Programme

Working with the national CSP the KCT Executive has agreed a phased programme of review:

Listening phase: September – October 2009

A number of groups have been invited to participate using the self evaluation tool from the national CSP and some specific questions agreed by KCT Executive. Individuals are also able to share their views using an online survey, the link is given below.

We will also use feedback from recent assessments and reports for example the annual review of the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

Options phase: October – December 2009

Building on feedback and taking account of related national and county developments the KCT County Board will develop and share options to strengthen our county and local children's trust arrangements.

Implementation phase: January 2010 onwards

This will include immediate changes as well as the development of a longer term strategic change plan to ensure our partnership arrangements continue to improve.

The schedule of meetings in the listening phase and an overall timeline are available at: http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/kct_whats_new.cfm

5. How can I be involved?

If you are a member of a group involved in the listening phase you will be invited to complete the CSP [self evaluation tool](#) (prior to the meeting) and to take part in a discussion to identify current strengths and areas for development. Alternatively you can complete the online survey to ensure your views are heard, or email your views to Joy Ackroyd.

Online Survey: <http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk?selfanalysis>

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