

Select Committee on Children's Services – 17 June 2010

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dudley Children's Trust including the Children and Young People's Plan

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the committee of progress on the activities of the Children's Trust within Dudley, including the development of our Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

Background

Children and Young People's Trust

2. Children's Trusts are a response to Lord Laming's report of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, which highlighted the extent to which better working together and improved communication are crucial to improving children's services.
3. Children's Trusts have been created to address the fragmentation of responsibilities for children's services. They build upon, bring together and formalise the joint work that has already taken place in many local areas. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation to improve well-being for children and places a duty on named 'relevant partners' to cooperate with those arrangements. Legislation in The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009 builds on the Children Act 2004 and strengthens Children's Trusts by:
 - extending the number of statutory 'relevant partners' with a duty to co-operate to include maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, Academies, sixth-form and further education colleges, Jobcentre Plus and Pupil Referral Units/Short Stay Schools from 12 January 2010;
 - placing the Children's Trust Board on a statutory basis from 1 April 2010;
 - making the CYPP a joint strategy which sets out how the Children's Trust partners will cooperate to improve children's well-being in the local area. Each local area must publish a joint CYPP on or before 1 April 2011;
 - transferring responsibility for preparing, publishing and revising the CYPP from the local authority alone to the Children's Trust Board;

- giving the Board responsibility for monitoring the extent to which each Children's Trust partner acts in accordance with their commitments in the CYPP, and for producing and publishing an annual report on the results.
4. The essential features of a Children's Trust are set out in 'Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on cooperation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan' (March 2010). Local Authorities and Directors of Children's Services continue to have a leadership role in the development of Children's Trusts.
 5. In collaboration with our partners we established Dudley Children's Trust in 2007. The Board of the Trust is part of the Dudley Community Partnership and is currently comprised of the following members:
 - An Independent Chair
 - Chief Officer, Dudley Council for Voluntary Services
 - Chief Executive, NHS Dudley
 - Chief Officer, Dudley Community Partnership
 - Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Dudley MBC
 - Director of Children's Services, Dudley MBC
 - Director, Action for Children
 - Superintendent West Midlands Police Dudley
 - A Post 16 College Principal
 - Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Dudley
 - Assistant Director, Children and Families, Dudley MBC
 - Assistant Director of Children's Services, Barnardo's
 - Non-Executive Director, NHS Dudley
 - District Manager, Probation Service
 - An elected Primary Head Teacher
 - An elected Secondary School Head Teacher
 - An elected Special School Head teacher
 - Joint Director of Public Health
 - A General Practitioner nominated by the PCT Commissioning Clusters
 - Director of Partnerships and Service Development, NHS Dudley Trust
 - Assistant Director, Education, Play and Learning, Dudley MBC
 - Assistant Director of Nursing, Dudley Group of Hospitals
 - Assistant Director, Quality and Partnership, Children's Services, Dudley MBC
 - Assistant Director, Transforming Futures, Dudley MBC
 - The Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
 - A governor or representative of the Dudley Group of Hospitals
 - Operations Commander, West Midlands Fire Service
 - The Head of Children's Trust Support (to be in attendance)
 6. Members represent their agencies and also bring experience and knowledge about other sectors and organisations. However, their primary duty is to act in the interest of children and young people in Dudley.

7. The Trust Board has an agreed constitution to govern its affairs. The constitution was reviewed and updated in May 2010. The partnership has recently developed its arrangements (shown in the appendix) to place greater emphasis on:
 - strategic commissioning to make best use of resources
 - leadership
 - participation of children and young people
 - improving outcomes.

8. The work of the Children's Trust is having a positive impact on outcomes for children, young people and families in Dudley. This includes:
 - reduction in the rate of teenage pregnancy
 - development of an infant mortality action plan
 - increased use of the common assessment framework as a tool for early intervention – over 600 children and young people have been supported by common assessment at the end of May 2010 (compared to just 46 in Mat 2009)
 - N2N (Nought to Nineteen) is established as the shadow Children's Trust board of children and young people
 - A workforce development strategy is agreed
 - A protocol is agreed between the Children's Trust Board and Dudley Safeguarding Children Board to ensure co-ordinated and effective working arrangements.

Children and Young People's Plan

9. The vision of the Children's Trust, and how it intends to achieve that vision, are set out in the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan (2010 – 2011). The plan was developed in the spring of 2008 and updated in 2009 and 2010. It is based upon a wide range of information about the needs of young people e.g. the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment prepared by the Primary Care Trust and the Council, recent Annual Performance Assessments and the 2006 Joint Area Review, and a range of surveys and activities that were conducted to collect the views of young people and community groups.

10. The key priorities for action within the plan are to:
 - Support all children to be and feel safe
 - Narrow the gaps between the performance and outcomes achieved by under-performing and under privileged groups in Dudley and the national average
 - Support children and young people to become and remain healthy
 - Support children and young people to enjoy growing up in Dudley and to acquire the skills to live successful lives

- Support children and young people to achieve economic and social well being
- Enhance the skills and confidence of parents and carers in Dudley
- Continue to strengthen Dudley Children's Trust and strategic commissioning.
- The Children's Trust Board will provide effective leadership within the partnership
- Children and young people have opportunities to be involved in giving their views and opinions – having a voice
- Further enhance the skills and fitness for purpose of our children's workforce.
- Increase the effectiveness of transition arrangements from children's to adult services.

Finance

11. Funding for the Children's Trust and the Children and Young People's Plan is based upon existing budgets, with the potential for some additional grants to be secured through the achievement of targets within the Local Area Agreement. Our work in this area is dependent upon collaboration between the representatives of the partner agencies. Partners have pooled funding in the area of integrated service management and the Children's Fund.
12. The financial strategy for our plan is based on the following principles:
 - investment and disinvestment decisions are focused on the extent to which activities contribute to better outcomes for children and young people
 - resources should be focused on preventative service delivery wherever possible, which in turn will reduce budget pressures
 - capital investment will support inter-agency working to promote and support high quality learning and working environments
 - resource decisions are based on agreed priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan and need

Law

13. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation to improve well-being for children and places a duty on named 'relevant partners' to cooperate with those arrangements. The ASCL Act (2009) as extended this duty to include additional partners as described in 3.

Equality Impact

14. Children and Young People are consulted and involved extensively as part of the work of the Children's Trust and the development of the Children's Plan. The vision

of the Trust and the Plan is to ensure that children and young people in Dudley are happy, healthy and fulfilled.

15. A Children and Young People's Board is established to work closely with the Executive Board. The young people involved have named their Board 'N2N' (Nought to Nineteen). They help to ensure that the views of children and young people are heard, understood and acted on within the partnership.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that the Committee note and endorse this report and the work it describes and request reports on future progress.



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