

**VERSION 2. SEPTEMBER 25 2008**

**THE CONSTITUTION OF THE  
CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD**

**METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF  
DUDLEY**

## **1. Terms of Reference and Aims of the Children's Trust Board**

The Children's Trust Board will work in collaboration to co-ordinate, plan, commission and deliver services based on local need for children and young people to enable achievement of the Outcomes Framework of Every Child Matters (ECM):

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-being

The Children's Trust Board will report its activities to Dudley MBC Select Committee for Children's Services and the Local Strategic Partnership as a themed partnership group.

## **2. Vision and Values**

The Children's Trust Board will operate in a spirit of open and honest dialogue with collective responsibility for taking decisions. The Children's Trust Board members will operate within the delegated authority of their parent organisations to ensure the effectiveness of the Board. The vision will be to ensure better outcomes for all children and young people in Dudley through the development and delivery of a wide range of services with the involvement of all partners, users and carers and the wider community. The development and delivery of services will be integrated in line with best practice and the most effective and efficient use of resources.

## **3. Strategic Objectives**

The Children's Trust Board will ensure the delivery of the following strategic objectives, through the Children and Young People's Plan and more detailed projects:

- Develop a vision for all children and young people in Dudley;
- Promote and plan integrated commissioning and ensure high quality services;
- Develop, adapt and refine Dudley's Children & Young People's Plan;
- Co-ordinate work across the 5 Outcome areas to maximise integration.
- Develop and oversee the Annual Performance Assessment and Comprehensive Are Assessment of children's services.

## **4. Membership**

The Children's Trust Board will consist of the following voting members:

An Independent Chair  
Chief Officer, Dudley Council for Voluntary Services

Chief Executive, Dudley Primary Care Trust  
Lead Councillor for Older People's Services, Dudley MBC  
Chief Officer, Dudley Community Partnership  
Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Dudley MBC  
Chief Executive, Black Country Connexions  
Director of Children's Services, Dudley MBC  
A representative of the Black Country Learning Skills Council  
Deputy Director, National Children's Homes  
Chief Superintendent, West Midlands Police Dudley North  
A Post 16 College Principal  
Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Dudley  
Chief Superintendent, West Midlands Police Dudley South  
Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services, Dudley MBC  
Assistant Director of Children's Services, Barnardos  
Non-Executive Director, Dudley Primary Care Trust  
District Manager, Probation Service  
A Primary Head Teacher  
Joint Director of Public Health  
A Secondary School Head Teacher  
Director of Patient Experience and Service Improvement, Dudley Primary Care Trust  
Assistant Director, Early Years, Youth and Education Services, Dudley MBC  
Head of Development, Children's Services, Dudley MBC  
Associate Operations Director, Dudley Group of Hospitals  
Assistant Director, Performance and Partnership, Children's Services, Dudley MBC

Members will represent their agencies and will 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.

Children, young people and their families will be involved via an extensive network of Participation, Involvement and Consultation fora.

Specific Service Providers will attend by invitation of the Chair / Vice Chair in relation to specific agenda items.

Each member will be an equal and active partner.

Any member failing to attend three consecutive Children's Trust Board meetings will be deemed to have forfeited their membership. The Children's Trust Board may invite the relevant nominating body to propose a new member, or invite the existing member to continue, if it feels there is a satisfactory reason for non-attendance.

Each nominating body shall be entitled to make representation to the Children's Trust Board regarding the replacement of their nominee at any time and the Children's Trust Board shall duly consider any such representation. A review of the structure of the Children's Trust Board and Leadership Team will take place annually to ensure that both groups have appropriate representation across partner agencies.

## **5. Expectations of Board members**

Board members will

Prepare effectively for meetings, respond to communications and maintain an up to date knowledge of national, regional and local developments

Attend meetings or make alternative arrangements for their views or those of their agencies to be represented as appropriate

Participate in meetings primarily as a member of the Trust in the interest of children, families and young people in the borough but also representing the views of providers, agencies other stakeholders and networks.

Represent and promote the Trust to other key organisations, networks and individuals such as the DCSF, regional Government Office, inspectorates etc.

Participate in partnership and events and training

Contribute to the development of the Trust and its Board as an effective, efficient and inclusive team including raising concerns with the chair if necessary

## **6. Chair / Vice Chair Arrangements**

### **Chair**

The Trust Board will appoint an individual to act in an independent capacity as the chair. If the chair becomes vacant the Board may search beyond its current membership to find a suitable appointee. Her/his appointment will be reviewed by the Board annually but is not time limited apart from this condition. .

### **Vice Chair**

The Board will elect a Vice Chair who will hold office for twelve months. Should the post fall vacant during the year, a new Vice Chair will be elected until the next annual review of Children's Trust Board members.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, members will identify a chair for the meeting. Substitute representatives may not Chair the meeting.

## **7. Children's Trust Board responsibilities**

The Children's Trust Board makes recommendations to existing decision-making bodies across the agencies. It will have the right to delegate tasks to other linked partnerships and groups where appropriate, and shall have the power to form sub-groups to work under delegated authority from the Children's

Trust Board. Individual members will operate within their organisation's delegated decision-making responsibilities.

Every year the Board will the Board will publish a programme of work which it intends to deliver with the aid of its sub groups. This programme of work will be based upon the priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan and other themes which emerge from the Annual Performance Assessment, Comprehensive Area Review, Local Area Agreement, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment or other locally determined priorities.

**8. Membership Interests / Probity**

Each member of the Children's Trust Board is required to declare any personal or pecuniary interest (direct or indirect) in any agenda items for discussion and shall take no part in the discussion or decision-making on that item.

**9. Children's Trust Board Secretariat**

The functioning of the Children's Trust Board will be supported by the Partnership Unit of the LA and designated colleagues within the PCT. This support will involve the arrangement of meetings, setting of agendas, distribution of papers and taking of minutes at the Children's Trust Board meetings.

**10. Frequency and Duration of Meetings**

The Children's Trust Board will meet at least quarterly. The normal duration will be no more than 3 hours.

Special meetings can be convened by any member with approval from the Chair and Vice Chair.

**11. Agenda Setting**

The Trust Board will develop arrangements to allow all members to contribute to the design of its agendas.

An agenda setting group will finalise the agenda in advance of each meeting. The membership of this group will be

Chair

Vice Chair

Director of Children's Services, Dudley MBC

Chief Executive, Dudley Primary Care Trust

Director of Patient Experience and Service Improvement, Dudley Primary

Care Trust

Assistant Director, Performance and Partnership, Children's Services, Dudley MBC

The agenda for subsequent meeting will be an agenda item each time the Board meets.

Agenda Items including papers must be sent to the Chair of the Children's Trust Board at least 10 working days prior to the meeting. Any emergency items should be notified to the Chair 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Agenda papers will be sent out a minimum of 5 clear days in advance of the meeting.

Children Trust Board members may / will receive confidential papers relating to service, financial, planning and performance issues. These matters should not be discussed / shared outside the Children's Trust Board unless authorised by the relevant parent organisation. It will be assumed that all papers are in the public domain, unless otherwise indicated.

## **12. Decision Making**

Consultation will be at the heart of the Board's decision making processes. This will take place through discussion with stakeholders, use of their statistics, information, research and submissions. Before going to the Board every effort will be made to circulate initial drafts for comment.

Plans and decisions will then be discussed, and normally agreed. At this point stakeholders will be informed using the most appropriate mechanisms e.g. direct, specific communications, circulation of minutes, distribution of paper and electronic updates.

If after full debate it is not possible to reach a consensus, the chair will normally allow time for further consideration at a future meeting. If appropriate the chair will call for further information and evidence to be made available.

After further deliberation the Trust will then seek to reach agreement, and if it is necessary in order to secure a definite course of action, voting will be used. In the event of a tied vote the chair may use his/her casting vote.

## **13. Accountability**

The Children's Trust Board is linked to the Local Strategic Partnership as a themed partnership and as such will be a constituent sub-group of the LSP.

All meetings of the Children's Trust Board will be open to the public. Reports and minutes of meetings will be in the public arena.

## **14. Amendments to Constitution**

The Children Trust Board will review the Constitution on an annual basis with any proposed changes requiring majority agreements of all voting members and approval by Cabinet.

#### **15. Commissioning of Services**

The Board will develop a consistent approach to joint commissioning across partner agencies and groups, in order to support a joint approach to the commissioning of services, which is effective and provides for economies of scale.

The Trust is a joint commissioning partnership that will improve outcomes for children and young people by working with and through all those who provide services.

The joint commissioning and other sub groups of the Trust, plus partner groups and agencies, will advise the Board about the joint commissioning that is necessary to improve outcomes and services. The Board will consider and make decisions about such advice and the deployment and/or pooling of resources that is necessary.

#### **16. Budgets**

Because financial management is a key part of good governance, decisions should not be made in the absence of budget information.

The Trust Board will influence the way in which mainstream funding and mandatory-pooled funds are used in order to improve outcomes for children, families and young people. This will include making plans for the integration and alignment of budgets where appropriate.

The Board will allocate pooled and other funds as they become available.

The Board may advise the realignment of resources where there is evidence that services are not contributing to the improvement of outcomes for children, families and young people.

The DCS will sustain a small budget for supporting the running costs of the Trust Board.

#### **17. Local Safeguarding Children Board**

The LSCB co-ordinates and ensures the effectiveness of agencies working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It holds everyone working with children, families and young people to account for safeguarding, and scrutinises the work of the Trust, the Directorate of Children's Services and other organisations accordingly. It is independent of the Trust Board but will maintain a healthy dialogue with it.