

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Directorate of Children's Services

Consultation Document

Consultation on: ***Dudley Children and Young People's Plan 2006-09***

Summary: Through the Dudley Children and Young People's Plan we have set out a vision for all children and young people in Dudley Borough. The Plan spans three years, looking ahead to 2009. It will be reviewed and revised every year to make sure that we are improving outcomes for children and young people in order to take changes and developments into consideration.

Deadline: All responses must be received by **11 May 2006**

Consultees:

- Chairs of Governing Bodies
- Headteachers
- Councillors
- Members of the Lifelong Learning Select Committee
- Members of Parliament
- The Black Country Learning and Skills Council
- Dudley Lifelong Learning Partnership
- Further Education Colleges
- Directorate staff
- Unions and Professional Associations
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
- Dudley MBC - Corporate Board
- Dudley Primary Care Trusts
- West Midlands Police
- Worcester Diocesan Education Committee
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Schools Commission
- Dudley Association of Governing Bodies
- Neighbouring LEA Directors

Dudley Racial Equality Council
Community Forums
Community Learning Networks
Churches together in the Borough of Dudley
Dudley Free Church Liaison Council
Dudley Parent Partnership
The Kashmiri Pakistani Professionals Forum
Dudley Muslim Association
Dudley Community Partnership
Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Dudley Education Business Group
Community Representatives Panel
Sure Start local programmes
Children's Fund
Children and Young People's Partnership

Public Access Public Libraries
Dudley Website www.dudley.gov.uk
InsideDudley
Westox House

Responses to: Carol Williams – Team Leader
Executive Support Team
Directorate of Children's Services
Westox House
Trinity Road
Dudley
DY1 1JQ
carol.williams@dudley.gov.uk

All responses may be published. A large print version, and versions in other languages are available on request to the above address.



John Freeman
Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
9 February 2006

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Directorate of Children's Services

Dudley Children and Young People's Plan 2006 -2009

Consultation Document

'Putting children and young people first in Dudley'

9 February 2006

John Freeman

Director of Children's Services

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Directorate of Children's Services

Westox House

1 Trinity Road

Dudley

West Midlands DY1 1JQ

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A vision for Children and Young People in Dudley

Through the Dudley Children and Young People's Plan we have set out a vision for all children and young people in Dudley Borough. The Plan spans three years, looking ahead to 2009. It will be reviewed and revised every year to make sure that we are improving outcomes for children and young people in order to take changes and developments into consideration.

It is important that we hold a strong and clear view of what we need to achieve in order to help us to respond to changes in the right way and to make the most of the different ways of working which will begin to emerge.

We enjoy enormous strengths in Dudley which includes our commitment to partnership working and we are determined to extend this partnership working to include children, young people and their families in service review, decision making and service delivery.

This plan has been led by the Borough Council with the complete involvement of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, involving as many stakeholders as possible through conferences, consultation and workshops.

Children and young people have been engaged in the process and have designed the summary document which will be available widely to the community, public bodies, the private sector and the various voluntary and community partners with which we work.

The plan reflects the assessed needs within the Borough and is therefore written around these needs and the developments required to change the way we work so that we can make sure that services are delivered with children and young people at the centre of that delivery.

There are real challenges ahead and we will be working together to tackle these. By working to a shared strategic plan we have a much better chance to work together, exchange ideas, support each other and share resources to enable us to put children and young people first in Dudley.

Andrew Sparke
Chair of
Children and Young People's
Strategic Partnership

Gill Cooper
Chair of
Children and Young People's
Implementation Group

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley

The overall vision of the partnership is to ensure the achievement and well-being of all children and young people living or learning in the Borough. We want all children and young people in Dudley to be happy, healthy and fulfilled. By doing this we will be working towards the overall vision of the Dudley Community Partnership as detailed in the Community Strategy 2005 – 2020, the promotion of stronger communities.

Children and young people in a strong community:

- ✚ Are healthy, with a good sense of mental well-being;
- ✚ Take an interest in where they live and have a sense of belonging;
- ✚ Know their neighbours and are tolerant of people different from themselves;
- ✚ Help and support one another through friendship and shared activities;
- ✚ Work together to take pride in their community;
- ✚ Look out for each other, especially those less fortunate than themselves;
- ✚ Make appropriate use of facilities in the areas, particularly the opportunities to develop leisure time interests;
- ✚ Have opportunities to do well in their education and pursue other learning interests;
- ✚ Enjoy a good standard of living and are supported into rewarding jobs;
- ✚ Provide positive role models for each other and the wider community;
- ✚ Feel safe and that they have control over their lives;
- ✚ Are able to affect decisions about their lives and the delivery of local services;
- ✚ Have a good idea about what is on offer from service providers and how to access those services;
- ✚ Have pride in and care for their environment.

For children and young people we have grouped the community partnership vision into the five outcomes reflected in the Every Child Matters agenda and required within the Children Act 2004:

✚ BEING HEALTHY

- Physically healthy
- Mentally and emotionally healthy
- Sexually healthy
- Healthy lifestyles
- Choosing not to take illegal drugs

STAYING SAFE

- Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
- Safe from accidental injury and death
- Safe from bullying and discrimination
- Safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school
- Have security, stability and are cared for

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING

- Ready for school
- Attend and enjoy school
- Achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school
- Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation
- Achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

- Engage in decision making and support the community and environment
- Engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school
- Develop positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate
- Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges
- Develop enterprising behaviour

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

- Engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school
- Ready for employment
- Live in decent homes and sustainable communities
- Access to transport and material goods
- Live in households free from low income

The Partnership, through its self assessment ([link to JAR self assessment](#)) has identified those areas which are working well and those areas which need to be focused on and recognises the work which must take place to change the way we deliver services to meet needs and improve outcomes for all children and young people, narrowing the gap for those at risk of disadvantage.

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley

Addressing Disadvantage

Through the Children and Young People's Plan we will work to improve the outcomes for all children and young people living and learning in the borough. National research shows that there are individuals and groups of children and young people who experience disadvantage because of their life experience. This can be because of their ethnicity, disability, class or gender, for example. There are also particular groups of children and young people who are vulnerable and can therefore be at a disadvantage such as those looked after by the local authority, young offenders or teenage parents.

It is also recognised that there exists in Dudley particular neighbourhoods who experience a combination of problems significantly worse than in other areas of the borough such as unemployment, low income, low educational achievement, poor skills, low quality housing and ill health.

A primary aim throughout this plan will be to close that gap, promoting greater equality so that all children and young people benefit from improved outcomes, supporting them to make a full contribution to society as they grow into adulthood.

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley

Acting now – looking ahead

The Plan sets out the basis for future decision making about service provision. It points the way in terms of principles and aspirations. We have developed a plan which looks ahead over a three year period. However, we will be undertaking an Annual Performance Assessment (APA) with national and local government every year where we will be externally assessed to make sure that our judgements on our performance are accurate and relevant. We will then use these judgements to review the Children and Young People's Plan to make sure that our aspirations are achievable, supporting us to focus resources and improves services appropriately.

We are also aware that the plan is being developed within an arena of change, such as the remodelling of Council Services, the formation of one Primary Care Trust for Dudley, the development of neighbourhood policing.

A further area in development is the Black Country Study which is bringing together the three metropolitan boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton to ensure growing prosperity for the area, linking into the development of the City Region in partnership with Birmingham and Solihull.

A key theme of the study is the importance of the knowledge economy which is significant for the 'enjoy and achieve' outcome for children and young people in the borough with a focus on spatial developments for housing, business development and schools. We are using this information within our Primary Review which is dealing with surplus school places, the intended Secondary Review and the development of Children's Centres.

The Council Constitution has already been amended so that every decision of the Council, the Cabinet, every Committee, and every individual Cabinet Member, has to take into account the impact of the decision on children and young people, and the decision maker has to consider how best to take into account the views of children and young people when making the decision. The operation of these principles will be kept under review and reported to the Council annually.

The following principles are now proposed for wider consultation:

The Council, the Cabinet, and Select Committees adopt the following principles that will guide all the work of the Directorate, including resource allocation, policy development, and policy development and operational management. The Directorate of Children's Services will:

- prioritise the safeguarding of children and young people;
- prioritise improved outcomes for children and young people looked after by the Council;
- consider the impact on all children and young people, and their families, of all activities, with a view to improving outcomes for all children;
- listen to children and young people, and engage them in decision making, and provide advocacy for their interests;

- provide active leadership to other parts of the Council and to other public agency partners, as well as private, voluntary and community sector partners on issues relating to children and young people;
- focus on preventative work, but, where intervention is needed, carry this through decisively and effectively, and as early as possible.

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Governance and Decision Making

The Children Act 2004 puts an expectation onto each local authority area to develop partnership arrangements which can be referred to as 'Children's Trusts' to manage the planning and commissioning of all services for the benefit of all children and young people in the borough.

Dudley has already developed a Children and Young People's Partnership, with decision making through an Executive Strategic Board. The structure of the overall partnership and its reporting and decision-making arrangements is near finalisation. We have decided to focus our development work through three partnership groupings or themes which are defined by an age-banding arrangement. These are Early Years Partnership: 0-5 years; Children's Partnership: 5-13 years; and Youth Partnership: 13-19 years. Each theme group will need to ensure that work is undertaken to improve all of the five outcomes, identify gaps in service delivery and ensure that services are delivered in a 'child' centred way. There are some time limited action groups which meet to make sure that various areas of important development take place, such as the National Service Framework (NSF) implementation group. This group is making sure that the new targets for the Health Service are fully implemented. There are a number of groups which will report directly to the appropriate theme group according to the age group to which it relates.

The age-banded theme groups will report to the Children and Young People's Implementation Group who will then make recommendations for decision making to the Executive Strategic Partnership.

Further work will be undertaken over the next twelve months to ensure that the decision making processes are timely and effective. Similarly further work is being undertaken to develop the joint commissioning framework for the partnership to

make sure that priorities are met and service improvements are made according to need.

We realise that decision making as a Partnership will not meet the requirements of public bodies where responsibilities clearly rest with one or more of the organisations which make up the Partnership. To overcome this it has been agreed that when a decision has been taken by the Partnership the relevant organisation will then ensure the full support within the normal decision making processes for that particular agency. For example, where an area of work which is normally governed by the Council is decided upon, the necessary decision making processes of the Council will be followed immediately after the Partnership has taken the decision.

As the Partnership develops the full Children's Trust arrangements these governance matters will be resolved regarding shared decision making and reporting arrangements. It is envisaged that a Children's Trust arrangement will be in place during 2007.

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Being Healthy Matters

Children and young people in Dudley should have the best possible start in life and be supported to be as healthy as possible.

Where we are now:

Overall the outcomes for children and young people towards being healthy are judged as good. Our recent self assessment recognises that over 80% of our schools are achieving Healthy School Status with all of our schools having made a formal commitment to achieving the Healthy School Status at level three under the new national arrangements. The services for children with a disability are currently under review so that we can build on good practice and work towards an integrated service. The health needs of looked after children are being met with a full team of dedicated health workers – a doctor and a nurse.

Strong partnerships with the voluntary sector play an important role in meeting the physical and mental health needs of children and young people. The Partnership is addressing the inconsistent performance of the Child and Adolescence Mental Health Service on-acute assessments and has reduced the waiting list by 53% in the first two quarters of 2005/06. The Health Inequalities Strategy has been developed on behalf of the Community Partnership and the Children and Young People's Partnership are committed to implementing this for the benefit of children and young people in the borough. The Strategy was available in January and will be disseminated with the relevant training throughout 2006.

An audit of service activity is being carried out against all of the National Service Frameworks for the Health Service so that gaps can be identified and addressed. Similarly an evaluation of care pathways, referral systems and admissions will be completed in March 2006.

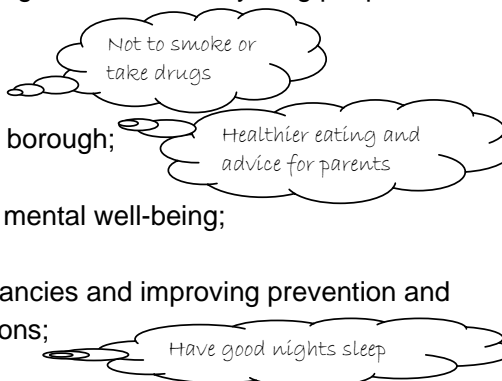
The self assessment identified the following areas for development:

- ✚ Achieve greater consistent and improved performance of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service;
- ✚ Achieve an improved and integrated service for children with disabilities;
- ✚ Achieve an improved maternity service;
- ✚ Deliver a school health advisor service to all children educated at home;

- ✚ Improve care pathways in relation to early intervention, prevention and effectiveness in respect of admissions to health care;
- ✚ Further development of positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyles.

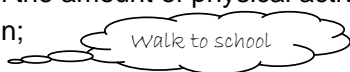
As a partnership we believe that we can have the most impact on improving health for children and young people through the following priorities:

- Lessening the negative impact of smoking on children and young people;
- Developing healthier lifestyles;
- Reducing health inequalities across the borough;
- Promoting children and young people's mental well-being;
- Reducing the number of teenage pregnancies and improving prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections;
- Reducing the numbers of children and young people taking illegal drugs or misusing alcohol.



We will achieve these through meeting the following outcomes:

- A reduction in the numbers of children and young people who begin to smoke;
- A reduction in the number of respiratory illnesses in children and young people;
- An increase in the number of environments that are smoke free;
- A reduction in the levels of obesity in children and young people;
- An increase in the range of healthy foods and the availability of water in schools and other settings for children and young people;
- An increase in the amount of physical activity that children and young people are engaged in;
- Narrowing the gap of negative health outcomes for children and young people from deprived neighbourhoods and vulnerable groups;
- A reduction in the waiting list for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service and developing a mental health strategy;



- An improvement in the engagement with health services of children educated other than at school;
- A reduction in the incident of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases;
- A reduction in the number of children and young people taking illegal substances;
- An increase in the number of children and young people moving into treatment services for substance misuse;
- An improvement in maternity services.



Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Staying Safe Matters

Children and young people in Dudley should feel safe and be protected

Where we are now:

Dudley launched its Safeguarding Children Board in April 2005. This was one of the first in the country to be established. The aim of the Board is to build on the excellent work that is taking place across the borough to protect children and young people. This has now been extended to include the wider remit of safeguarding children and young people and promoting their well-being, such as reducing harm to children and young people through accidents and bullying. The Board is also producing information for children, young people and their parents/carers about services available to them.

Our self assessment found that good partnership arrangements are in place to promote safe outcomes for children and young people. There are strong child protection arrangements in place and all procedures are effectively managed. There are good links in place to make sure that Schedule One Offenders are safely managed. The level of registrations on the child protection register is good, with appropriate diversity of placements and efficient planning decision made for children and young people to make sure that their needs are met.

The quality of care and support to disabled children is good, but the numbers of children with disabilities are increasing and this will need to be considered as we develop our multi-agency strategy for children with disabilities.

Strategies to safely reduce the numbers of looked after children are proving effective and will continue with support from the Dartington Social Research Unit. The range of preventative support is increasing.

Our self assessment identified the following areas for development:

- ✚ Continue to safely reduce the looked after population;
- ✚ Take forward the outcomes of the multi-agency review of services for children with a disability;
- ✚ Improve the adoption performance and pathway planning;

- ✚ Progress the Safeguarding Board implementation plan in the context of new guidance;
- ✚ Extend the Common Assessment Framework and processes across the borough;
- ✚ Promote early intervention through a 'team around the child' approach.

As a partnership we believe that we can have the most impact on making sure that children and young people are safe and protected through the following priorities:

- Improving sharing data and information to reduce the risk of harm to children and young people as employers and service providers;
- Encourage agencies to work closer together to support children and young people who are vulnerable or suffering from harm;
- Identify needs as early as possible so that we can intervene early and effectively;
- Reducing bullying;
- Improving adoption services;
- Preventing offending and re-offending;
- Reducing the impact of domestic violence on children and young people;
- Making the transitions between services and from children's service to adult services more positive;

Safe people to talk to

"If one of our friends told us that they were not happy at home we would not know what to do"

I want my brother to feel safe

We will achieve these through meeting the following outcomes:

- The implementation of the information sharing and assessment protocol across all services;
- The co-location of services and multi-agency teams for service delivery;
- The implementation of the Preventative Strategy and action plan
- A reduction in the number of reported incidences of bullying or racial incidences;
- An improvement in the adoption services;
- A reduction in the numbers of children and young people offending for the first time ;

Keep away from bullies

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- A reduction in the numbers of children and young people re-offending after engagement with services;
- A reduction in the number of children and young people witnessing or suffering from domestic violence;
- A reduction in the numbers of problems experienced by children as they move from primary school to secondary school;
- A reduction in the numbers of young people aged 16 who are not in education, employment or training ;
- A reduction in the numbers of young people who's destination on leaving secondary school is unknown;
- A increase in the number of young people leaving care at age 19 who are in education, employment or training.

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Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Enjoying and Achieving Matters

Children and young people in Dudley should have the opportunity to fulfil their personal goals and ambitions

Where we are now:

Our self assessment showed that nursery education and care standards are good overall. Access to childcare has improved and we have achieved our targets for nursery admissions for 4 year olds. Provision for the education of 5 – 16year olds is good and the various settings are well supported by the local authority with appropriate guidance and challenge.

Standards of achievement are improving particularly at Key Stage 2 and we compare well with our statistical neighbours. We have a range of specialist secondary schools which work well together, such as sports colleges and schools are now preparing to achieve a second specialism. We are closing the gap for ethnic minority groups and looked after children through increasing their achievements at all stages including GCSE.

School attendance is improving at both primary and secondary schools and we have been commended by Government for our work in this area. We report on and monitor exclusions from school on a regular basis and have increased the amount of time children and young people attend school.

Support for children and young people with special educational needs is good and we have successful support for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs in mainstream schools. Our inclusion strategy is being implemented through our action plan.

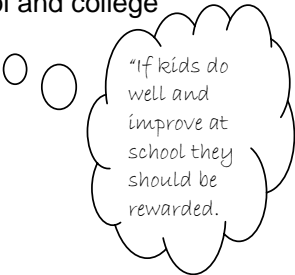
A significant range of good quality recreational and informal learning opportunities are available and taken up by children and young people. Pupils generally enjoy school.

Our self assessment identified the following areas for improvement:

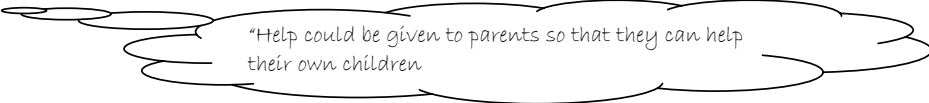
- ✚ Develop a strategy to inform parents about early years education;
- ✚ Ensure that the early years curriculum guidance is in place for all settings;
- ✚ Develop a behaviour strategy to include the under 5's;
- ✚ Continue to improve educational standards particularly at Key Stage 1 in all subjects and Maths at Key Stage 2;
- ✚ Improve the achievement of looked after children and those from different ethnic backgrounds;
- ✚ Continue to implement the Inclusion Strategy and the Children Missing from Education Strategy;
- ✚ Increase the percentage of 5 – 16 year olds spending a minimum of 2 hours a week on physical education or sport.

As a partnership we believe that we can have the most impact on the enjoyment and achievement of children and young people through the following priorities:

- Improving the achievement and engagement of children and young people in learning;
- Making sure that children and young people feel ready for school and college and that parents and carers are supported to help achieve this;
- Improving the achievement of children and young people with disabilities and additional educational needs;
- Improving the levels of attendance in all of our schools;
- Improving the attendance and the achievement of looked after children and young people in learning;
- Increasing the numbers of young people at age 16 and beyond in education, training and employment, with a particular focus on care leavers and young parents;
- Encouraging children and young people to take part in a range of play and leisure activities.



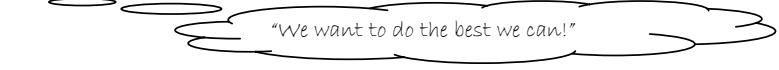
"If kids do well and improve at school they should be rewarded."




"Help could be given to parents so that they can help their own children"

We will achieve these through meeting the following outcomes:

- The achievement of the educational targets agreed with the DfES;
- An increase in the numbers of children being ready to learn when they start school;
- An increase in the retention of students within colleges and work based learning;
- An increase in achievement for all children and young people with a disability and/or additional educational need in all our schools;
- A reduction in the number of days that children and young people are absent from school;
- A reduction in the number of temporary and permanent exclusions from our schools;
- An increase in the number of days that children and young people who are looked after attend school;
- An increase in attainment at all Key Stages for looked after children;
- An increase in the number of young people aged 16 and beyond in education, employment and training;
- An increase in the number of care leavers and young parents aged 16 and beyond in education, employment and training;
- An increase in the percentage of children and young people taking part in at least 2 hours of physical education or sport every week;
- The development of a play strategy.



"We want to do the best we can!"



"We want more clubs and sports near our homes"

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Positive Contributions Matter

Children and young people in Dudley should have support and be enabled to take responsibility for playing a full part in the life of the local community.

Where we are now:

Our self assessment shows that we have good partnership arrangements in place to promote the involvement of children and young people in a range of services, building on successful models of consultation and engagement which is co-ordinated through the participation sub group of the partnership. We have the United Kingdom Youth Parliament Members and elections are in place and supported by the Electoral Services of the Council. We have an active Youth Council, Student Councils in schools and Area Youth Forums reporting to the Area Committees in the borough.

Children and young people are involved in decision making for allocation of funding through the Youth Service and the Children's Fund. Young people won a national award for promoting positive images of young people through the National Youth Agency and our disability group Me2 has also been recognised nationally.

Targeted work takes place to engage with hard to reach and vulnerable groups, for example using *View Point*; "Ask Me" and targeted recruitment through the Youth Service, Connexions and the Youth Offending Service.

Dudley Council has signed up to the "Hear by Right Standards". Children and young people are supported to be involved in decisions about their lives. Views are taken into account for strategic planning and service review, an analysis of views was used to inform the development of this plan and the youth service has trained young people to become peer assessors in their inspection policy.

Information, advice and counselling are signposted appropriately with targeted support for the most vulnerable. Looked after children and children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported through multi-agency working and identified within our management information systems to enable performance management of outcomes for these most vulnerable groups in a range of settings.

Anti-bullying work is in place in schools and other settings and a wide ranging policy and guidance has now been updated and is being consulted on. Clear strategies are in place to reduce anti-social behaviour through multi-agency working. Youth offending rates are reducing.

According to the Schools Health Education Unit, citizenship lessons are more likely to be recognised as being 'useful' by pupils in Dudley than by pupils in their reference sample made up of views of pupils from hundreds of schools across the country: 27% of boys and 25% of girls in year 10 said that citizenship was 'useful' of 'very useful' compared to 16% and 14% in the reference sample.

The assessment by OfSTED and CSCI in our annual performance appraisal reported positively on the increasing speed with which young people are being brought to justice and the reduction in the number of repeat crimes being committed. The level of multi-agency working is seen as a strength in assisting children and young people to make a positive contribution to their community and the assessors recognised the wide consultation that has taken place with them in Dudley.

Our self assessment identified the following areas for improvement:

- ✚ Develop the strategy for the full engagement of children and young people in decision making and to make sure that this impacts systematically on service review and delivery;
- ✚ Develop a web based provision to meet the information needs of children, young people and their parents or carers and to develop a Directory of Children's Services for professionals. This needs to build on the work of the "Ask Me" website and the Children's Information Service;
- ✚ Support all agencies in the Partnership to adopt the Hear by Right Standards and develop training and support for young people to act as assessors of services to make sure that the standards are met at all levels;
- ✚ Implement the Youth Matters agenda to ensure that the development of a robust and effective youth support service is in place for all young people.

As a partnership we believe that we can have the most impact to make sure that children, young people and their parents or carers are as involved as possible in decision making and service review through the following priorities:

- Engaging with children and young people, making sure that they have the skills, confidence and understanding to make decisions and are actively listened to when developing services;



- Developing and adopting standards such as Hear by Right for all partners to use when engaging with children and young people across the borough;
- Working with children and young people to become assessors for service delivery and review in all agencies against the standards;
- Developing the Youth Support Service;
- Strengthening our engagement with parents and carers;
- Improving the level of engagement and achievement of young offenders in full time education, training or employment.

"Dudley could become more inclusive by listening to parents"

We will achieve these through meeting the following outcomes:

- The involvement of children and young people in developing the engagement and participation strategy for the borough;
- All partners adopting standards such as those contained within "Hear by Right";
- The training and engagement of young people as assessors for service delivery and review;
- An increase in the number of parents and carers involved in consultation;
- The development of a Children's Services Directory;
- An increase in the number of young offenders engaged in full time education, training or employment;
- An increase in achievement in learning for young offenders.

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Economic Well-being Matters

Children and young people in Dudley together with their families should be enabled to engage in high quality learning opportunities, working towards jobs and increased incomes.

Where we are now:

Overall the outcomes we have achieved in response to the Black Country, regional and national contexts are satisfactory and improving. However the rate of improvement can be increased and the outcomes for some groups at the moment are not satisfactory

Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are broadly in line with the national averages and above the Black Country average. Schools are making increasing use of vocational qualifications and our post 16 participation rates and levels of attainment are also climbing steadily.

Dudley has three school sixth forms within twenty two mainstream secondary schools. There are four post sixteen colleges and whilst many neighbouring authorities are struggling with the challenges created by very small sixth forms, the majority of young people in Dudley benefit from being able access a wide range of provision at a local college.

Transitions to a local college can be more difficult for more vulnerable, less confident groups. We are aware of this and improving post 16 participation in education and training is a major priority for the partnership. In particular we are targeting each Key Stage 4 cohort in order to promote post 16 progression to positive destinations.

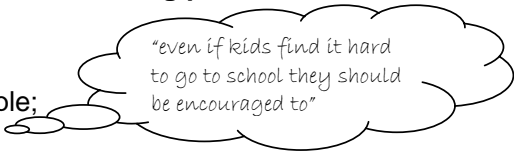
Overall collaboration with the partnership to support young people to achieve economic well-being is good and improving. Working relationships with the Learning and Skills Council, Schools, Connexions, the Black Country Training Group, employers and the voluntary sector are effective. At the same time we are striving to make our provision more successful in a number of areas and we have the plans and the capacity to do this.

Our self assessment identified the following areas for improvement:

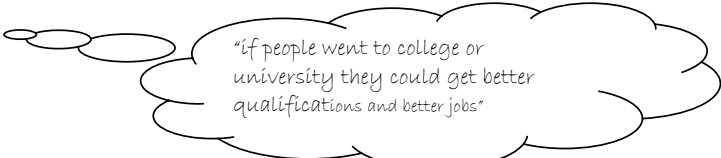
- ✚ Greater understanding and implementation within the borough of the local authority 14 -19 Improvement Plan and the DfES plans for 14 -19;
- ✚ Improving educational outcomes for all children and young people and particularly looked after children, those with a disability and young offenders;
- ✚ Improving progression rates into sixth form and colleges post 16 for all young people, and particularly looked after children, those with a disability and young offenders.

As a partnership we believe that we can have the most impact on the economic achievement for young people through the following priorities:

- Raising aspirations in children and young people;
- Stimulating the market place – for both education and employment;
- Improving outcomes for care leavers, young people with disabilities and young offenders;
- Providing an effective vocational learning experience for all 14 -16 year olds;
- Reducing the number of young people not in education, training or employment and reducing the numbers of young people where this information is not known;
- Reducing worklessness and poverty and supporting parents and carers to access childcare services.



“even if kids find it hard to go to school they should be encouraged to”



“if people went to college or university they could get better qualifications and better jobs”

We will achieve these through meeting the following outcomes:

- An increase in the number of young people entering further and higher education;
- An increase in the number of adults entering employment;
- An increase in the number of accessible child care placements;
- An increase in the number of care leavers, young people with a disability and young offenders entering further education, training or employment;
- An increase in the number and range of vocational learning opportunities for 14 -19 year olds in the borough;

- An increase in the number of young people post 16 in education, employment or training;
- A reduction in the number of young people post 16 where information is not know about their destination in education, employment or training;
- An increase in the number of available child care places;○ ○ ○
- An increase in the number of parents and carers accessing child care provision;
- An increase in the number of parents and carers returning to work.



Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

A local preventative strategy

We want to make sure that we prevent children and young people from needing extra support, but where extra support is needed we want to make sure that this happens as quickly and effectively as possible. We can make this happen by working better together.

We are now introducing the common assessment framework in line with central government policy, which means that no one will be asked the same questions over and over again by different agencies. There will be one assessment framework that will be used by all of the agencies working with children, young people and their families and therefore avoiding duplication of effort.

To help this to succeed we will need to share information carefully and confidentially and we will develop a 'lead professional' who will make sure that all of the agencies work together to support children, young people and their families in a way which means the most to them.

All of this will mean that the right services will get involved at the right time, working with children, young people and their families as a team, with the child or young person at the heart of service delivery.

We are working to what is called 'a child concern model' which will help us to make sure that all children and young people secure the right targeted support. We will be working with services at what we term different tiers of need from universal services, open to everyone, to specialist services for those with particular or multiple needs.

The table below shows the different tiers of service children, young people and their parents or carers can expect:

Tiers	What level of support will be available
Tier 1: Universal Need	Universal need: prevention strategies at this level focus on whole populations where problems are not obvious
Tier 2: Child Welfare Concern	Need for support: problems may be beginning to show and action is needed to prevent them worsening
Tier 3: Need for Support	Child welfare concern: prevention strategies at this level focus on situations where there are multiple, complex and long-standing difficulties that require individually tailored services to meet the needs of the individual concerned
Tier 4: Protection Need	Need for protection: prevention at this level requires a clear interagency focus which seeks to safeguard the child/young person

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Extended Schools and Children's Centres

By 2010 every school in Dudley must offer extended services to ensure the well-being of pupils in their care. This means that schools will offer or know where child care is locally, be open from 8 am to 6 pm every day and for 48 weeks of the year. They will offer breakfast clubs, after school clubs, holiday schemes, access to study after school, sports programmes and adult learning.

Dudley has developed a four phase approach to their development and are developing partnerships across each of the five area townships. The schools are being led strategically by the local authority through the extended school township partnerships. Each partnership has members who represent the organisations and agencies featured in the extended school core offer. All services will work together to ensure that children, young people and their parents or carers can access support through the school when they need it.

A comprehensive programme of workshops using the National Remodelling Team tools and materials has already begun for extended school managers and their partners. This is just one element of the support for change to enable all schools, including special schools, to meet their national targets for delivery.

The extended schools strategy has been deliberately ambitious from the beginning. The adoption of an innovative and forward thinking approach has ensured quick and effective engagement and commitment; resulting in progress that has been acknowledged nationally. The considerable work of the initial 24 schools nominated for the first phase has been a key feature of Dudley's success to date.

The development of Children's Centres will ensure the well-being of those children under 5 before they start school, bringing services together to meet the needs of children 0 – 5 and their parents or carers, including health, adult learning and family support. The aim is to improve outcomes for all young children and in particular to close the gap for the most disadvantaged families in the borough. Outcomes and options for children, families and their communities will be improved by increasing the availability of high quality integrated childcare and early learning, health and family support services through a core offer delivered in every centre.

By 2008 we will have established 17 Children's Centres in the 30% most disadvantaged areas in the borough. Most of these will be linked to Primary Schools with partnerships arrangements with the voluntary and community sector, child care providers, health, adult learning and Job Centre Plus.

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Allocating Resources

Where we are now:

All of the partner organisations within the children and young people's Partnership manage their resources to support and deliver services. As the Partnership matures towards a children's trust a joint commissioning framework will be developed to make sure that all of our resources are aligned to meet the strategic priorities in this plan.

Schools have already been issued with three year budgets through the Direct Schools Grant. Other partners, including the Council work within medium term financial planning.

Some areas of work such as the Local Safeguarding Board; the Youth Offending Service and Health Promoting Schools have budgets where more than one partner contributes to joint financial arrangements. In other areas of work we have pooled budgets arrangements where more than one partner contributes with decisions about allocations to service delivery being made by multi-agency groups such as:

- Out of borough placements;
- Teenage pregnancies;
- Young people and substance misuse.

In all cases budget allocations are reviewed annually to ensure targeted work against priorities can take place based upon clear self assessments of outcomes achieved.

The joint deployment of staff into multi-agency teams has been achieved in areas such as:

- Children with disabilities service;
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services;
- Children's Fund;
- Education support service;
- Early support programme.

Further multi-agency teams will be developed with the co-location of staff for extended schools and children's centres.

Resources do not relate just to the delivery of services. Care is also being taken with regards to the physical resources within the borough. The Council is currently undertaking a review of all primary school provision. With falling birth rates, fewer children are entering our primary schools which has led to an increase in the number of surplus or unfilled places. Where this leads to smaller and smaller schools the work becomes both educationally and financially unviable.

Over the next two years we plan to reduce surplus places from over 20% to under 10%, with no school being smaller than 210 places. This will mean closing schools and our plans at the moment are to close 6 schools, with each school working in partnership with a neighbouring school to support the process. Parents will still be able to express a preference for the school they wish their child/children to attend and no staff will be made redundant in the process.

As the fall in birth rate impacts through the ages we will also need to start a review of secondary schools this year with the publication of the principles we will use to base decisions upon. We also 'import' children into our secondary schools, with young people coming into Dudley to learn from neighbouring authorities. With the 'building schools for the future' national programme, neighbouring boroughs are being able to build a number of new secondary schools and academies. This will result in a reduction of young people coming into Dudley for their education and will further impact on the surplus places within our secondary schools.

Further capital investment is being made within the Health Service through their 'LIFT' programme and plans are in place to build new health centres and to improve others in order to ensure greater accessibility to a range of services within the community, tackling health inequality where possible.

As a partnership we believe that we can have the most impact on achieving improved outcomes through the following priorities:

- Developing the joint commissioning framework for the children's trust;

- Re-aligning budget across the partnership to ensure that services work towards the five outcomes for children and young people's achievement and well-being;
- Develop pooled budget arrangements where this will result in an improved service delivery, with reduced duplication and competition;
- Work as a partnership to develop a longer term capital build strategy which utilises co-location of resources where possible and encompasses the overall regeneration aims for the borough, the Black Country and the City Region.

We will achieve these through meeting the following outcomes:

- The implementation of the children's trust arrangements with an agreed commissioning framework;
- The development of a partnership capital investment programme that supports the integration of services and multi-agency working.

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Workforce Development

Where we are now:

In order to achieve our aspirations for children and young people in the borough we need to make sure that we have a workforce which is highly skilled, well led and support by effective systems and processes. We will ensure that staff work together across professional boundaries, putting children and young people at the heart of service delivery.

This will involve supporting staff to gain and update their skills to meet the national core skills for working with children and young people as a firm foundation for the various areas of professional training that the different services support. We will also be reducing professional boundaries to make sure that staff understand the role of other professionals in the field and develop a common understanding of the jargon which currently permeates all areas of working.

To achieve this we must look at culture change to reduce and remove professional silos as well as raising skill levels and flexible working. We will work with the national lead – the Children’s Workforce Development Service to develop our own workforce development strategy reflecting local needs and circumstances.

The council has already achieved Beacon Status on remodelling the school workforce and has also achieved national recognition for work within the extended schools programme which is shaping cultural change with workforce development. All partners have received accreditation or are working towards Investors in People.

As a partnership we believe that we can have the most impact on developing our workforce to meet the improved outcomes for children and young people through the following priorities:

- Developing a Workforce Development Strategy across the partnership;
- Delivering multi-agency training and not single service training regarding the core skills for working with children and young people;
- Supporting cultural change and integrated working.

We will achieve these through meeting the following outcomes:

- Having a workforce development strategy in place across the partnership;
- An increase in the amount of multi-agency training in place.

Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley:

Managing Performance

This plan sets out the principles, direction and priorities for the children and young people's strategic partnership. It does not detail all of the actions due to take place over the coming year with regards to improving the achievement and well-being of all children and young people aged 0 – 19.

The plan has clear links to the high level plans of the City Regions, the Black Country Study and the Community Partnership and is the conduit for all of the organisations in the children and young people's partnership to focus their energies on achieving the five outcomes for children, as detailed above.

Therefore partner organisations will develop their own plans, showing how these will meet the needs identified within this plan. The service plans will show how their actions will meet the partner organisation activities and these in turn will be translated to individual and team plans. In this way all staff will be aware of how their work is contributing towards achieving the agreed outcomes.

Performance management will also follow this hierarchy of planning processes. That is individual supervisions and performance review and development meetings will monitor performance at an individual or small team level. Service planning will need to ensure that it reflects key performance indicators which show how the work is built towards achieving the outcomes. Similarly organisations plans will need to show key performance indicators on how the service plans work together to achieve sum of the outcomes agreed.

Quarterly performance management discussions will take place with a clear focus on achievements to date, exception reporting where we may not be making the progress we planned and service improvement discussions.

The quarterly performance data plus annual data and issues arising from service improvement will form the basis of the annual self assessment against this plan in order to inform year two planning and implementation.

The Council has an electronic system, referred to as Performance Plus, which will be shared with partners over the next 12 months in order to facilitate discussions about shared electronic performance management systems being developed across the partnership agencies. Work is currently underway to ensure that Performance Plus can deal with the amount of data required and to analyse it within the framework of the five outcomes.

Utilising the same performance management systems will enable the Partnership to monitor and manage its performance across all services and support a Partnership approach to the Annual Performance Assessment required by OfSTED of the Council. It is important that the Partnership is fully involved in the annual assessment because the Council cannot achieve all of the required improvements to the outcomes for children and young people on its own.

As a partnership we believe that we can have an impact on improving the outcomes for all children and young people through the following priorities for managing performance:

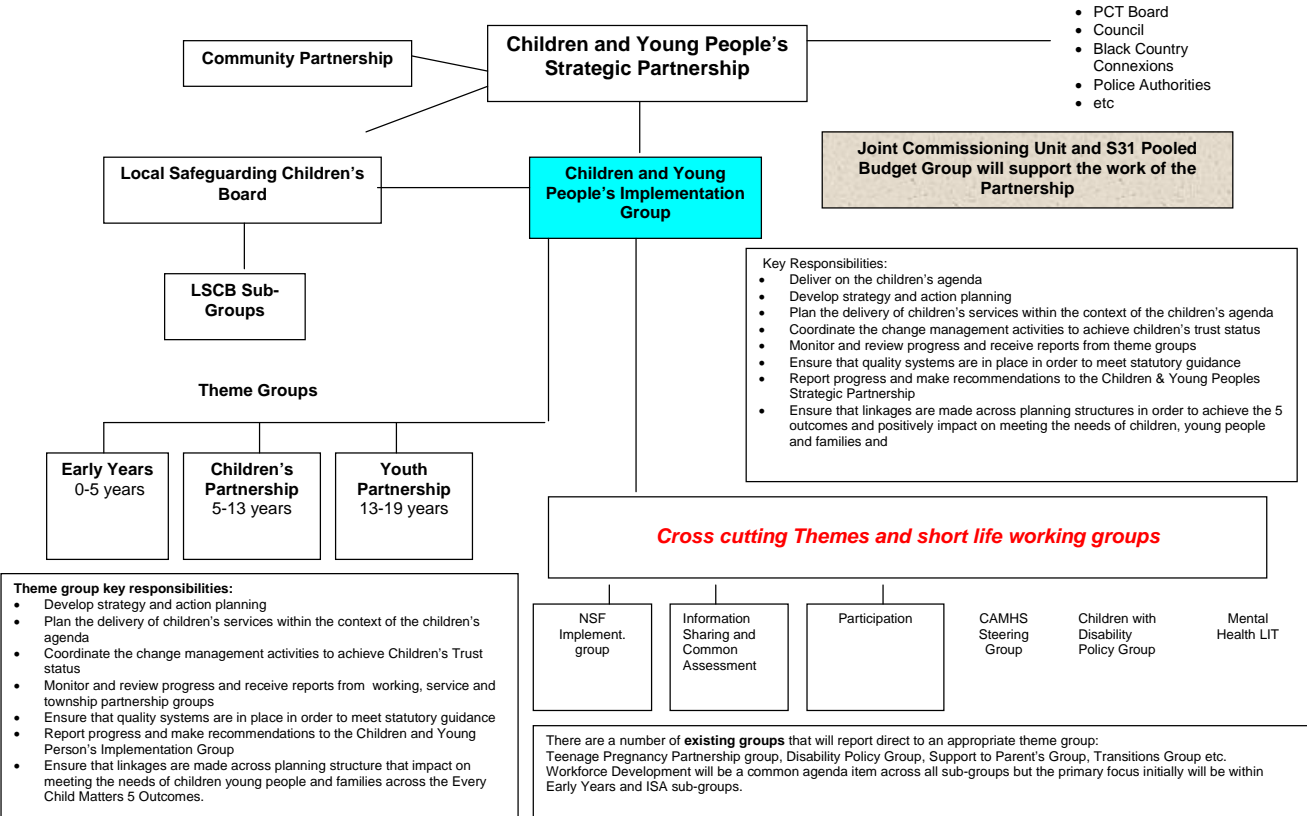
- Developing a performance management framework which works across the partnership and takes into account all levels of service delivery;
- Preparing and presenting quarterly performance management reports to the children and young people's strategic partnership through its governance arrangements;
- Undertaking an annual performance assessment with the partnership to be completed in May each year which will inform the development and implementation of the children and young people's plan.

We will achieve these through meeting the following outcomes:

- Have in place a systematic framework for managing performance across the partnership as we move towards a children's trust in 2007;
- Data for performance management will include all data in relation to outcomes as well as information from service reviews and gap analysis for service delivery;

- Commission and de-commission services against identified needs from performance management data;
- Clarity from all staff and partners, including the voluntary and community sector on how their activities contribute to the priorities contained in the children and young people's plan.

Diagram of Proposed Children and Young People Partnership Structure



- Active Neighbourhood Partnership key responsibilities:**
- Provide a forum for children, young people, parents, carers, schools, community groups and service providers to comment on local issues
 - To determine local need in line with the Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework
 - To identify any gaps in services
 - To report on service provision
 - To identify and co-ordinate local resources
 - To develop local information sharing processes
 - To contribute towards common assessment processes
 - To provide representation of local issues to the Partnership Theme Groups

Children and Young People Implementation Group

Theme Groups

Early Years Partnership
0-5 years

Children's Partnership
5-13 years

Youth Partnership
13-19 years

Township Partnership

Township Partnership

Township Partnership

Township Partnership

Township Partnership