

Children and Young People's Plan: 2009 - 2012 Consultation Document

“An excellent opportunity for York's children and young people”

Background

The *Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)* is a partnership plan, which covers a three year period. The plan clearly articulates the priorities for all services that are provided for children and young people in the city and makes sure that available resources are focused on the areas that need to improve. It is the responsibility of the YorOk (Children's Trust) Board to ensure that, not only is a plan in place, but that progress against the priorities agreed in the plan are closely monitored and adjusted, according to progress made. The ultimate aim is to make a real difference to the lives of children and young people in the city by improving outcomes for them. In order to make such a difference attention needs to be paid to all services, some of which, such as schools, are provided for everybody, as well as those that are targeted on groups of young people who may need particular attention and support.

Statutory guidance, which was not available when the city produced its first plan for 2005 – 2008, clearly states the areas that should now be included in the plan.

The first plan was organised around the five “Every Child Matters” outcomes for children, identified as national priorities by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES). These are:

- Being healthy,
- Staying safe,
- Enjoying and achieving,
- Making a positive contribution,
- Achieving economic well-being.

Although the outcomes were nationally determined, the activity in the plan was locally decided, and the same approach was taken when the plan was updated, following major consultation activity, for 2007 - 2010.

The current 2007-10 plan maintained its importance as a strategic document, whilst at the same time remaining readable and engaging. It recognised the continued significance of the five “Every Child Matters” outcomes and, in addition, identified

thematic areas for improvement, which cut across those outcome areas. Running through both plans produced to-date have been some important principles, all of which relate to removing the barriers to progress that leave some young people struggling whilst their peers move on with increasing confidence.

Some of this is captured in the vision statement for the Children's Trust that remains unchanged from the first plan.

In York we recognise that our children are our future. We want to help children achieve their potential and enjoy life as active participating citizens free from poverty, ignorance, neglect, crime, harm, abuse and distress. This is part of the wider vision of the City Council and its partner agencies' commitment to creating a future for the people of York that ensures that everyone has the opportunity to lead a full, healthy and satisfying life. We share a long-term vision, led by the YorOK Board, to make York a place where:

- children and their families live in safe, secure communities, empowered to have the skills and knowledge to be protected from abuse, harassment, exploitation and neglect;
- families develop the confidence and capability to love, protect and care for their members;
- the needs of the most vulnerable and socially excluded children and families are met in a timely and effective way;
- families know how and where to get help when they need it;
- services share a common understanding and commitment to our preventative strategy so that children and families can get help promptly to deal with difficulties when they first arise;
- trusting, flexible and innovative partnerships develop between the statutory and independent sector and local communities;
- information, methods and responsibilities are shared, for example, for managing risk or assessing the impact of services;
- multi-disciplinary and cross organisational working enhances the range of skills, experience and expertise of individual workers, as well as valuing the contribution of different practitioner groups; and
- children, young people, their families and communities are involved in the development of preventative services.

The development of the current CYPP in 2006/07 was characterised by a considerable body of effective community consultation. The plan drew on the views of:

- almost 4000 children and young people, reached through 45 pieces of work,
- parents, reached through the parent questionnaire in schools, with 6300 responses,
- partners (50) reached through events, briefings and conferences.

Young people were also involved, in an advisory role, in the development of the final document, and two further versions of the plan were produced; one for children and one for young people. The young people also produced a DVD to accompany the plan, which portrayed their "take" on needs in the city.

We are keen to see such engagement again. A lot has happened since the first plan was agreed. The Partnership Board responsible for the plan (called YorOK or the

Children's Trust) has increased its membership to embrace a wider range of partners, and a new directorate covering Children's Services has been established by the City Council. The relationship between the work of the YorOK Board and the Local Strategic Partnership ('Without Walls') has been clarified since the last plan was produced. The Board has become a clearer delivery mechanism for the LSP's new Community Strategy for the city, and resulting Local Area Agreement.

We are now launching consultation on a new Children and Young People's Plan for 2009-12. We do so because we definitely know that plans of this nature can, and do, contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people. The YorOK Board has monitored closely, and seen real progress against, the priorities identified in its earlier plans. Those priorities, informed by widespread consultation, clearly identified the areas where further progress was still needed, the hardest issues to improve. In reviewing progress against the CYPP and the children and young people's block of the LAA, the YorOK Board is delighted to see that:

- in the Children and Young People's Plan, of 17 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) where a trend can be identified, 14 have improved, which is over 82%,
- in the LAA, 37 of the 53 (70%) of the indicators have stayed the same or improved.

If we look to external inspectors to validate the progress we are making, we can read the Ofsted Joint Area Review report (published 3 June 2008), which described that:

"Overall improvement in performance is being sustained and outstanding outcomes for children and young people's services have been maintained over time."

So how will we agree our priorities for the 2009-12 Plan? How will we ensure that the experience we have of driving improvements is applied to the right issues? How do we ensure that we grasp this opportunity to review priorities for the next three years? Increasingly, much reference is made nationally to a quest for world class services for our children and young people. York, as an acknowledged top performing authority nationally, has a real opportunity to respond.

No consultation should start from a blank sheet of paper and the process should be one that does not restrict but challenges thinking, remaining open to innovative and new suggestions.

However, we have to start from somewhere and attached are issues which have emerged as particularly important for one or more reasons, such as:

- children and young people have been saying they are important to them,
- the data collected is saying there is room for improvement,
- the Annual Performance Assessment or the Joint Area Review have identified them as needing further attention.

Our consultation should also be influenced by the national agenda, which has been given a renewed impetus through the Children's Plan, published by the DCSF in December 2007. The Children's Plan places an expectation on local authorities and their strategic partners in Children's Trusts to champion and take responsibility for achieving measurable improvements in the lives of children and young people across all five of the Every Child Matters outcomes.

The ambition is two-fold: firstly that every child reaches adulthood with the breadth of skills, qualifications and experience that they need to be able to thrive in society and

the workforce; and secondly, that every child has a good experience of childhood and their teenage years. The Children's Plan will provide a road map for the delivery of world class services that enable every child to achieve their potential and have a happy, healthy and safe childhood and teenage years.

This consultation document outlines the most important issues where fresh ideas and additional help might make a difference. All ideas are welcome, but particularly those that do not need more resources than are currently available! That does not mean we should not be ambitious – it may be about us stopping doing some things and starting to do others or we may need to do things differently. The intention is always that the local authority and all its partners should be smarter about the way in which existing resources are used.

The Consultation Process

In order to write the plan, it is vital to consult with the people of York to get their views and build on the work undertaken to develop the 2007-2010 plan, which has been acknowledged by the Joint Area Review to be “thorough and wide-ranging.”

From now until the end of October we want to consult with as many people as possible, in fact, all those who work together to support children and young people making up the YorOK community:

- Children and young people,
- Parents and carers,
- Partner organisations and the workforce within those organisations,

There will be a range of events where colleagues will be gathering views from the York Community, including Ward meetings, Festivals, meetings with Schools, Children's Centres, Voluntary organisations and Youth groups.

This document will form the basis of the consultation but more materials, including presentations for use with communities and children and young people, are available from the Children's Trust Unit ctu@york.gov.uk or from Bernie Flanagan (Tel: 01904 554463) or via www.yor-ok.org.uk **If you are able to access the website you will be able to make your contribution to the consultation electronically and this will make collation of people's views easier. However we welcome all responses in whatever format.**

We have organised the consultation against the 5 outcomes from the Every Child Matters framework. However, in doing so, we certainly do not want to restrict thinking, nor do we believe that issues can be simply boxed into particular categories. We know that many of the issues and challenges are cross cutting ones, but we also know that the 5 outcomes have an established level of understanding across the key stakeholders. There are lots of questions asked and you may feel that there are only some that you would wish or have time to comment upon. We have also included additional space for ideas/comments that you were finding difficult to fit anywhere else!

Being Healthy in York

Where are we now? The Children and Young People's Plan 2007–2010 described York, on the basis of available evidence, as 'a comparatively healthy place for children and young people, but a city not immune from the trends that are affecting the health of children elsewhere in the country'. The most recent information from the PCT suggests that this remains true. Progress has been made in young people accessing exercise, in eating more healthily, in having immunisations up-to-date, in reducing smoking in pregnancy and increasing breastfeeding rates. We can also evidence progress in promoting good health with particular groups, such as children in care, but what more needs to be done?

Where and how do we need to make further progress?

Interim results from the National Child Measurement Programme 2006/07 (awaiting validation from the Information Centre) indicate that, for North Yorkshire and York, 9.2% of reception children are obese and 15.8% of Year 6 children are obese. This is below national levels but those national figures are of major concern. Should we be concerned locally? And what more do we need to be doing?

Support for Disabled Children and Young People was a key priority in our last plan. Much progress has been made in improving access to services with new directories, lead professional schemes and improvements in transitions to adulthood. Are we on the right track to ensure that all disabled children and young people and their families receive services that are sufficiently differentiated to meet their diverse needs? If not, what more is needed?

The emotional health and wellbeing of our young people is crucial to their future development and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy for the city received glowing praise in the recent Joint Area Review. Are we doing enough in this area and, if not, what more is needed?

Teenage pregnancy rates in the city reduced in 2006 compared to 2005 and are now below regional and national averages. Does this mean they should not be focused on in the new plan? Are young people now making better choices about sex and relationships and, if not, why not?

The Government's new ten-year drugs strategy prioritises the prevention of harm related to substance misuse, in particular focusing on vulnerable young people, families and parents who misuse substances. Nationally, it is suggested that we have seen a significant rise with the average weekly consumption of alcohol for 11–15 year olds increasing from 5 units in 1990 to more than 11 units in 2006. Evidence also suggests that: a higher proportion of young people are drinking with the aim of getting drunk and are consuming stronger types or brands of drink; younger teenagers (aged 11-13) are drinking more; and there is a trend towards increased unsupervised drinking by young people in open-air public spaces. Is this an issue in York? Do we need to do more in this area? Should it be a priority in the Plan?

Your comments on the above or any other "being healthy" related issues are welcomed

Staying Safe in York

Where are we now? In York “Children and young people live in a very safe environment. There are highly effective multi-agency partnership arrangements, with strong strategic leadership through a well-established Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Early identification, referral and assessment processes are rigorous and ensure that interventions are prompt and that appropriate support is provided for children and families in need”. Those are not our words but those of the Ofsted inspectors who concluded that safeguarding services were “outstanding” in the city. And, yes, we can evidence improvements in the timeliness of assessments being completed, new systems for responding to domestic violence, a roll-out of safe recruitment practice, increases in foster parents etc, but what more needs to be done?

Where and how do we need to make further progress?

Despite being a Beacon Authority for Early Intervention for Children at Risk in 2006, we have seen an increase between 2001-2008 in the numbers of children who are in the care of the local authority. Is this a good thing or not? Does it mean we are identifying poor parenting more quickly and intervening, or are our preventative services not being effective enough? Or is it too early to judge?

The local Safeguarding Children Board has worked hard to ensure that when children, young people and their families are using services they can be confident of a safe professional service. Safe recruitment practice, robust Criminal Records Bureau checking and codes of conduct for staff have been introduced across agencies. Is there more that needs doing to further protect children?

We have worked hard to introduce the national Common Assessment Framework aimed at getting the needs of vulnerable children and young people met earlier. Much training has been done, new systems are in place, and rich information has been shared in creative ways. Is this sufficient? What more is needed to get early help to the right children?

Excellent progress has been made in developing our Children’s Centres and all of the current eight have achieved national designation. What local services for children and their parents would you like to see them delivering for our 0-5 year olds?

The work on the YorOk website is impressive and the engagement of families in specific parenting programmes is at the highest ever level in the city. But do families know where to go for help? Is there anything more we should be doing or doing differently to support parents in their absolutely crucial role?

Our anti-bullying work is impressive and clear evidence exists of reductions in reported bullying. But given what we know about the significance of positive relationships with peers to the well-being of our children and young people, is it an area where we can never be complacent? The misuse of new technology is also nationally reported. Is cyber bullying a local issue? What more should we be doing to tackle bullying?

2007 saw an increase in the numbers of local children killed or injured on the roads. Whilst easily dismissed as not statistically significant and still below regional and national averages, any such incident can be devastating. Are we doing enough on road safety and, if not, what more should we be doing?

Your comments on the above or any other “staying safe” related issues are welcomed

Enjoying and Achieving

Where are we now? The Annual Performance Assessment letter of 2007 summarises this outcome with the judgement "The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is outstanding. Standards in schools are above average in all key stages and have risen still further. In Key Stage 3 standards are well above the national average. Provision for family learning is excellent. The programme for developing children's centres and extended schools is well ahead of regional and national comparators". The following is a typical description in the majority of school Ofsted reports: "Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. They are happy, confident and poised both in their dealings with each other and with adults". The work of the School Improvement Service led the authority's success in obtaining Beacon status for school improvement in 2007/08. But what more needs to be done?

Where and how do we need to make further progress?

The Children Act places a duty on local authorities to promote educational achievement for Looked After Children. Children need a stable and supported school place if they are to learn, carers who are able to support their educational achievement and access to development and other activities. We still do not see educational outcomes for looked after children in York as high as the rest of the young people in the city. Is this inevitable? What else should we be doing to address this issue?

Early years settings across the maintained and PVI sectors, in both urban and rural locations, are now working with children and families from a wide range of backgrounds, including different cultures, class, lifestyle, language, religion and nationality. Successful inclusion initiatives will ultimately contribute to narrowing the gap for children from these often excluded families, as practice is related more closely to their needs and as families they are initially welcomed and then retained within the settings. Our work in increasing the availability of affordable, high quality childcare for pre-school children is making great progress but, given the importance of the issue, is there more we should be doing? Is there more we should be doing to provide high quality play provision for all ages?

The statistics tell us that children and young people from families in the city with the lowest incomes achieve less, at every stage in their lives, than those who are born into families that are better off. They are more likely to have a turbulent home life, to miss school, to find learning difficult and, as they grow older, to become disaffected and have anti-social behaviour. What more do we need to do to "narrow the gap" between the outcomes achieved within some communities compared to others? Do we need to retain "Success for All" from the previous plan as a key priority?

Progress is being made to reduce the number of exclusions in our schools and a major Behaviour Support Service review is underway. How can our behaviour partnerships help to reduce exclusions even further and also to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people? Is there anything more in addition that we should be doing to improve school attendance particularly for specific groups like Looked After Children and Travellers?

High quality teaching and learning, strong leadership of our schools, high quality learning environments and best use of available resources are all key to improvements in educational outcomes for our children and young people. New schools are being built, a Primary Capital Strategy has been submitted and major reviews are planned for the forthcoming year. Whilst more of our schools are achieving outstanding judgements, what can we do to take schools from an Ofsted judgement of “satisfactory” to “good” and from “good” to “outstanding”.

Our mantra must remain “no school standards without Every Child Matters and no Every Child Matters without school standards”. To achieve this we will need to demonstrate the interaction and mutual dependence between Every Child Matters and school standards agendas and how they will be driven forward together. Are we sufficiently demonstrating the role of local authorities in challenging and supporting all their schools to improve educational standards and how this will be achieved through delivery of the wider Every Child Matters outcomes?

Your comments on the above or any other “enjoying and achieving” related issues are welcomed

Making a Positive Contribution

Where are we now? There is an outstanding range of opportunities for young people in York to make a positive contribution to their community, and the numbers doing so are increasing steadily. Feedback from children and young people is consistently positive, and they genuinely appreciate the opportunity to influence the decisions that affect them. In order to maintain the momentum for improvement that has been established in recent years, YorOK has identified 'Children and Young People in their Communities' as a "partnership priority". Children and young people are comprehensively involved in the decisions that affect them, and consultation mechanisms at all levels (from the strategic to the operational) are now fully embedded across the partnership. Both at a universal level and with respect to targeted groups, there is a tremendous amount of positive real participation by young people in shaping and changing service provision. But what more needs to be done?

Where and how do we need to make further progress?

The range of local indicators used for measuring the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour shows that, on the whole, concern levels in York have remained stable over the last two years (Talkabout, number 29, September 2007). But the expressed attitude of the wider public about children and young people often remains negative. How do we improve public perception and should it be a priority for the plan?

Lack of access to mainstream services alongside non-disabled peers exacerbates social exclusion for disabled children and young people and this can have long-term and intractable consequences. It also denies them opportunities for enjoyment, achievement, and development that these settings afford. There is a lot of policy and service development activity around childcare, play and youth services, which need to be taken on board in an inclusive way.

Despite evidence that youth crime is falling and that re-offending by young people known to our Youth Offending service is reducing, we know that preventing young people getting involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour in the first place is the best course of action. We share the national desire to significantly reduce by 2020 the number of young offenders receiving a conviction, reprimand, or final warning for a recordable offence for the first time. How do we go about achieving this?

In April 2008, we established a new Integrated Young People's Service bringing together the previously organisationally separate Connexions and local authority Youth Services. A tremendous opportunity exists to improve the access and quality of Information, Advice and Guidance to young people whilst at the same time responding to their and the public's desire to increase the availability of "places to go and things to do". However resources are limited. What should the balance be for the service between universal and targeted provision? What kind of "places to go and things to do" are we talking about? Are we talking about better leisure facilities, more youth clubs or more drop-in places?

Kent County Council has banned the Mosquito, a controversial device that disperses young people by emitting a whining sound that only they can hear. An estimated 3,500 of the devices - which emit a high-pitched sound - are in use throughout England since their introduction in January 2006. The Children's Commissioner for England, Sir Al Aynsley-Green, launched the 'Buzz Off' campaign earlier this year against the Mosquito, saying it infringed young people's rights and created a divide between young and old. Do we do enough to enhance inter-generational understanding in the city and should it be a priority in the plan?

YorOK has made volunteering a previous priority as part of the York Local Area Agreement. Recent evidence shows an increase in the numbers taking part in the DoE Award, and a growth in the number of small scale schemes, such as the Street Sport Initiative and the It's Up 2 U scheme which was launched in Summer 2007. Is this progress embedded or does it need a high profile in the new plan?

The population of York is changing and positively becoming more ethnically rich. How can we ensure that children and young people from all our diverse communities are equally valued and have equal opportunities to participate in the life of the city?

Your comments on the above or any other “making a positive contribution” related issues are welcomed

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Where are we now? In making further progress on 'achieving economic well-being' the Authority is building on provision that has already been identified as "excellent" (APA letter 2006) and "outstanding" (APA letter 2007). Progress since the publication of the Children and Young People's Plan 2007–2010 has, in this area, again been significant.

Where and how do we need to make further progress?

2010 will see the local authority take over the commissioning of post 16 provision as part of a national drive to ensure greater participation of 16-19 year olds in education, training or employment. Local authorities will judge demand for different forms of provision, the extent to which the available supply meets that demand and makes a full reality of the new entitlements to Diplomas, Apprenticeships and the Foundation Learning Tier. They will then decide where to commission more provision, where to expand the best provision to fill gaps, and where to remove the least effective provision. In doing so, they will aim to make the new entitlements available in full to all young people at the highest possible standard. We have made excellent progress in developing the new diplomas, we have a new integrated young people's service and we have low percentage figures for young people who are not in employment, training or education (NEET). However, this represents over 200 young people, a significant number of whom have a degree of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or are involved with the Youth Justice System or who are care leavers. A new opportunity exists. What more do we need to do to achieve a city where all 16-19 year olds are engaged in some meaningful education, training or employment?

Also at risk of being over-represented in this NEET group are care leavers. Historic performance is patchy and dependent upon a small and therefore volatile cohort. Is there more that the partnership should be doing to ensure that children who have been in care are moving into employment or training?

Employers are central to Diploma Developments and, for the current Gateway round, business colleagues have supported the development of the submission in five new lines. These colleagues are committed to ongoing involvement. The 14 – 19 Partnership has, for example, recently developed a DVD careers resource, with significant input from employers in key sectors of the city. Do we do enough to engage employers in these debates and particularly given the challenge of York's economy what more should we be doing?

We commented earlier that our work in increasing the availability of affordable, high quality childcare pre-school places is making great progress. We did so in the context of improving the "preparedness" of some particular children for starting school. This work also contributes significantly to ensuring that we have the quality and sufficiency of childcare which supports the needs of working parents and employers. Is there an issue about accessing affordable childcare in York?

The level of unplanned homelessness for young people aged 16/17 years old continues to be a focus for multi-agency action. The level of accepted homeless 16/17 year olds in the first half of 2007/08 is exactly the same as in the previous year, at 29. The projection for the year is around 50. Given the impact, and despite the impressive partnership work on the issue, should it be given a higher profile in our priorities?

The Government has produced a 'Child Poverty' indicator - Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDAC). This indicator shows the percentage of children under 16 who were living in families in receipt of Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based), or in families in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit/Disabled Persons Tax Credit, whose equivalised income is below 60% of the median before housing costs. i.e. living in 'Child Poverty'. Against that definition York has 14% of its children and young people under 16 living in low income households against the national position of 20%. However, behind that

overall figure are five wards where the figure is in excess of the national average. Should reducing child poverty be a priority for our next plan and how might progress be achieved?

Your comments on the above or any other “achieving economic well-being” related issues are welcomed

Other Cross-cutting Themes and Agendas

In addition to ideas about improving specific outcomes, the CYPP will also needs to develop ideas about broader ways in which agencies will work together more effectively to support children and young people. There are several cross cutting themes that underpin partnership work in the city, and your views and comments about these are welcomed.

Where are we now?

The recent Joint Area Review of Children’s Services rated the capacity of Children’s Services and our partners to improve as “outstanding” and service management as “good”. A number of major strengths were identified, including the establishment of clear priorities, a strong focus on improving outcomes, early intervention, prevention and inclusion. Strong leadership and partnership working were also identified, along with sound financial management.

Where and how do we need to make further progress?

York’s Children’s Trust has made significant progress through well-established and effective partnership working in the city. Do we need to promote the work of the Trust to a wider audience to ensure it is increasingly seen as central to the day-to-day activities of partners and in ensuring high quality services for children and young people?

Whilst significant progress has been made in relation to improving multi-agency training through the YorOK website, we have a lack of capacity to develop an overarching Workforce Development Strategy. We will respond to this challenge by recruiting a new dedicated resource from September 2008 to build on our successful partnership work.

There are many good examples of successful jointly-commissioned activity in York, however, in order that we can respond to local and national challenges, the YorOK Children’s Trust Board has agreed that we should develop a more strategic approach to the integrated commissioning of services for children, young people and parents in the city. Early discussions have confirmed that our integrated commissioning framework should build on experience and strengths, should allow flexibility, promote innovation, and be inclusive and transparent. We also need to explore how pooling budgets can support the development of new and exciting services and ways of working. This is quite a tall order, but not impossible! What are the key challenges for providers and organisations in taking this work forward? What particular strengths should we be careful to preserve?

Whilst significant progress has been made in relation to improving multi-agency training through the YorOK website, we have a lack of capacity to develop an overarching Workforce

Development Strategy. We will respond to this challenge by recruiting a new dedicated resource from September 2008 to build on our successful partnership work. What should an integrated workforce look like? How should our workforce strategy make a difference to children and young people?

York is lucky to be a diverse city containing children and families from many different backgrounds, with different abilities and beliefs. The YorOk Board is committed to ensuring all our diverse communities are equally valued, have equal opportunities to participate in the life of the city and for children and young people from all communities to thrive and reach their potential. How can we best work together to achieve this?

Vision: at the outset of this document (page 2) we repeated the vision for the Children's Trust. This was produced in 2003. Do you still support the words contained in that vision and if not, what changes would you want to see?

Your comments on the above or any other "service management/cross cutting themes" related issues are welcomed

This consultation has asked for your views on a range of issues. But were they the right issues? Please add any comments on this and anything else you want to say about services for children and young people in the space below. We are always keen to know not only your views on the issues but your ideas on solving them, so if your organisation can assist in the solutions please let us know how. Please use this section to comment.

Please return to Peter Dwyer, Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services at Mill House, North Street, York, YO1 6JD by the end of October 2008

Many Thanks for your contribution – it will influence our shared priorities