

Report to: Children's Services, Culture and
Young People and Sport Scrutiny
Committee

Date: 12th February 2009

Report of: John Livesey

Report No:

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Report Title: Update on Children's Trust

Non Confidential: **(Non-Confidential)** This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

- To update Members with the background and progress to the development of the Children's Trust in Bolton
- To update Members with recent proposals regarding future development and role of Children's Trusts

Recommendations:

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

- Statutory guidance on interagency co-operation to improve the wellbeing of children: children's trusts – DFES July 2005
- Bolton Children's Trust: Terms of Reference
- Draft Concordat for Bolton Children and Young Peoples' Trust (BCYPT)
- Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families – DCSF 2008

(for use on Exec Rep)

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Summary:

*(on its own page
with background docs)*

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Background

Duties in section 10 of the Children Act 2004 require local authorities and their 'relevant partners' to cooperate to improve children's wellbeing, defined as the Every Child Matters five outcomes. The Act places a duty on local authorities to take a lead in making arrangements to promote cooperation between local agencies whose work impacts on children within the authority's area. The relevant partners must cooperate with the authority in its making of those arrangements.

In July 2005 DFES issued guidance entitled '*Statutory guidance on interagency co-operation to improve the wellbeing of children: children's trusts*'. This clarified expectations of what the arrangements to promote cooperation were and stated '*A set of effective local arrangements, operating at every level, will be a children's trust in action.*' The guidance also articulated that most areas should have a children's trust by 2006 and that the Government expected all areas to have a children's trust by 2008.

Children's trusts are a response to Lord Laming's report of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, which highlighted the extent to which better working together and better communication are crucial. They have been created to address the fragmentation of responsibilities for children's services. They build upon, bring together and formalise the joint work that is already taking place in many local areas.

Current Situation

Bolton's well-established practice in joint working was, until 2007, based around the Children and Young People's Partnership which in many ways echoed the requirements of the children's trust arrangements. This strength in partnership working was noted in the APA report of 2006. In April 2007, the move from this position to that of a Children's Trust was made; this was in advance of the 2008 deadline and was timed so as to take forward the new Children and Young People's Plan.

Bolton has been clear from the start that the Trust will be inclusive – not just of other agencies and partners but including young people as full members of the Trust. The inaugural meeting of the Trust on 20th April 2007 was essentially an exploration of the scope of the Trust's interest alongside some key scene-setting about the Borough and its achievements. The Trust has agreed that it will manage its business through a series of sub-groups, each focused on one of the Every Child Matters outcomes. Each of the 5 sub-groups is led by a senior officer from either the council or one of the partner agencies. Their role is to bring together key partners, create a common understanding as to what the priorities are and how they are measured and develop an accessible way of reporting on progress, identifying challenges and generally keeping the Trust up to date.

A draft concordat or voluntary agreement setting out how the Bolton Children's Trust and its members will establish and provide the leadership and arrangements necessary including decision making, joint planning and commissioning processes to deliver improved outcomes for Bolton's Children and Young People was drawn up for agreement by the Trust members at the meeting in March 2008.

Current Membership

Name	Organisation
Councillor Adia	Executive Member for Children's Services
Councillor Swarbrick	Liberal Democrat Member (Opposition Representative)
Councillor Ashcroft	Conservative Member (Opposition Representative)
Margaret Asquith	Director of Children's Services
Nafisah Atcha	Youth MP
Zuhayr Adia	Youth MP
Niall McGloin	Deputy Youth MP
James Murray	Deputy Youth MP
Suzanne Hindle	Participation Development Manager, Children's Services

David Filingham	Chief Executive, Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust
Jan Hutchinson	Director of Public Health, PCT
Susan Holland	Divisional Manager, Womens, Childrens & Out-Patients Division, Bolton Hospital
Helen Clarke	Assistant Director of Nursing, PCT
Alison Jackson	Senior Commissioner - Children's Services & CAMHS Bolton PCT
Beverley Andrew	Director of Corporate Services, Bolton Hospital
Claire Jackson	Partnership Director – Bolton, LSC
Margaret Gregory	Headteacher Devonshire Road Primary School, Headteacher's Executive (Primary)
Phil Williamson	Headteacher Canon Slade, Headteacher's Executive (Secondary)
Bill Wilson	Headteacher Thomasson Memorial School, Headteacher's Executive (Special)
Steve Wetton	Bolton Sixth Form College, 14-19
Beverley Gallier	GMPT
Karen Minnit	Bolton CVS Chief Officer
Julie Ryle	Bolton CVS
Martin Greenhalgh	Chief Inspector, GM Police Bolton Division
Sara Wallwork	Chief Inspector, GM Police Bolton Division
Julie Thompson	Assistant Director Children's Services, Positive Contributions
Tony Birch	Assistant Director Children's Services, School Improvement
John Livesey	Assistant Director Children's Services, Planning, Performance and Resources
John Daly	Assistant Director Children's Services, Children and Families
Pat Harrison	Head of Lifelong Learning, Children's Services
Tony Sinkinson	Strategic Services Manager, Children's Services

Future developments

On the 18th November the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families wrote to Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members of Children's Services, highlighting the importance of Children's Trusts and published updated guidance for Children's Trusts entitled '*Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families.*'

The Secretary of State also informed Directors and Lead Members of proposals to strengthen the legislative framework for Children's Trusts that would be taken to the next Parliamentary session.

It is acknowledged that nationally the vision of Children's Trusts has won wide acceptance and that local partners have made significant progress in many areas, however the cultural changes needed to drive through demonstrable improvements in outcomes have yet to be sufficiently embedded.

If proposed legislative changes to strengthen Children's Trusts go ahead as planned the statutory 'relevant partner' will be extended to include maintained schools (and Academies), Sixth Form and Further Education Colleges and Job Centre Plus. The Board of the Children's Trust will be placed on a statutory footing and it will be responsible for developing, publishing and monitoring the Children and Young People's Plan. The Trust will still however have a responsibility to ensure non-statutory partners such as GPs are engaged in the planning process.

The guidance published in November focuses on the priorities for the next 18 months after which it will be updated to reflect any legislative changes that have been made.

During this period it is expected that each Children's Trust should:

- routinely include schools, colleges and Job Centre Plus as key partners in the Children's Trust;
- have a Children's Trust Board in place; and
- have a Children and Young People's Plan in place to which key partners have committed to provide, and made public, the level of resources needed for its delivery.

Implications

The Children's Trust in Bolton is still at an early stage in its development and has yet to look formally at its role in commissioning services as identified in the Children and Young People's Plan. As one of the key partnerships for the Bolton Vision Partnership, it will need to develop its strategic relationships with other partnerships such as BeSafe.

The latest guidance states that subject to the necessary legislation every Children's Trust will have a statutory Board with responsibility for producing a Children's and Young People's Plan for the local area, informed by a full consultation with children, young people and their families.

The Board should hold its individual members to account for delivering their agreed part of the agreed plan. To do this effectively the guidance states that the Children's Trust Board should systematically and regularly monitor and evaluate results, challenge itself and others where progress is slow, being sensitive and responsive to the practicalities of front line delivery.

This is an area which needs to be strengthened in Bolton; regular reporting of the National Indicators included in the Local Area Agreement and Community Strategy would support this activity as would formal structured reporting from each of the Trusts subgroups.

In light of the latest guidance the role and membership of the Children's Trust would need to be reviewed to ensure all 'relevant partners' are represented and that the sub-groups reporting to the Trust are effectively managing and driving improvement in each of the outcome areas.

Although Bolton did produce a Children and Young People's Plan in 2007 and reviewed it during 2008, the new guidance seeks to extend the ownership of the plan to all statutory partners.

Children and Young People's Plans are currently local authority plans, although they must consult with other partners and the plans must cover the full range of outcomes for children. Extending responsibility for the Plan to all partners covered by the 'duty to cooperate', and requiring all partners to 'have regard' to them, would mean that the Plan becomes the shared responsibility of the Children's Trust. This would suggest the production of a new Children and Young People's Plan for Bolton looking again at our priorities and progress against the five outcomes, a process for achieving this would need to be discussed and agreed.

The implications of the recent guidance were discussed at the last meeting of Bolton's Children's Trust and it was agreed to hold a development half day for members of the Children's Trust in March 2009 to review the current Trust arrangements and their fitness for purpose in light of the new guidance.

It is likely that further guidance regarding systems for safeguarding and child protection will be issued following the conclusion in February 2009 of Lord Laming's review following the tragic death of Baby P.

This report does not require an EIA, as it is not seeking a Policy change.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members

- Consider the information and implications of Statutory Guidance
- Note actions to progress developments