

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

8TH NOVEMBER 2007

**CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PLANNING
& IMPLEMENTATION GROUP**

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Board information on the strategic planning processes in place with regard to children looked after.

BACKGROUND

2. Overall responsibility for strategic planning in Middlesbrough rests with the Middlesbrough Partnership, which was developed in its current form in 2002 but built on a long history of cross-sector and partnership working. This partnership operates through a board that includes senior representatives of key agencies from the public and private sectors. In addition there are places for representatives of the voluntary and community sectors and local residents.
3. The Middlesbrough Partnership has six themes (that form the basis of the Community Strategy), one of which is Supporting Children and Learning. Within that theme there are two Action Groups, the Middlesbrough Learning Partnership and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, which formed the basis for the development of the Children's Trust. The Children's Trust is made up of the key agencies who have a 'duty to co-operate' under the Children Act 2004. These agencies include the Local Authority, Police, Probation, Youth Offending Service, the Strategic Health Authority and the Primary Care Trust.
4. Within Middlesbrough, the Children's Trust has adopted the Every Child Matters outcomes as the framework for the planning and commissioning of services. There

are, therefore five 'themed' groups, each lead by one of the partner agencies. Alongside these themed groups there are two additional groups, one that focuses on children with disabilities and another for children looked after. This reflects pre-existing and successful strategic planning arrangements for those groups of children. This approach to strategic planning provides clear links between objectives for children's services identified at a national, partnership-wide, corporate and departmental level.

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

5. The Children Looked After Planning & Implementation Group (commonly referred to as CLAG) was established many years ago as one of a number of planning sub-groups linked to the (then) Joint Commissioning Group. CLAG includes representatives from a wide range of agencies whose services impact upon the lives of children looked after. Not all members of CLAG are able to attend every meeting but there is representation from the Primary Care Trust, the Designated Paediatrician, the Youth Offending Service, a Foster Carer, the Youth Service, Teenage Pregnancy, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Leisure Services and Strategic Housing. When the idea of Multi-agency Looked After Partnerships (MALAPs) was developed by the government, it was agreed that CLAG already fulfilled that role within Middlesbrough.
6. The purpose of the Children Looked After Planning & Implementation Group is to provide a forum to co-ordinate the strategic development of multi agency services to children looked after. The group develops an annual action plan and monitors performance against the action plan and against relevant performance indicators. The group also provides a focus for responding to new legislation, guidance and initiatives relating to children looked after. The group reports to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Children's Trust.
7. The group's action plan is structured around the Every Child Matters outcomes and relates directly to key local and national performance indicators and targets. Performance issues are identified and appropriate actions put in place. Key tasks identified within the current action plan include:

Health

- Health Roadshow Event
- Contribute to review of CAMHS Service
- Review and revise Health Assessment Protocol
- Develop and implement system for tracking health outcomes for CLA

Stay Safe

- Develop multi agency placements in crisis panel
- Increase number of foster carers by 8 to enable better matching
- Enhance foster care links with Sure Start
- Monitoring and analysis of placement stability indicators
- Implementation and development of Permanence Planning Meetings
- Develop adoption strategy and action plan
- Undertake audit of CLA placed with parents and make recommendations for action as appropriate
- Improve and enhance the role of service provision
- Service Managers consider decision to commence care proceedings

- Development of services for teenagers
- Questionnaire to be sent to all CLA aged 6+ re visiting arrangements
- Audit to be undertaken of visiting frequency
- Develop training programme in relation to CLA
- Develop overarching bullying policy for CLA
- Review and implementation of Joint Working and Information Sharing Protocol between Children, Families & Learning and the South Tees Youth Offending Service
- Implementation of Restorative Justice within children's homes

Enjoy and Achieve

- Participation in What Makes the Difference Pilot and evaluation
- Quarterly audit and monitoring of PEPs
- Continue contract with Welfare Call
- Analyse circumstances of children missing education and identify themes
- Roadshow event for foster carers, adopters and staff on education
- Participation in regional Aim Higher initiative
- Motivational visits to higher education establishments
- Future role and management of the education looked after team determined
- Review education looked after Strategy
- Development and implementation of protocol for promoting extra curricular interests and pastimes for CLA
- Gather baseline data on CLA involvement in activities and increase number by 15%

Make a Positive Contribution

- Arrange a Corporate Parenting Conference to be led by CLA and those leaving care
- Arrange further CLA Achievement Day

Achieve Economic Well-being

- Increase joint working with Connexions
- Increase joint working with teenage pregnancy and Sure Start plus
- Early identification of cohort and undertake direct work in relation to education, training and employment
- Expand role of education looked after team to include those aged 16-19
- Participation in Homeless Strategy group
- Continued meetings with Homeless and housing providers to advocate housing needs of those leaving care
- Recruit 4 further Supported Lodgings Providers
- Explore option of joint working with MIN to develop floating Support scheme around Tees Valley accommodation

8. The majority of the actions identified are completed or well underway although some issues, particularly in relation to major service developments, will require longer term solutions. The existence of this strategic planning group will also assist in preparations for the forthcoming Joint Area Review.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

9. There are no immediate financial or legal implications arising from this report. As corporate parents, this report will be of interest to all Members.

RECOMMENDATION

10. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advises the Executive to note the work undertaken to ensure effective partnership working and strategic planning in relation to services for children looked after.

REASON

11. To ensure that the Members are aware of arrangements for representing the needs of children and young people looked after within strategic planning processes.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Middlesbrough Local Area Agreement 2007-2010
- Children and Young People's Plan, Middlesbrough 2007/08

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