

AGENDA ITEM:

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

AD HOC CHILDRENS TRUST SCRUTINY PANEL – FINAL REPORT

Introduction

1. Whilst always a topic of huge national interest, it is difficult to remember a time when children's services, the way they are provided and the outcomes that they produce have been under greater national scrutiny. The notion that one agency can improve life chances and life outcomes for children has also been dismissed and the value and worth of partnership working is now firmly embedded into the public policy debate.
2. Childrens Trusts are a major development of that public policy debate around partnerships and are themselves part of the wider Local Strategic Partnership. It is clear that they have a crucial role to play in considering the effectiveness of services, the outcomes being delivered for children and being a crucial advocate for children and young people, in all areas of public policy which impinge upon their lives.
3. It is also the unanimous view of public policy experts that the UK faces a considerable period where public spending increases are likely to be minimal, if there are any increases at all. A tighter financial climate makes it all the more important that the public sector gets more for every pound it spends and an integral way of doing this is to work more closely with partners. The Childrens Trust is an excellent example of such an arrangement. It is against this multi-layered backdrop of public interest, that the Panel wanted to consider the role played by the Childrens Trust in Middlesbrough.

4. Membership

Councillors Brunton (Chair), E N Dryden (Vice Chair), A Majid, B E Taylor, E Lancaster, G W Rogers, H Pearson OBE, J G Cole, L Junier, M B Williams, M J Ismail, P Purvis, P Sanderson, S Carter, S K Biswas, W Ferrier MBE.

5. Terms of Reference

- To ascertain the achievements to date of the Middlesbrough Children's & Young People's Trust.
- To ascertain the major challenges that Middlesbrough Children's & Young People's Trust can expect to face in the next three to five years.
- To establish the Trust's goals for the next three to five years.
- To ascertain how the Trust goes about engaging with Children, Young People, parents and schools, in considering the effectiveness of the Trust and the services it provides.

Evidence from University of Durham 2 October 2010

6. When considering how to progress a piece of work considering the Middlesbrough Children's & Young People's Trust, the Panel felt it would be advantageous to initially consider the social and political context to Children's Trusts and gain a better understanding of where they come from as a policy tool.
7. In pursuance of this initial information, the Panel held a meeting with Gordon Jack, from the University of Durham's School of Applied Social Sciences. Mr Jack worked as a practitioner and manager in children's services for around 15 years, before becoming a lecturer in Social Care at the University of Exeter, where he was head of department from 1998-2004. In 2006 he took up the position of Reader in Social Work at University of Durham. Mr Jack has a substantial amount of experience in the training and development of social workers at both qualification and post qualification level. His main research interests centre on the topics of social ecology, social policy and child well-being.
8. The Panel heard that Children's Trusts developed as a concept around the late 1990s, when there was a general political acceptance that society had not adequately tackled the topic of social exclusion. There were also significant concerns over the apparent lack of social mobility amongst certain groups in society. The Government of the day had also accepted that key agencies were not working together sufficiently and such matters had to be challenged.
9. Against that political backdrop, The Panel heard that in 2003, there were two hugely significant events that shaped the development and inception of Children's Trusts. Firstly, the Chief Inspector of Social Services published *Modern Social Services – a commitment to the future*¹, which advocated substantial change in the way social services for children were managed and

¹ Modern Social Services – A commitment to the future The 12th Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Social Services 2002-2003 © Department of Health. Please see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/AnnualReports/DH_4067095

delivered, arguing for a much more substantial element of partnership in the delivering of children's services. The Report highlighted Lord Laming's:

"Salutary messages about the uneven priority which children have been given across agencies – with everyone relying of social services and many overlooking their own critical responsibilities. In particular the vulnerability of frontline practitioners across a range of services has been exposed²".

10. The Chief Inspector went on to say that

"There has been no shortage of applicants to create Children's Trusts. If organisations express caution, it is from the perspective of wanting change to succeed – because they know only too well that change is needed – social services alone cannot serve children."³

11. The second and most significant major development of 2003, which attracted huge amounts of publicity, was Lord Laming's report following the Victoria Climbié Inquiry⁴.
12. Victoria died on 25 February 2000. Marie-Therese Kouao (Victoria's great aunt) and Carl John Manning (Kouao's partner) were found guilty of Victoria's murder on 12 January 2001 and Lord Laming's Inquiry Report was published on 28 January 2003⁵.
13. The Laming report was stinging in its criticism of the bodies that failed Victoria in her case, but also made hugely significant comment about how public bodies approached the topic of child welfare and particularly how public bodies went about the task of protecting children at risk of harm.
14. Lord Laming was critical of the systems of accountability on Children's Social Care and what he felt was a lack of accountability in senior management. He was also clear that the degree of systematic partnership working between relevant agencies (such a local government, health and police) was not sufficient to provide the sort of protection that children deserve. Specifically, he said:
- We cannot operate a system where the safety and wellbeing of children depends upon the personal inclinations or ability or interests of individual. It is the organisations, which must accept accountability⁶.*
15. Lord Laming's report was the catalyst for fundamental changes to the organisation of Children's Services and specifically the creation of Children's

² Page 5 of the above.

³ Page 6 of above document quoted at footnote 1.

⁴ It is not proposed to set out the detailed history of Victoria's life in London, although a history is set out in the House of Commons Health Committee's *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report* Sixth Report of Session 2002-3, on pages 6 to 9. Please see <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmhealth/570/570.pdf>

⁵ Department of Health, The Victoria Climbié Inquiry, Report of an Inquiry by Lord Laming, Cm 5730, January 2003.

⁶ Please see page 12 of Health Committee report highlighted at footnote 4.

Trusts. The Panel heard that the removal of certain organisational boundaries, particularly between Social Care and the NHS was very much in line with prevailing Government thought at the time, with the then Secretary of State for Health, Alan Milburn MP, saying that:

Where partnership works it works brilliantly. Where it does not the needs of the user come a poor second to disputes between services. And let me just say candidly, I know the problem lies as much on the NHS side of the fence as on your side. The answer is to take down the fence⁷.

16. The Panel was interested to hear that around the same time of Lord Laming's report (2003), significant work was being undertaken in public health circles to develop child wellbeing indices. The Panel heard that such work to develop those indices was starting to show that child wellbeing was worse in the United Kingdom than a substantial number of countries that actually spent less, in real terms and as a proportion of GDP, on children's services⁸. Such stark facts led the government to think in great detail about the necessary structural work required to improve children's services in the UK, with the emerging concept of Children's Trusts (as multi-agency bodies) considered to be a significant policy tool in tackling those areas of concern.
17. As the Children's Trusts concept developed and gained further credence, the Panel heard that a lot of the initial thought and focus was placed on the systems and processes required for Children's Trusts to run effectively and probably less attention was paid to outcomes. The Panel heard that this was understandable and probably predictable, but Children's Trusts were always viewed as 'a means to an end' in delivering better outcomes for children.
18. The Panel heard that against the backdrop of this emerging consensus, a three-year research and evaluation project was commissioned by the (then) Department for Education & Skills and the Department of Health of the 35 Children's Trust Pathfinder sites. The evaluation was undertaken by an interdisciplinary team of academics based at the University of East Anglia, in association with the National Children's Bureau⁹.
19. The research made a number of key observations. It found that Children's Trust pathfinders had:
 - Acted as a catalyst for more integrated approaches to the diagnosis and provision of services for children;

⁷ Speech made by Alan Milburn MP as Secretary of State for Health, at Annual Social Services Conference on 19 October 2001. Please see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Speeches/Speecheslist/DH_4000442

⁸ Please see *Child wellbeing and child poverty – Where the UK stands in the European table*, Spring 2009 as an example of this. These ideas are discussed more fully later in this document . Please See www.cpag.org.uk

⁹ Children's Trust Pathfinders: innovative partnerships for improving the well-being of children and young people National Evaluation of Children's Trust Pathfinders March 2007. www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/about/aims/childrenstrusts/faq/childrenstrustsfaqs

- Drawn together a variety of statutory and local services with the aim of enabling them to make a difference to the wellbeing of children and young people;
 - Begun to develop expertise in joint commissioning of services across traditional organisational boundaries
 - Sometimes found it difficult to engage partners in key sectors, notably where there are funding difficulties or complex accountability frameworks;
 - Enabled joined up approaches to workforce development and training
 - Facilitated the development of new types of professionals who are able to work across long standing organisational and professional boundaries
 - Reported early indications of local positive outcomes for children and young people
 - Learnt a great deal about the complexity of change management in children's service provision.
20. Following those pathfinder projects and subsequent developments, the Panel heard that Children's Trusts are soon to be placed on a statutory footing.
21. The Children's Plan (2007) described a 'new leadership role' for children's trusts to
- 'Deliver measurable improvements' and by 2010 'have consistent arrangements to provide identification and early intervention for children who need additional help'*
22. A recent national publication by the Audit Commission entitled, 'Are we there yet?'¹⁰ provides a highly useful snapshot of how Children's Trust are 'shaping up' and getting to grips with the huge task that faces them. The Audit Commission concluded that:
- "five years after the Laming inquiry, there is little evidence that children's trusts have improved outcomes for children"*¹¹
23. The Audit Commission went on to say that Children's Trust need to develop substantially if they are to bring about the intended benefits"¹²
24. Significant emphasis was also placed on the importance of governance arrangements within the Children's Trust. The Audit Commission underlines the importance of ensuring that governance arrangements focus on delivering

¹⁰ Are we there yet? Improving Governance and resource management in Children's Trusts – Audit Commission, October 2008. Please see www.audit-commission.gov.uk

¹¹ See page two of the summary document of the above

¹² Please see page 4 of the summary document of the above

better outcomes for local children, young people and their families, not just structures and processes.

25. The Panel was also interested to hear that the topic of 'child wellbeing' is not always symbiotic with wealth. The Panel heard about a piece of work recently published by the Child Poverty Action Group¹³ which outlines that the UK comes 24th out of 29 European countries in overall child wellbeing with only Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta faring worse. The Panel heard that child poverty is a grave threat to child wellbeing, but once the threat of child poverty per se had been averted, other matters were of more importance to child wellbeing than the amount of money available to be spent on the child. To some extent, this is borne out by the Child Poverty Action Group figures which highlight superior child wellbeing in much less wealthy countries such as Slovenia, Czech Republic and Slovakia.
26. The Panel therefore heard that child wellbeing is perhaps more to do with child happiness. The Panel heard that a focus on Key Performance Indicators and other performance type information had its place in modern governance, but was not the only tool when it came to assessing matters of child wellbeing. The Panel heard the opinion that if a Children's Trust wants to get a detailed picture of child wellbeing in its area, it should use quantitative methods less and rely more on (admittedly more expensive and time consuming practices) as asking children "are you happy?" or "How do you feel about your life?". To contextualise the matter more, the Panel heard that a very good indicator of child wellbeing in an area would be the extent to which the Every Child Matters Outcomes were becoming a reality in the Children's Trust's area of influence. It was made clear to the Panel that should there be sufficient resources to prevent child poverty in a society or a household, greater financial resources does not always correlate with increasing levels of child wellbeing. The panel was provided with an example of this, with the reference of 2007 Unicef Report, which ranks the United Kingdom & United States as worst and second worst respectively for child wellbeing, of twenty one economically developed countries¹⁴.
27. It was felt that it would be of interest for the Panel to consider issues of Child Poverty and associated issues such as social mobility. The Panel also expressed an interest in considering the topic of people feeling 'able' to access support services and accept support from support services. The Panel heard that it tends to be those most educated and less in need of support services who readily access them. This was a topic that the Panel expressed an interest in considering further.

Prevailing National Guidance

28. During the course of the Scrutiny Panel's review into the Children's Trust, the Department for Children, Schools and Families held a consultation exercise about revisions to the Children's Trust guidance, which was originally

¹³ Child Wellbeing & Child Poverty – Where the UK stands in the European Table. Child Poverty Action Group, Spring 2009 – can be accessed via www.cpag.org.uk

¹⁴ <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf>

published in November 2008. The final guidance was published in the middle of March 2010¹⁵. The current guidance replaces *Children's Trust; statutory guidance on interagency cooperation to improve wellbeing of children, young people and their families* (2008) and *Children and Young People's Plan Guidance* (2009). The Panel have, therefore, had the benefit of considering the most up to date edition of the statutory guidance when considering the Middlesbrough Children & Young People's Trust.

29. The guidance defines its purpose as 'to set out in one place what a Children's Trust is, what it does and how, by promoting co-operation between partners, it improves the lives of local children, young people and families' It reaffirms the guidance's commitment to assisting in the delivery of the five *Every Child Matters* positive outcomes:
 - Be healthy
 - Stay Safe
 - Enjoy and Achieve
 - Making a positive contribution
 - Achieve economic wellbeing
30. The guidance also makes clear that the above outcomes are underpinned by the United Kingdom's international commitments, relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹⁶. The Convention includes children's rights to
 - A protection from harm and violence and discrimination
 - A supportive family environment or alternative care
 - Help to keep healthy
 - Education, play and leisure and
 - Additional support for those with the most need.
31. The statutory guidance reflects a number of changes that arise from the ASCL Act 2009¹⁷. These are:
 - The Children's Trust Board is placed on a statutory footing from 1 April 2010

¹⁵ Children's Trusts **Statutory guidance on co-operation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan**

www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00346

¹⁶ Ratified by the United Kingdom in December 1991.

¹⁷ Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

- Responsibility for developing, publishing and reviewing the CYPP passes from the local authority alone to the Children's Trust Board. The first new style CYPP must be published by 1 April 2011.
 - The CYPP becomes a joint strategy in which the Children's Trust partners set out how they will co-operate to improve the well-being of children and young people in the local area. It differs from the previous CYPP in that although the scope of the new CYPP includes all services that affect children and young people's well-being, once the Children's Trust Board has identified its main cross-cutting priorities, the Plan should focus on what the partners will do **together** to deliver them.
32. Responsibility for implementing the CYPP remains with the individual partners, who are under a duty to have regard to the Plan. The Children's Trust Board is responsible for monitoring the extent to which the partners act in accordance with the Plan and to publish an annual report which sets this out.
33. Schools (including Academies, and non maintained special schools), FE and sixth-form colleges and Jobcentre Plus are new statutory 'relevant partners' in the Children's Trust co-operation arrangements from 12 January 2010. This means that like other statutory 'relevant partners' they:
- are required to co-operate with the local authority and its other partners to improve children's well-being through the Children's Trust co-operation arrangements;
 - are (subject to any specific restrictions on partners' funding arrangements) able to pool budgets and share other resources with the other partners; and--
 - must be represented on the Children's Trust Board.
34. In defining the nature and function of the Children's Trust, the statutory guidance says,
- "The Children's Trust is the sum total of co-operation arrangements and partnerships between organisations with a role in improving outcomes for children and young people. This includes the Children's Trust Board. The aim is to promote co-operation between partner organisations to improve children's wellbeing, which should be underpinned by the General Principles of the UNCRC. **The Children's Trust is not a separate organisation. Each partner within the Children's Trust retains its own functions and responsibilities within the wider partnership framework.**"*
35. The Children's Trust Board, whilst only a part of the Children's Trust, plays a crucial role in the work of the Trust. It is now statutory and is responsible for the CYPP. The Guidance dictates that

“The Children’s Trust Board should have a clear and separate identity within the wider co-operation arrangements.”¹⁸

36. The guidance makes clear that the purpose of the Board is

“to bring all partners with a role in improving outcomes for children together to agree a common strategy on how they will co-operate to improve children’s wellbeing and help embed partnership working in the partners routine delivery of their own functions. It also provides a strategic framework within which partners may agree to commission services together, with pooled or aligned budgets, but delivering the strategy remains the responsibility of the partners, both individually and together. This means each partner’s existing lines of accountability are unchanged, i.e. each partner of the Children’s Trust Board retains its existing formal lines of accountability for delivering its own functions. This avoids any confusion or blurring of lines of accountability within the Children’s Trust Board.”

37. One of the most important functions of the Board is to prepare, publish and review the CYPP. This is a joint responsibility of the Children's Trust partners on how they will co-operate to improve children’s wellbeing across the five outcomes. The guidance emphasises the joint responsibility for the production and implementation of the CYPP and the fact that the CYPP should set out what the partners intend to deliver together to achieve its aims.
38. The overriding purpose of the new CYPP is to drive forward better integrated working across services to improve outcomes for children and young people. It is not simply about mapping everything each partner does for children and young people in isolation.

Evidence from Director of Children, Families & Learning 25 November 2009

39. Following consideration of the views presented to the Panel from the University of Durham, the Panel was keen to hear the views from the Children, Families and Learning Directorate. Those views were presented by the Director of Children, Families & Learning, who at the time of the meeting was the Chair of the Children's Trust Board.
40. Initially, the Panel was taken through some of the national policy developments which led to the creation of Children's Trusts. Specifically, the Panel heard that the Children' Act 2004 placed a number of statutory duties on local authority areas including:
- A duty to co-operate to improve the wellbeing of all children for named key partners
 - Having children’s trust arrangements in place by 2008

¹⁸ see para 1.3 of guidance

- Production of a Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) by April 2006
 - Appointment of a Director of Children's Services by April 2008
 - Appointment of a designated Lead Member for Children's Services by April 2008 and
 - Establishment of a local Safeguarding Children Board by April 2006
41. It was confirmed to the Panel that Section 10 of the Children Act provides the statutory basis for Children's Trusts (as the duty to co-operate). The Panel heard that the scope, process and form of Children's Trust arrangements are left to local discretion, and therefore each local authority area can decide whether new structures are required to support them.
42. The following 'onion' diagram was presented to the Panel, which outlines the Government's views of Children's Trusts 'in action'. The Panel heard this diagram provides a framework in which Children's Trusts can operate.



43. The Panel was advised that the Government published the National Children's Plan in December 2007, a ten-year strategy to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up.

44. The Panel heard the Children's Plan acknowledges that Children's Trusts will be the key to delivering the Government's ambitious targets. Ministers, therefore, announced in consultation published in July 2008 proposals to strengthen the Children's Trust arrangements, including the introduction of further legislation.
45. Following the consultation the Secretary of State announced plans to legislate to strengthen Children's Trusts and in particular to:
 - Extend the duty to co-operate in promoting children's well-being, under the Children Act 2004, to include schools, Academies, non-maintained special schools, FE and sixth-form colleges, short stay schools / Pupil Referral Units and Job Centre Plus;
 - Require every local area to have a Children's Trust Board and therefore establish them as statutory bodies;
 - Require Trust Boards to produce, publish, review and revise the local children and young people's plan, which was previously the responsibility of the local authority and:
 - Leave the responsibility for implementing the CYPP to Board partners.
46. The Panel learned that The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 received Royal Assent on 13th November 2009. At the time of the meeting, the DCSF was consulting on statutory guidance on co-operation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan. This consultation closed on 29th January 2010. New statutory guidance was published in March 2010. The Panel was advised on local trust arrangements.
47. The Panel was advised that Middlesbrough produced its first CYPP in 2006 and formally established the Children and Young People's Trust Board on 15th October 2007. A Director of Children's Services and Lead Member were also appointed, all within the timescales required by Government and the Children Act 2004.
48. The Panel heard that the Children and Young People's Trust Board is an action group within the Middlesbrough Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) arrangements and is responsible for the Supporting Children and Young People Theme.
49. It was confirmed that membership of the Trust Board includes all those partners with a statutory duty to co-operate, as set out in the Children Act 2004, and is supported by five themed groups addressing each of the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes. There is also a Joint Commissioning Group, Engagement and Communications Group and a Workforce Development Group.

50. It was confirmed to the Panel that the Trust Board members include key decision makers within partner organisations with a statutory duty to co-operate, Chairs of the Themed Groups and representation from the voluntary and community sector. The Board is responsible for setting the vision and strategic direction for the Trust including the development and production of the CYPP.
51. The Panel heard that the ECM Themed Groups are the strategic planning groups within the Trust and are responsible for assessing needs, identifying priorities and appropriate actions, overseeing the implementation of the CYPP and performance management. The groups are chaired by Senior Managers in Children, Families and Learning and in the case of the Be Healthy Group by the Director of Public Health.
52. It was confirmed that the Joint Commissioning Group is a relatively new group responsible for the development and implementation of a Joint Commissioning Framework and Strategy to facilitate the joint commissioning of services.
53. The Panel was advised that the Engagement and Communications Group is responsible for ensuring the voices of children and young people are listened to and are able to influence service planning and delivery. A significant amount of work has been achieved in this area for which the Trust has received local and national recognition.
54. In addition, it was outlined that a Workforce Development Group is overseeing the development and implementation of a Workforce Development Strategy that will drive forward the Government's national agenda to create a world class integrated children's workforce.
55. The Panel heard that despite the steps taken, as outlined above, progress was required in a number of fields for the Trust to continue its progress.
56. It was said that the Trust has an important role locally in improving outcomes for children and young people and in the delivery of the National Children's Plan and local CYPP.
57. Reference was made to the fact that the Children's Trust commissioned a review of its working, which was performed by an external consultant. A formal review of current arrangements began in March 2009 and a draft report with recommendations was produced in October 2009. The review was facilitated by an independent consultant and funded by the PCT.
58. The Panel heard that the review acknowledged that significant progress has been made in developing local Trust arrangements and the commitment shown by key organisations to working in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people in Middlesbrough.

59. It has also highlighted key areas for future development, which reflect those identified nationally by Government and the Audit Commission's recent publication 'Are We There Yet?'. These have been identified as:
- Strengthening governance arrangements;
 - Clarify its strategic role;
 - Commissioning and delivery;
 - Strategic management of key priorities and
 - Staff engagement.
60. **Strengthening Governance arrangements** – The Trust will begin to develop its position of strategic leadership, which will include the establishment of an Executive Group to ensure the decisions and recommendations of the Trust Board are effectively implemented. This will follow a similar approach taken recently by the LSP.
61. **Joint Commissioning** - At the present time many of the budgets are held by discrete agencies such as Middlesbrough Council or the PCT. However, there are a number of examples where pooled Children's Trust partner budgets have been used to commission services including, speech and language services, drug and alcohol services and a range of support services through the use of the Children's Fund Grant.
62. A range of different budgets held by different organisations, currently fund services for children and young people. These organisations are subject to different financial pressures, accountabilities, timescales and budget processes. This makes joint commissioning a complex process requiring an agreed framework that will secure improved outcomes for children and young people as well as providing value for money.
63. The table below gives an indication of the level of investment in 2008/09 across various service areas and activities for children's services.

Investment for Children and Young People In Middlesbrough 2008/2009			
Partner	Service Area	Activities	Budget £
Middlesbrough Council - Children, Families & Learning Department	Commissioning & Resources	Includes, repairs & Maintenance, catering, Performance & Planning, ICT, Governor Support, Standards Fund, Commissioning & Contracting	24,383,000
	School Improvement	Includes, school support services	700,000

	Pupil Support	Includes, Home-school transport, Education psychologist service, sensory impaired service	11,558,000
	Community Education	Includes, Youth Service, Connexions,	5,762,000
	Strategic Management	Includes, investors in people, organisational development	431,000
	Family Services	Includes, Children's Social Care, Sure Start, Children Looked After	24,880,000
Total Middlesbrough Council - Children, Families & Learning Department			67,714,000
Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust	Paediatrics	General & Specialist Services including surgery	9,893,000
		Accident & Emergency	878,000
		ITU	568,000
	Maternity Services		5,436,000
	Neonatal Services		882,000
	Special Care Baby Unit		1,421,000
	Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service		3,196,000
	Health Visiting Service		1,957,000
	School Nursing		742,000
	Children's Physiotherapy Services		253,000
	Speech & Language Service		538,000
	Child Protection Service		149,000
	Youth Offending Service		49,000
	Local Safeguarding Children Board		37,000
	Total Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust		
Middlesbrough Children's Fund	Commissioning Budget		686,000

Total Middlesbrough Children's Fund			686,000
Middlesbrough Youth Offending Service	Youth Justice	Targeted support for young offenders	1,224,000
Total Middlesbrough Youth Offending Service			1,224,000
Learning & Skills Council	FE Funding WBL Apprenticeships Entry to employment		18,351,064
			2,744,709
			1,138,589
Total Learning & Skills Council			22,234,362
Cleveland Police	Child Protection Services		85,000
Total Cleveland Police			85,000
Teesside Probation		Includes, Youth Offending services, Child protection, Part 8 reviews	53,000
Total Teesside Probation			53,000
Voluntary Sector	The Junction		411,000
	Families Talking		75,000
Total Voluntary Sector			486,000
Total All Services			£97,386,589.00

64. In conclusion to the evidence submitted, the Panel heard that:
- Middlesbrough has met all of the government requirements relating to the introduction and implementation of Children's Trust arrangements.
 - There is a clear commitment from partner organisations to improving outcomes for all children and young people in Middlesbrough and to contributing actively to the Children and Young People's Trust.
 - The Trust has recognised that Trust arrangements in Middlesbrough need to be strengthened and has identified key areas for improvement.
 - The draft action plan that has been developed following the review of the Trust will strengthen current arrangements and subject to agreement by the Trust Board will help ensure that Middlesbrough is able to meet the challenges and requirements that the new legislation will bring.
65. Following consideration of the submitted report, the Panel held a discussion about some of the issues raised.

66. One of the issues which was felt to be crucial to the success of the Children's Trust and its constituent parts was workforce development. The Panel heard that locality teams now exist, covering particular parts of the town. It was said that locality teams are widely supported and it is felt they can deliver significant benefits for the areas they serve, as all appropriate agencies tend to work to the same localities. Still, the Panel heard that those locality teams include different professionals, with very different career routes and can come from very different professional cultures. The Panel heard that whilst locality teams should certainly be viewed as an enhancement to local service delivery, they are not without their challenges to establish and implement. The Panel heard that issues such as different terms and conditions of employment and different levels of professional standing could affect locality teams.
67. Whilst not insurmountable problems, the Panel noted that such issues can make the management of multidisciplinary locality teams more difficult. The Panel felt that a key theme for Workforce Development issues, would be the gradual evolution of a Children's Services professional, who is trained within a multi-agency environment, who does not recognise the organisational boundaries that have always existed and probably still feature in people's thinking.
68. Linked to the consideration of the structure of teams and their skill mix, the Panel heard that the first priority in establishing any sort of service would be that services meet the priorities and needs of young people and their families. As such, the work of the engagement group associated to the Children's Trust is absolutely crucial.
69. The Panel was provided with information regarding the Children's Trust theme groups and their membership. A question was asked as to whether some theme groups are too big, which could then potentially inhibit the efficacy of the group's work. This was acknowledged as a possible problem and the Panel heard that the creation of a group sitting beneath the Trust Board, in a management committee type role, could play a very strong role in ensuring high quality output from the theme groups.
70. The Panel asked about the level of attendance at Children's Trust meetings. This was from the perspective of frequency of attendance of agencies and the seniority of those attending. The Panel heard that the frequency of attendance by partners was good, although at times there were concerns of the seniority (or lack of) of those attending, as this can place limitations on people's ability to commit their organisations to a particular course of action.
71. Regarding the importance of the right person attending from each organisation, the Panel heard that the Children's Trust had recently lost the established Police representative, due to the individual moving onto a new position. It was said that as and when people move on, the Children's Trust did suffer and there was a small hiatus whilst the new person 'got up to speed'. Whilst some of this was felt to be understandable, the Panel felt there

may be an issue pertaining to knowledge management within the Children's Trust, if the removal of some people had an effect on the running of the Trust.

72. The Panel was keen to explore the topic of finance, particularly the overall spend on services for Children and the influence that the Children's Trust has over that spend. The table at on page 14-15 outlines details pertaining to the spend on children's services.
73. The Panel expressed the view that the level of detail in the spend on children's services should be greater, for such a large amount of money. That point was accepted, with an assurance that detailing of the spend on children's services would be looked into in further detail and a better disaggregation of spend was an ongoing project.
74. Connected to the size of the spend, the Panel asked about the extent to which that money was spent as part of pooled or aligned budgets. The Panel heard that there are some aligned budgets between partners, but few pooled budgets as such. Related to this point, the Panel heard that a key consideration should be whether the Children's Trust has agreed set priorities which should be pursued, with the governance of achieving those outcomes then enacted to achieve those ends. It was emphasised that Children's Trusts should not get too preoccupied about whether budgets were pooled or aligned, but much more focus should be the improvement of outcomes and establishing an unambiguous and definitive strategic vision for the Trust. The Panel heard that although solid progress was being made towards finalising the vision, the Children's Trust was not there yet.
75. The Panel was interested in establishing the extent to which agencies are committed to integration in the Children's Trust. The Panel heard that, in the view of the Director of CFL, agencies are very much committed to the concept of integration. The active sharing of financial resource, however, is something which requires further development. It was agreed, that such integration would improve outcomes and probably deliver efficiencies.
76. On the topic of integration of services, the point was made by the Panel that services can only be sufficiently integrated and suitably meeting local need, if the Trust partners have access to high quality and timely data. The Panel asked about the data available to the Children's Trust and whether partners were satisfied with its rigour.
77. The Panel heard that the Children's Trust is not entirely satisfied with the quality of the data at its disposal. Broad data is available, although the Panel heard that the Trust feels that if such data is going to be relied upon to take commissioning and decommissioning decisions, the data is required to improve. The Panel heard that there are no intrinsic impediments on improving the quality of the data available to the Trust, it would be a matter of putting the required resource in to improve the research and intelligence function available to the Trust.

78. The Panel felt that the information received thus far, indicated that there were issues to progress with reference to the integration of governance and decision making processes within the Trust Board. The Panel was also interested to hear whether there were any challenges within the integration of outcomes for Trust partners.
79. It was said that certain organisations certainly had different modus operandi, but there were some tensions within desired or targeted outcomes. The example was given of the tension between the Youth Offending Service and Cleveland Police. On one hand, the Youth Offending Services is essentially concerned with preventing people offending or re-offending and therefore going through the Justice system. On the other hand, Cleveland Police have particular targets to increase the number of arrests and the numbers of those going through the criminal justice system.
80. In addition, the Panel heard that there are challenges around the partners using integrated information systems and having a shared language, with the take up and use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) being highlighted as an area which requires improvement.¹⁹
81. In terms of areas of priority for the Children's Trust, the areas of strengthening commissioning, earlier intervention and workforce developments were highlighted to the Panel as areas where progress should be particularly targeted. The Panel heard that integration between partners was also considered a priority.
82. In terms of future challenges, the Panel heard that decommissioning, where appropriate, would become a major part of the work of the Children's Trust if evidence indicated that services were not delivering the desired outcomes. It was said that decommissioning is not something that local health and social care economies have been particularly good at in the past. Still, in an era of tighter public finances, the willingness to decommission certain services was crucial, if those services were demonstrated to not be delivering the necessary outcomes. The Panel made the point that apart from organisational will, high quality evidence was also required to decommission services, which underlined the need for the Trust to have access to a high quality research and intelligence function. The Panel was not convinced that the Trust currently had access to such a function.
83. The Panel heard that commissioning is an area of Trust activity where some progress could be made, commissioning around areas of known need to demonstrate to the local health and social care economy the impact that the Trust can have.
84. In conclusion, the Panel heard that the partnership across the Children's Trust is very strong, with very good relations between organisations and good working relationships. Still, there are a number of significant issues facing

¹⁹ The use of CAFs was also mentioned as an area for improvement in an unannounced inspection visit by Ofsted, in January 2010. Please see [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/\(id\)/5532/\(as\)/UAV/uav_2010_806.df](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/(id)/5532/(as)/UAV/uav_2010_806.df)

the Trust. The Panel heard that the issues facing the town are substantial, but will actually require better integration of partners to tackle, due to tightening public finances.

85. Inextricably linked to the tightening economic outlook facing public services, is the wider recession, which has affected the UK. Child poverty in Middlesbrough, whilst not created by the recent recession by any means, will certainly have been exacerbated by the recession and the Panel was interested to hear how the Children's Trust will approach Child Poverty. The Panel heard that children do not live in poverty in isolation and those children will be living in a family environment affected by poverty. As such, whilst the Trust is taking an active interest in considering the topic of child poverty, the Panel heard that poverty was a topic which the entire Local Strategic Partnership is taking a lead on.

Evidence from NHS Middlesbrough 18 January 2010

86. To understand the Children's Trust, the Panel felt it was crucial to hear the views of, and put questions to, NHS Middlesbrough, as the leader of the local NHS and commissioner of healthcare services.
87. In advance of the meeting, the Panel submitted a number of questions to NHS Middlesbrough, which were addressed initially in a paper, submitted for the Panel's consideration. The questions asked by the Panel are outlined below in bold type.

How does NHS Middlesbrough see its role within the Children's Trust in the sense of what it has contributed so far and what it is there to do?

88. The Panel heard that NHS Middlesbrough has been an active partner within the Children and Young People's Trust since its formation in 2007. It was said that NHS Middlesbrough views its role within the Children's Trust and broader LSP arrangements as a partner, leader, shaper and advisor. The Panel was advised that NHS Middlesbrough recognises and fully embraces the goal of the Children and Young People's Trust to work together to improve outcomes for young people.
89. The Panel was advised that NHS Middlesbrough aims to set an example to other partners demonstrated through its commitment to continuing to develop the work of the Children and Young People's Trust and become a central contributor to its success.
90. The Panel heard that NHS Middlesbrough recognises that the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) as the key local planning document and understands the need to underpin this with sound needs assessment. It was noted that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is another crucial document, which Middlesbrough Council and NHS Middlesbrough are statutorily obliged to prepare and publish, should complement the CYPP. A disadvantage to the planning system that the Panel heard about is the fact

that the planning cycles and timescales for the CYPP and JSNA were determined by central government and as yet are not fully aligned to each other. It is, however, the intention of NHS Middlesbrough and Middlesbrough Council to ensure that the process for assessing the needs of children and young people is consistent for the development of the JSNA and CYPP. The Panel was reassured to note the priority needs within the JSNA and CYPP are consistent with each other.

One of NHS Middlesbrough's strategic themes is child health, how does it pursue this through the Children's Trust?

91. The Panel was advised that the NHS Tees Strategy is built around eight priority themes, which are:

- Staying Healthy
- Maternity and Newborn
- Child Health
- Planned Care
- Long term conditions
- Mental Health
- Acute care
- End of Life care

92. The Panel was advised that the commitments outlined in both the Child Health and Maternity and Newborn themes incorporate the priority areas of 'Be Healthy' and 'Stay Safe' within the CYPP. The Panel was pleased to see a deliberate attempt by NHS Middlesbrough to align plans and reflect the work taking place within local partnership arrangements.

93. The Panel was advised that each strategic theme of the NHS Tees strategy is in the process of developing a strategy delivery group. Each strategic delivery group will engage local commissioning partners including the Children's Trust as well as specific representation from Local Authorities. The Panel heard that the challenge will be to execute the engagement on a Tees basis in an effective way. The Panel was told that NHS Middlesbrough recognises this challenge and will work closely with the Children and Young People's Trust to ensure the relationship with the strategy delivery groups is both firm and purposeful.

What are the achievements to date in addressing areas of concern within child health that the children's trust, as a partnership, has delivered?

94. The Panel heard that in the view of NHS Middlesbrough, the work of the Children's Trust has achieved a "coming together of partners where motivation and commitment to partnership working is strong". With reference to child health, the Children's Trust and particularly the 'Be Healthy' thematic group have come together to plan and share best practice. The Panel heard that a specific example of this would be the development of an integrated child health specification for South of Tees. An independent consultant has been

commissioned to undertake an expert appraisal on Health visiting and school nurses.

95. The Panel was also advised of multi agency working in relation to emotional health and well being of children and young people, with the targeted mental health in schools project funding allocation is £225,000 for schools in Middlesbrough.
96. The Panel heard that examples of cross-thematic achievements demonstrate how effective partnership working can bring about change. Substance misuse and young people was highlighted as a priority area, and the formation of the Young Peoples Substance Misuse Joint commissioning group has seen the successful commissioning of services in Middlesbrough.
97. The Panel heard that the thematic groups also undertake a monitoring performance function with its partners. For example, the Be Healthy group regularly reviews progress towards the key targets and objectives and invites partners to update the thematic group on a regular basis to highlight progress as well as identify gaps and issues that could and should be addressed across the partnerships. The Panel heard that it is felt that this process is working well and has the full engagement of partners.

What level of financial resource does NHS Middlesbrough contribute to the Children's Trust?

98. It was reported to the Panel that there are different levels of financial resource provided, which can be direct or indirect. Currently there is no direct recurring financial contribution made to the infrastructure of the Children's Trust.
99. The Panel heard that the Middlesbrough Director of Public Health and Director of Health Systems Development both commit significant time to the Children and Young People's Trust and are members of the Trust Board. The Director of Health Systems Development chairs the Joint Commissioning Group (JCG) and the Joint Director of Public Health chairs the Be Healthy thematic group. The Assistant Director of Healthy Systems Development is also a member of the JCG.
100. In terms of time dedicated to the Children's Trust, it was reported that those Directors are supported by staff (Children's Commissioner for Health Systems Development and Children's Partnership Manager for Public Health) who provide a critical support function across the JCG and Be Healthy group to ensure smooth operation. Various staff time is given to meeting attendance and pursuing and achieving actions related to the children's trust and CYPP.
101. The Panel was advised that NHS Middlesbrough contributes direct financial investment through the commissioning of child health services. Preventative services are also commissioned for the following areas 09/10;
 - Childhood obesity
 - Dental Health

- Mental Health and CAMHS
- Teenage Conception
- Alcohol and drugs
- Sexual Health

To what extent does NHS Middlesbrough feel that the Children’s Trust’s commissioning of services is effective and can call upon detailed data to underpin those commissioning decisions?

102. The Panel was advised that NHS Middlesbrough understands and supports the need to align resources and commission jointly, where appropriate, to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. The Panel heard that Tees PCTs have developed a single commissioning strategy across the Tees area but are cognisant of the need to align the strategic objectives to those of the Children and Young People’s Trust. It was confirmed that the Tees Strategy explicitly refers to this. The Panel heard that (at the time of the meeting) national policy was still emerging around the precise commissioning role of Children and Young People’s Trusts and the role the of Trust Boards in holding all partners to account for delivery of services.

103. The Panel was advised that Commissioning in its broadest sense, captures the needs assessment process associated with the development of the CYPP, which can only be as effective as those partners providing the data/information required. The Panel heard that NHS Middlesbrough accepts the need to ensure that data is utilised (with partners) in the most effective way, to underpin commissioning decisions. The Panel heard that it is critical for data to be interpreted and collated in such a way to provide *intelligence*, again to inform decisions. The Panel was told that this is an area of work that needs to develop further, but the Trust is confident that joint arrangements exist to ensure this happens.

104. What are the areas of concern/interest, within the field of Child Health, that the Children’s Trust should be making key strategic priorities?

105. The Panel heard that the CYPP has been developed to highlight the strategic priorities. The overarching aim of the CYPP (Be Healthy Thematic group) is to ensure good physical, mental, emotional and sexual health by:

- Reducing childhood obesity
- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Reducing teenage pregnancies
- Reducing health inequalities across neighbourhoods.

106. The Panel was advised that Priority indicators have been documented in the CYPP and have not changed. These are as follows:

- Prevalence of childhood obesity
- Proportion of primary and secondary school pupils who state they are happy most of the time
- Proportion of women smoking during pregnancy

- Proportion of women choosing to breastfeed
 - Proportion of young people (under 20 years) who contract a sexually transmitted infection
 - Average number of decayed, missing and filled teeth in 5 year olds
 - Under 18 conception rate
107. The Panel heard that to ensure the Trust achieved these objectives, the systematic engagement of children and families should be an integral part of the Children and Young People's Trust business and needs to be developed further. The voice of children and young people should always be heard clearly and not just at times of review and consultation.
108. As a final point, the Panel heard that the development of an all-encompassing child health service specification, will need to involve contributions from all partners.
109. Following consideration of the information initially presented, the Panel debated the points raised with the representatives from NHS Middlesbrough.
110. It was emphasised to the Panel, that NHS Middlesbrough is a strong supporter of the ethos behind the Children's Trust and takes its role within the Trust very seriously and is a strong advocate for the importance of partnership.
111. The Panel enquired as to an area of service where partnership could deliver better outcomes for local people, than each service operating in isolation. The example of Teenage Conception was given, where, the Panel heard, significant strides have been made recently in reducing numbers. It was said that progress would not have been achievable by one organisation, or all of the organisations acting in isolation.
112. Mindful of the significant amount of national comment on Children's Trusts and the nature of that comment, the Panel enquired as to what extent Children's Trusts can become a mere 'talking shop'.
113. The Panel heard that the representatives from NHS Middlesbrough, whilst they would acknowledge there is a potential for this to be the case, the Children's Trust in Middlesbrough is not a 'talking shop'.
114. The Panel heard that in the view of NHS Middlesbrough, priorities are shared across the Trust and some areas of need have been identified, although there is more work to be done on the identification of need. It was said that whilst it was fully accepted that more work was required on understanding local need and influencing the commissioning process accordingly, the Children's Trust has been very successful in bringing people together. It was also said that the Trust has been successful in establishing a shared vision for Children & Young People, and also bringing more rigour and focus to discussions about Middlesbrough's children and young people, their future and the services designed for them.

115. Reference was made to the fact that a new CYPP is required for April 2011 and is now a shared responsibility of all statutory partners of the Children's Trust, as opposed to being the sole responsibility of the local authority, which was previously the case. The Panel heard that the JSNA would be a crucial contributor and evidence source in compiling the next CYPP, which was currently receiving a great deal of thought.
116. The Panel was interested to ask about the extent to which the aims of the 2008-11 CYPP had been achieved by partners having in place such things as integrated plans, budgets and staff or whether those partners continued to operate as single organisations.
117. The Panel heard that those present would not agree that partners continue to operate exclusively as separate and distinct operations, although there are always improvements that could be made to the level of interagency working. It was said that whilst governance and joining up of organisations are important, the outcomes for local people should be the priority.
118. The Panel heard that in areas of activity such as teenage Conception and childhood obesity, significant progress has been made towards service integration and the Panel heard that the services are reaping benefits from that greater integration, with seemingly improving (or at least stable) outcomes. Still, it was felt that the level of integration in these services was by no means perfect and could be improved significantly. It was also pointed out to the Panel that sometimes integration is not particularly desirable in certain service areas.
119. The Panel was interested in the integration of services and whether an ethos of integration filtered down to those at an operational/practitioner level. The Panel heard that there will be no such thing as a 'Children's Trust employee', but the board will hold partners to account on the delivery of services and meeting of their commitments. On this point, the Panel fully understands and accepts that it should be the Board holding the partners accountable for delivery of their areas of responsibility in agreed priorities, although the Panel is quite unclear as to how those partners will be held to account, or the processes associated with it. The Panel has not seen any proposals as to how this will happen, nor is the Panel convinced that the Children's Trust is clear as to how this will happen in practice. The Panel heard that the Trust would be waiting for guidance (which has since been published), although the Panel would hope that the Trust would not establish operations exclusively on the contents of the guidance, but interpret the guidance for local circumstances.
120. Connected to point of holding partners to account, the Panel heard that the Children's Trust's capacity to get people around a table and discuss the issues of most importance is crucial and should not be underestimated. It was emphasised that this was a huge development that the Children's Trust has brought about. The coming challenge, however, was outlined as getting those partners currently attending and taking part in the debate, to consider themselves responsible for the CYPP.

121. The Panel heard that integration and achieving a partnership ethos at Board level was only 'half the battle' and it was also crucial to develop practitioners understanding of the Children's Trust's existence and the concept behind it. Further it was said that there is work to do in ensuring the practitioners are aware of their roles as being part of bigger amount of services and not simply considering their services in silos.
122. Reference was made to the NHS Tees Strategy, its sections pertaining to Children and the extent to which that was influencing the role of the Children's Trust. It was said that the NHS Tees Strategy is well publicised and has received the support of partners, but the Panel was unclear as to how the NHS Tees Strategy, explicitly direct the work of the Trust. It was noted that the Strategy may have a bigger impact on the work of the Trust, than it has done previously, with the new CYPP required to be developed and published by April 2011. The Panel did, however, hear that the *World Class Commissioning* programme, which is so central to the operation of NHS commissioners would present challenges as to how it applies to and interacts with the work of the Children's Trust.
123. In addition to how partners relate to each other within the Trust Board, the Panel was also keen to hear about how the constituent organisations' leadership such as Middlesbrough Council's Executive or NHS Middlesbrough's Board, are kept aware of the Children's Trust activity. The Panel heard that key people are kept aware of developments when it is required, but it would appear that there is no systematic approach used to routinely keep the leadership of partners aware of progress. Whilst the Panel was aware of accountability and reporting measures within the LSP, the Panel felt that the fact that such important forums as the NHS Middlesbrough Board, or Middlesbrough Council's Executive were not routinely updated on progress was an omission. Regular progress reports would enable information sharing and an additional degree of challenge. This is especially the case on such an important topic as services aimed at improving outcomes for children, which if delivered effectively can prevent some children requiring more serious and more costly interventions in the future.
124. The Panel was keen to give further consideration to the outcomes that the Children's Trust has already delivered. As mentioned previously, the Panel heard that partners feel that the Children's Trust has engendered much better relationships between partners, with much more thought and discussion occurring relating to services for Children and the outcomes wanted for local children. It was said that the Children's Trust mechanism has delivered an incredibly important 'common purpose' amongst partners.
125. The Panel accepted that the above was important, but queried about the outcomes that have been delivered for children, as opposed to organisational benefits.
126. As an example, the Panel made specific reference to the increasing number of children entering the care of the local authority. The Panel acknowledged that whilst the Children's Trust does not have a specific responsibility for

managing 'safeguarding' per se, the Children's Trust could have a significant impact on the life chances of children. This could be by influencing the commissioning and provision of the services aimed at children and their families, hopefully preventing some cases from escalating to the point where more serious intervention is required. The Panel heard that the University of Teesside had been commissioned, in an attempt to investigate and understand the reasons for the significant rise in the numbers of children looked after. The Panel expressed an interest in hearing about the outcome of that research. Specifically, the Panel was interested as to whether the conclusions of the research would make any comment about the range and stage of interventions available for children and their families and the possible implications those conclusions may have for commissioning priorities.

127. In terms of recent improvements to outcomes, the Panel heard the Breastfeeding rates have recently improved and the childhood obesity data has also improved. In addition, there are more schools obtaining the 'healthy schools' standard and NHS Middlesbrough has recently funded the acquisition of a number of Dance Mats, to be used in exercise classes in various community settings. The Panel asked whether such developments had occurred because of the Children's Trust, or whether they would have happened anyway. The Panel was advised that such a question was impossible to answer, although the fact that NHS monies were now being used to fund public health initiatives like kit for dance classes, demonstrates the progress being made in tackling health problems in the locality.
128. On the topic of use of resources, the Panel queried as to the impact that the Children's Trust has had on commissioning decisions, or decisions to decommission services. The Panel was advised that the Children's Trust is beginning to have an impact on some commissioning decisions, with service changes to substance misuse quoted as an example. Still, it was accepted that there is more to do in respect of exerting influence over commissioning decisions.
129. On the topic of decommissioning services and influencing such decisions, it was accepted that the area of work is underdeveloped. Historically, local health and social care economies have not been particularly good at interpreting information and making decisions to decommission services if outcomes were not felt to be good enough. The Panel heard that developmental work is needed, to enable the Children's Trust to improve at interpreting available data, applying that intelligence and state the case to decommission services when appropriate. The Panel heard that this was not presently a meaningful aspect of the Children's Trust's operation.
130. The Panel enquired as to the role of the Children's Trust relating to Child Poverty. The Panel heard that the Trust Board pays an active interest in the topic of Child Poverty and is well aware that the guidance expects the Trust Board to do so.

“Each (CYPP) plan must set out the arrangements made by Board partners for co-operating on reducing and mitigating the effects of child poverty in the area of the establishing authority”²⁰

131. Nonetheless, within the Middlesbrough LSP, the topic is being considered on a wider basis, as family poverty and across the entire LSP. The Panel was also told that the Local Authority is in the process of drafting a Child Poverty Needs Assessment & Strategy, in line with legislative requirements²¹.
132. The topic of Child Poverty is considered elsewhere in this final report, although the Panel was keen to explore some practical steps that the Children's Trust could do to alleviate family, and therefore child, poverty. The example was given of welfare rights advisors and generic financial advisors being located in General Practice facilities to provide advice to those requiring financial assistance. This was suggested as something tangible that the Children's Trust could influence and argue for, which would probably improve the mental health of parents, who may be presented with physical or mental health problems, when the root of the families' problems are financial in nature.
133. The Panel enquired as to what the future role of the Children's Trust could be and where it could make most impact. It was suggested that the Children's Trust could have a highly valuable role in constantly monitoring and mapping children's services in the town and considering whether that money is being well spent and then advocating ways forward in given fields. It was accepted that this should be on the agenda for the Children's Trust, but has not really been considered in any detail as yet.

Evidence from Cleveland Police 11 February 2010

134. Following on from discussions with the local authority and local NHS, the Panel was keen to hear and consider the views from a wider range of partners in relation to the Middlesbrough Children's Trust. The Panel invited Cleveland Police's District Commander for Middlesbrough, who is a Board Member of the Children's Trust. It was noted that the current District Commander had been in post for a few months at the time of the meeting. As such, the Panel acknowledged some of the answers would be based on early impressions.
135. Initially, the Panel asked about the strengths of the Children's Trust in Middlesbrough, as seen by Cleveland Police. The Panel heard that, in the view of the District Commander, it was quite clear that the right people were around the table when the Children's Trust met and there was quite clearly a genuine and real commitment to working in partnership for the benefit of Children and their families.

²⁰ Please see page 93 of the Statutory Guidance

²¹ Child Poverty Act 2010 – Section 22.

136. The Panel was also keen to hear some areas that, in the view of the District Commander, were in need of development. The Panel heard that there were many opportunities for closer working between partners and there were also opportunities to become much better at information sharing, particularly information sharing to better identify joint priorities and therefore joint commissioning.
137. Connected to that point, the Panel heard that the Trust needs to improve the interpretation of data it has at its disposal to ensure it has a better picture of local need. The Panel heard that the Trust's intelligence on local need could be better than it is currently. A great deal of emphasis was placed on the importance of a shared intelligence function which could then influence joint commissioning decisions. The Panel heard that the debate around joint commissioning within the Children's Trust and, the Trust's influence over commissioning decisions was underdeveloped.
138. The Panel heard that making significant progress of shared intelligence and shared commissioning decisions was all the more vital, given the economic circumstances of the country and the tightened economic climate that the public sector faces in the medium term. The Panel heard that a paradox often faces public sector organisations in tighter economic times. In one sense, it is easy to understand organisations pulling back from partnerships, protecting their budgets and concentrating on 'their' priorities, with partnerships placed in the 'nice to do, but not essential' category, rather than being viewed as 'core business'. The Panel heard that a tighter economic climate is precisely when organisations are required to become braver in respect of partnerships, by ensuring that stretched resources can go further and by sharing responsibilities and assets, more can be delivered for the same money. The Panel heard that such thinking should very much apply to the Children's Trust, with its potential to heavily influence and direct the huge spend of children's services to ensure better services are delivered with available resources.
139. On the topic of partnership, the Panel heard that from a certain perspective, it is not entirely obvious as to why a Police Force would be a statutory partner in a Children's Trust. Nor would it be entirely clear as to what a Police Force would gain from being part of a Children's Trust. Still, when considered in detail, it is clear to see that young people with good prospects, who have access to good activities and have higher levels of self-esteem are less likely to become involved with Crime and/or antisocial behaviour. There is, therefore, a longer-term benefit for Cleveland Police and a reason to become involved.
140. The Panel was keen to speak to the Cleveland Police representative in further detail about the topic of information sharing. The Panel heard that Government Office North East (GONE) had recently published an information sharing protocol that made it easier and more straight forward for organisations to share information pertaining to individuals when authorities are considering safeguarding matters. Still, the Panel heard that there could still be problems with information sharing between organisations.

141. The Panel heard that from a Cleveland Police perspective, it can often transpire that a number of agencies are working with a particular family. The Panel was advised that with a better sharing of information, public services could deliver a more efficient, and possibly more effective, support. The Panel heard that Cleveland Police was very keen to explore this area of debate with the Childrens Trust.
142. The Panel was interested to explore whether, in the view of Cleveland Police, services for children and their families were sufficiently proactive in offering support, or whether those services waited until problems presented themselves to intervene. The Panel heard that regarding Safeguarding issues, Cleveland Police felt that they are quite proactive, although other child centred services away from Safeguarding could be more proactive.
143. The Panel heard about vulnerability units, which were operated by Cleveland Police on a North and South Of Tees basis and had a specific responsibility to deal with safeguarding issues. The Panel heard that in relation to Safeguarding matters, information was well shared and Cleveland Police were as confident as they could be that all appropriate information was shared, assisted by the GONE protocol, with appropriate agencies and/or individuals. The Panel heard, however, that information sharing regarding local need and the wider picture of children's services in Middlesbrough could be much better. The Panel heard that Cleveland Police see it as a key function of the Children's Trust to be a 'hub' where information is collected, collated, interpreted and discussed. Cleveland Police, the Panel heard, is not convinced this happens with sufficient regularity and rigour.
144. The Panel was interested to hear where improvements could be made by Cleveland Police to improve their effectiveness and enhance their worth as a Children's Trust partner.
145. The Panel heard that, in the view of Cleveland Police, there are significant opportunities for developing Neighbourhood Policing and working with communities in a broader sense. The Panel heard that Cleveland Police would strongly welcome the opportunity to do detailed work with children and young people and hear the detail about their concerns and their wider thoughts on the area they live in, which is something that Cleveland Police feel they lack presently. Cleveland Police would also welcome the opportunity to visit schools on a more regular basis to speak to young people about their priorities and levels of acceptable behaviour expected from citizens.
146. The Panel heard that, in the view of Cleveland Police, alcohol referral programmes and drug action teams could be a huge area for development. It was said that improvements could be made in the commissioning of those services and the level of expertise available to those services. It was said that alcohol and drug problems have a huge impact on family life and children's wellbeing, so local services should consistently ask themselves whether services are configured to offer assistance to the individual, as well as offering help to the family members affected by it. The point was made that services

do not always need additional financial investment, as such, to be improved and that services can be greatly improved by being approached from a different angle or with additional expertise assisting.

147. The Panel heard that Cleveland Police would also like to do more work on domestic violence and its impact on children and families, in addition to having a much more systematic link with the local NHS. Despite all of these areas of interest, the Panel heard that from the perspective of Cleveland Police, there was not a clear investment/commissioning programme for the Children's Trust. Further, much more work is needed to be done to 'pin down' shared priorities and how those services would actually be brought to fruition.
148. In addition, the Panel heard that Cleveland Police would be very interested in exploring, through the Children's Trust, the possibilities around out of school activities and associated outreach work with young people. The Panel was advised that this is a huge area for development, which the Children's Trust could lead on, which could have a material impact on a number of aspects of young peoples' lives and the wellbeing of the whole community.
149. The Panel was interested to explore the extent to which the Children Trust's CYPP strategic direction was in line with partner's individual service plans. It was mentioned that the CYPP is currently due for refresh and republication by April 2011, which provided a significant opportunity to critically appraise strategic direction and ensure that Cleveland Police's three year plan was in harmony with the CYPP.
150. It was felt that there was significant overlap with the expectations from Central Government of a police force and the contributions that it can make to the Children's trust.
151. In conclusion to the evidence from Cleveland Police, the importance of information sharing was re-emphasised. The Panel heard from a Cleveland Police perspective, without knowing some detail of other agencies' interaction with a particular family, it is impossible to understand the 'full picture'. It was underlined that this sort of information sharing is something that Cleveland Police is extremely keen to pursue within the Children's Trust and with partners.

Evidence from Government Office North East 11 February 2010

152. The Panel was keen to get a slightly different perspective on the Middlesbrough Children's Trust, understand what is expected of it by Government and how other areas are dealing with similar challenges. With that in mind, the Panel invited a representative from Government Office North East (GONE) to speak to the Panel. In advance of the Panel meeting, some questions were put to GONE, which were addressed in a paper submitted to the Panel. Those questions and the responses in the paper are outlined below.

To what extent does GONE support and challenge the Local Authority on the progress of the Children's Trust?

153. The Panel was advised that the main relationship between Government Office North East and the Children's Trust is through the Children's Services Adviser (CSA), and from April 2010 the Children and Learners Strategic Adviser (CLSA). The Panel heard that the CSA for Middlesbrough is invited to attend the Trust, and indeed attends four other Trusts, but this is at the discretion of the Director of Children's Services. There is no statutory right for the CSA, or indeed the CLSA, to be in attendance at the Trust.
154. The Panel heard that both roles have support and challenge as a key part of their goal of improving outcomes for children and young people, but the CLSA role will be more focussed on applying this to improving partnership working, including the Trust, than has been the case before. It was confirmed that it is also responsible for negotiating all LAA targets, including statutory targets, for children and young people.
155. The Panel was advised that The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are determined to promote Trusts and the closer partnership working they require, as the means of achieving the 'step change' necessary to improve outcomes. The CLSAs will be leading on this regionally for the Department.
156. The Panel heard that as part of this process new ways of working, including CAF and multi-agency integrated teams, will be driven through the Trust. It was confirmed that GONE is interested in monitoring these developments and when necessary, providing support or challenge to ensure that progress is made.
157. The Panel was advised that to support this process DCSF are piloting a new process known as *Getting Ahead of the Curve* and Middlesbrough will be one of those pilot authorities.

What is the view of GONE on the progress made by the Middlesbrough Children and Young People's Trust?

158. The Panel was advised that the concept of the Children's Trust is an evolving one and since 2004 each local authority area has been developing their own arrangements, within broadly similar parameters. In the experience of the CSA Trusts differ considerably in the way they operate and the way they engage with partners. The Panel heard that in Middlesbrough, DCSF had been impressed by the strength of leadership within the council and engagement with some key partners.

On what specific issues would GONE like to see the Children's Trust focus their attention on in the next three to five years.

159. The Panel was advised that the significant challenges facing Middlesbrough's Children's Trust over the next 3 to 5 years are similar to those facing all Trusts

but are modified by the context, history and strength of partnership in each Children's Trust area. It was confirmed that the key issues will be:

- Forging a stronger partnership, especially with those new organisations that will have a duty to co-operate. These will include maintained schools, Academies, 6th Form Colleges/FE Colleges and Job Centre Plus. The challenge facing Middlesbrough and other Trusts will be how to address a cultural expectation and history of separateness on the part of schools. The duty to promote child well-being and the new inspection regime will be strong drivers for cultural change but this will take not only time but also a developmental approach.
- The development of a co-ordinated Children's Trust owned Children and Young People's Plan by 2011. This Plan will need to incorporate the contributions of all Trust Partners to address the priorities identified by a detailed joint needs assessment.
- The development of protocols and processes for holding Partners to account for their contribution to the CYPP.
- The development of the Trust as a genuine commissioning body, which will involve the re-configuring of services, including decommissioning where appropriate, to meet the assessed priorities.
- The development of an infrastructure that will support these changes.

160. Following the consideration of the paper submitted. The Panel moved into asking questions of the DCSF representative.

161. The Panel accepted, at the suggestion of the DCSF representative, that there was a frustration amongst Elected Members about the progress of Children's Trusts and the degree of leverage that Children's Trusts had on ensuring partners 'did their bit'. The Panel heard that it is precisely for this reason that schools and Jobcentre Plus had been made statutory partners, in the hope that this may encourage better engagement and better joint actions.

162. The Panel was interested to expand on the areas that the Children's Trust should be developing in the near future. The Panel heard that the advent of JSNAs had been an improvement for those responsible for the management of health and related services, as it provided better and more up to date data than had often been available in the past. Still, the Panel heard that the Children's Trust in Middlesbrough, as with other Trusts, relies on a significant quantity of information which is out of date and that information is of a sufficiently poor quality, to raise questions over the level of intelligence it is able to provide. This, in turn, raises the question as to how effective commissioning decisions can be when they are not supported by sufficiently current and robust intelligence.

163. By way of example, the Panel heard from the DCSF representative that teenage conception data can often have an 18-month time lag, so any

decisions made on teenage conception services are often being made on the basis of information that was collected 18 months previously.

164. The Panel was keen to consider the views of the DCSF representative in relation to the roles and responsibilities of partners. The Panel heard that as a general point, partners in Trusts are still not all entirely wedded to the idea of being active partners, in the sense of being held to account for their contribution to improved outcomes.
165. The Panel heard that this point raises a very interesting question as to the degree of leverage or persuasion that can be placed on partners within Trusts. The Panel heard that, in the view of the DCSF representative, there is unlikely to be a Children's Trust in the country that has fully answered that question. Nonetheless, the Panel heard that where there is an effective strategy to encourage partners to take action and then hold them properly to account, with the partners acceptance of that approach, it is probably a good indication that the Children's Trust is working well. Currently, this remains a work in progress in Middlesbrough and seemingly everywhere else.
166. In relation to partners, the Panel heard that another key challenge is the role of schools as statutory partners within the Children's Trust environment. Specifically, the Panel heard that in an area like Middlesbrough, where there are faith schools, academies and maintained schools, there can be a concern over the school representation. Specifically, about those sitting on the Children's Trust and whether that representation is truly representative of the wider body or their own views and interests. This is especially felt to be the case when national policy has been interpreted as encouraging competition between schools and when the Children's Trust model encourages a more collaborative model of addressing a locality's priorities.
167. The Panel heard that, in the view of the DCSF representative, the Middlesbrough Children's Trust has a clear and demonstrably strong partnership, with a great deal of commitment to working for the best interests of children, young people and their families. The Panel was also advised that despite this, and despite progress in a range of outcomes and positive inspection reports on services in the Borough, outcomes in many key areas are not as good as they are for the rest of the country. This is the major challenge that the Trust faces.
168. It was said that the Children's Trust should be the fulcrum of the sea change required to tackle many of the problems facing Middlesbrough. It was emphasised that Middlesbrough does have a particular set of challenges, with a particular severity. Those considering the impact of Children's Trusts thus far, should therefore consider the extent to which it has taken on the mantle of being the leader of the debate about the child wellbeing and the extent to which it is the fulcrum, from which major developments originate. It was emphasised that this can only happen when, amongst other things, data collection and interpretation is improved and the speed with which it reaches Children's Trust Boards improves. The DCSF representative confirmed this as a big challenge for the Middlesbrough Children's Trust, as elsewhere.

169. The Panel asked about the impact that processes, such as the Common Assessment Framework, can have in directing the work of the Children's Trust. The Panel heard that they are important, although they are simply processes, which require the effective implementation by staff to be of great use. They are not a 'magic bullet' as such.
170. It was noted that in an unannounced inspection of Children's Services by Ofsted, no priority action points were identified which could be interpreted as a significant positive. There were, however, comments made around the extent to which CAFs were used, with the suggestion that they should be used more and at an earlier stage of intervention²².
171. The Panel was advised that despite the areas where significant improvement is required, Middlesbrough is actually one of the better Children's Trusts in the sense that it is open about its development requirements and will seek help and advice, when it is felt to be appropriate. This was felt to be very positive, as it shows a desire to improve and not to hide anything.
172. The Panel was keen to hear the views of the DCSF representative regarding the role of the Children's Trust in relation to Safeguarding. The Panel heard that it is very important that Children's Trusts do not exclusively focus on Safeguarding, despite the undoubted importance of that area of work. The Panel heard that the Trust can have a huge impact on the wellbeing of children by considering wider issues such as poverty, family environments, and equality of opportunity and self worth, which would indirectly have a significant impact on children at risk of entering the safeguarding system. The link with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board is crucial in relation to safeguarding but the Children's Trust should continue to focus on the wider areas of determinants of child wellbeing.
173. The Panel heard that it may be a challenge to ensure Jobcentre Plus becomes an active partner, as it may not be immediately obvious to Jobcentre Plus the benefits it can derive from, and contribution it can make to, the Children's Trust agenda. Connected to this is the wider point that the Children's Trust may have to deal with questions along the lines of 'What's in it for me?', regarding participation in the Children's Trust. The Panel heard that this is where the Trust can persuade people to see that, whilst not immediately obvious, there are benefits for their organisations in taking part, which may be two steps removed from the here and now, but are benefits all the same.
174. As touched upon previously in the evidence presented by DCSF, there is also a challenge for the Children's Trust in ensuring that commissioning decisions and, therefore, decommissioning decisions are taken on the strength of high quality data, interpreted into high quality intelligence. It was said that Children's Trusts have to be clear about what they want to deliver and ensure that the necessary steps are taken to deliver those goals. Children's Trusts

²² [www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/\(id\)/5532/\(as\)/UAV/uav_2010_806.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/(id)/5532/(as)/UAV/uav_2010_806.pdf)

cannot achieve the necessary improvements in outcomes by continuing to fund the services that have always existed and to continue to do what has always been done. In conclusion, the Panel heard that the Children's Trusts national mandate is intentionally broad and it is within their gift as to how ambitious and significant they want to be. It was clear to the Panel that this meant actually delivering improved outcomes through their decisions and actions, in addition to stating a desire to improve outcomes.

Evidence from North East Strategic Health Authority 11 February 2010

175. The Panel was keen to also consider the views of the North East Strategic Health Authority and receive information about the role that it plays in relation to Children's Trusts.
176. The Panel heard that day to day partnership working and co-operation with children's services in the twelve Local Authorities in the North East, is undertaken by local Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). The SHA considers the strategic alignment of Children and Young People Plans when reviewing PCT strategic plans.
177. The Panel was advised that the SHA has identified a senior manager to develop an agreement with all children's trust boards in the North East as to how the SHA will discharge its responsibilities in line with this new guidance. This development will require discussion with Directors of Children's Services, Government Office North East and PCTs. The SHA for some time has had a written *compact* with the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards in the North East and this could be adapted to set out how the SHA works with the 12 children's trust boards.
178. The Panel was advised that PCTs in North East work closely with their Children's trusts boards to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people. The Panel was advised that the North East PCTs have a stable workforce of child health commissioners who are experienced at multi-agency partnership working. Securing better health for children and young people through world class commissioning: A guide to support the delivery of *Healthy Lives, brighter futures: the strategy for children and young people's health*, sets out the central role of the commissioner in improving outcomes for children and the world class competencies in the context of children's health. It also helpfully aligns the joint commissioning and health commissioning cycles.
179. The Panel heard there are common themes across Children's Trusts:
180. **Leadership and accountability** - The children's trust boards require strong leadership and effective partnership working to deliver priorities and to facilitate co-operation arrangements. The accountability arrangements for Children's trusts will need to be developed in partnership and endorsed by all partners.

181. **Embedding the Children and Young People Plan as the key document for all partners** – Children’s trusts will need to develop mechanisms to support partners and align their strategic objectives to those of the Children and Young People’s Plan
182. The Panel was particularly interested in the SHA’s views as to how Middlesbrough’s Children’s Trust is performing. The Panel heard that NHS Middlesbrough is a key partner in the Children’s Trust and is aligning PCT plans to reflect the ongoing work and priorities in local partnership arrangements.
183. The Middlesbrough CAMHS Partnership is currently updating its CAMHS SAM (Self Assessment Matrix). The partnership has developed a Self Harm Protocol and is now working on implementation and training of Tiers 1 and 2 services. The Regional Development Worker for CAMHS attends the Middlesbrough Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Partnership and is supporting the partnership with key priorities including:
- CAMHS proxies
 - development of Targeted Mental Health in Schools bid - funding of £225,000 from April 2010
 - development of CAMHS Transition Worker Posts
 - pathway development e.g. referral pathways from Tiers 1 and 2 to specialist CAMHS
184. The Panel was also keen to hear the SHA’s views on the priorities for the next three years. The Panel was advised that the NHS Operating Framework for 2010/11 sets out the priorities for the NHS for the year ahead. The Operating Framework identifies the priorities, which Children’s Trusts will want to consider in respect of child health. The Panel was advised that the following may be of particular interest to Children’s trusts in addition to their ongoing work and priorities:
185. Review of the local service offer in line with the child health strategy *Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures* (February 2009).
186. Consider the new commissioning guidance and recommendations of the Violence Against Women and Children Health Taskforce findings (November 2009).
187. Ensure local arrangements and processes are in place and agreed for appropriate hospital environments for mental health patients under the age of 18.

Evidence from the Chief Executive of Middlesbrough Council 10 March 2010

188. When considering the Children's Trust and outcomes for children and young people, the Panel was keen to consider the views of the Chief Executive of Middlesbrough Council. With that in mind, the Panel spoke to the Chief Executive and the text below is an account of that discussion.
189. By way of introduction, the Panel heard that the Chief Executive is satisfied that the local authority leads the Children's Trust and has, as an initial step, fulfilled its duties in respect of bringing agencies together into a coherent group. The Panel was advised that, in the view of the Chief Executive, the Children's Trust is a fairly recent development and a fairly young partnership, which is still evolving. Nonetheless, against that backdrop, the Panel heard that partnership working could be stronger in the planning and provision of services. It was also felt that there was a gap within the partnership at middle management level, which could mean that strategy was not always followed through, as it should be. The Panel heard that the Council's commitment to the Children's Trust was strong, as evidenced by the significant financial and officer resource it had committed towards the Children's Trust.
190. The Panel asked whether pooled budgets are indicative of a strong partnership. The Panel heard that they could be, but pooled budgets are often easier to agree in principle than in detail.
191. The Panel asked how confident the Chief Executive was that he had the necessary information metrics to know how successful the Children's Trust was in impacting on and improving outcomes. The Panel heard that there is no clear overview of how the Children's Trust adds value specifically, although outcome related data, is produced and considered by the local authority. Nonetheless, the point was accepted that from the perspective of the Chief Executive there is no source where performance information for the Children's Trust can be considered.
192. The Panel was keen to discuss the role of the partnership and the responsibilities it has. The Panel heard that when considering the Children's Trust and taking part in its activities, it is important that constituent organisations do not give up, or abdicate, their own statutory responsibilities. It should be clear that the Children's Trust is not a single organisation, but a partnership where agencies come together, in an attempt to deliver a better whole, than those organisations can do in isolation.
193. The Panel heard that there is some early evidence to support the idea that the partnership model represented by the Children's Trust is starting to deliver improvements in childhood obesity as an example, which is an issue that no single organisation can effectively address alone. The Panel heard that the

emerging *My Place* project was a good example of a partnership working, which came about following a swiftly compiled, partnership bid.

194. The Panel was interested to discuss the role of the local authority in considering outcomes for Children. It was agreed that the local authority is the lead agency in relation to outcomes for Children, although the Panel heard that the time may be right to reflect on how partners performance is assessed in the attempt to improve those outcomes.
195. Connected to the assessment of partners performance, the Panel considered the options available to a partnership in holding partners to account for performance. The Panel heard that accountability and the associated mechanisms are always slightly more difficult in a partnership than in single organisation. It is more difficult to influence partners when they also have parent Government Departments which they also have to satisfy, which to some extent is inevitable. The Panel, however, saw no reason as to why a Children's Trust could not have highly localised targets, specific to local conditions, which could be pursued over and above the national 'must do' targets. It could then be the role of the Children's Trust to pursue effective performance against these local targets, whilst leaving the same agencies to meet their national targets from parent Government departments. The Children's Trust could then pursue those local priorities and hold partners to account on such matters. This was felt to be an excellent example of the potential of the Children's Trust in acting as advocate/fulcrum for Children's interests.
196. It was emphasised that the Children's Trust, as a partnership was still quite young and needed to mature. As it matured, it may be organisational relationships would develop and more risks may be taken in respect of pooling budgets and sharing resource.
197. The Panel heard that, in the view of the Chief Executive, ensuring accurate and meaningful representation from the secondary sector was absolutely critical, although given the diversity of secondary education in the town, was not an easy thing to arrange and manage. In addition, it was noted again that national policy encouraged an element of competition between schools, yet the Children's trust concept encouraged collaboration.
198. The Panel was keen to seek the views of the Chief Executive regarding the future challenges and opportunities for the Children's Trust, to develop its work. The Panel was told that although developing, the Children's Trust still remains fairly immature and should be looking to developing its mechanisms to a point where it can demonstrate its impact more robustly. It was added that there was presently no systematic measure to consider the impact of the Children's Trust and this should be addressed in the near future.
199. The Panel was also advised that, in the view of the Chief Executive, the Children's Trust should look to play a bigger role in considering the wider societal issues around Safeguarding and the numbers of children within the safeguarding system and the reasons why those children enter the system. It

was noted that this area of work is potentially complicated by the recent creation of a Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board and the development of a good working relationship between the two was felt to be critical. The Panel heard that whilst the Children's Trust should not 'step on the toes' on the MSCB, a healthy working relationship, where challenge can take place is essential. A point that applies to the entire Children's Trust was made to the Panel that effective partnership, may be more art than science.

200. In terms of service based priorities, the Panel heard from the Chief Executive that the Children's Trust should concentrate its efforts on a few specific areas. Firstly, the Panel was told that work should be done to improve the family environment and strengthen the family's ability to teach children the skills required, so that they enter school ready to learn. The Panel heard that a number of primary schools have concerns over the home environment of some children and the life education they are, or are not, receiving in early years. It was stressed that it is not the role of the Children's Trust to propagate a quasi-political or moral view as to what the ideal family scenario is. It is, however, precisely the role of the Children's Trust to see that services exist to assist parents and carers in giving their children the best start in life and learning key skills.
201. The Panel was also told that family/child poverty is a problem of significant magnitude in Middlesbrough, which has very well documented impacts on children's home lives and their ability to 'get on' in life. The Panel heard that understanding that poverty and its impact on Children is a huge issue, which the Children's Trust should be making a priority area of work. In addition, attainment in school is a challenge facing Middlesbrough. Whilst figures are improving, they are not improving at the rate to be desired and the gaps with higher achieving areas still remain. This is something that the local authority makes a huge priority of, although the Children's Trust could well do work around changing the way educational attainment is valued and how parents see schooling and hopefully by challenging the prevailing culture in some areas, better attainment will develop.

Evidence from the Head of Youth Offending Service 10 March 2010

202. The Panel was keen to hear the perspective of the Youth Offending Service, in relation to the progress of the Children's Trust. In preparation of the Panel meeting, A paper was submitted to the Panel and the information presented in that paper is outlined below.

203. The Panel heard that the development of YOT's (Youth Offending Team) was started following the implementation of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. YOS (Youth Offending Services), as many have become, are statutory in their nature and are charged with the prevention and reduction of Youth Crime (those aged 10 – 18) in a geographic location.
204. The original guidance "Establishing YOTs" published by the YJB (Youth Justice Board)²³ set out the requirements for the use of a pooled budget between Local Authorities, the Police, the Probation Service, Health and the Youth Justice Board. The indicative size of the operation was to cover a population of approximately 300,000 and teams should have at least:
- 1x Social Worker
 - 1x Probation Officer
 - 1x Police Officer
 - 1x Health Officer
 - 1x Education Worker
 - 1x Accommodation Officer
205. Original guidance has been updated through the "Sustaining the Success" document accessible on the YJB (Youth Justice Board) website and currently being updated.
206. The Panel was advised that the service can have at any one time some 400 young people 'on the books', subject to some form of statutory supervision ranging from final warnings through to custodial and post custodial sentences. In addition, a service level agreement is in place to deliver preventative services, aligned to work done with Connexions and Youth Services. Further work ensures the service works with the victims of crime to ensure their views are considered when implementing programmes of work.
207. The Panel heard that the service also recruits and trains volunteers to act as referral order Panel members. As well as the above, the service has a small team who deliver reparation programmes in areas where there is a need for young people who offend, to put something back into the community
208. The Panel was interested to hear that in many ways, the emergence of the Children's Trust mirrors the development of the YOS Partnership, albeit with a wider remit for all children in the area.
209. The South Tees Youth Justice Board (the service covers both Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland) has developed over the years and calls the service to account for performance and budget. It was confirmed that it includes Senior Officers, as well as Elected Members.

²³ www.yjb.gov.uk

210. The Panel heard that in the last 2 years, the service has implemented a wider Youth Justice Forum to engage a larger group of stakeholders as preparation for inspections.
211. The Panel heard that the Chair of the Youth Offending Board is the Director of Children, Families and Learning, which ensures a cross over into Children's Trust business.
212. In addition, performance information as well as development work the service is involved in is routed through the Positive Contributions Theme Group.
213. As a statutory partner of both the Children's Trust and Safeguarding Boards the service takes its responsibilities seriously, and builds upon inspection findings.
214. The Panel was advised that the majority of young people known to the service are not only damaging, but are damaged themselves. The Panel heard that the STYJBE (South Tees Youth Justice Board Executive) and the service have had ample opportunity to influence the work of the Children's Trust and its constituent sub-groups to date, as demonstrated by the endorsement of a vision and CYPP.
215. Furthermore, a coherent programme of work by various agencies making up the Trust is in place. Governance arrangements, as well as a review of membership in light of recent guidance are almost complete. The linkages between the Trusts are soon to be implemented, with a Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children's Board currently being finalised (at the time of the meeting).
216. In terms of future challenges, the Panel heard that the delivery of services to vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities, children looked after and young people known to the Criminal Justice system will act as a barometer of how effectively the Children's Trust operates.
217. The Panel heard that just as the YOS (Youth Offending Service) operates effectively across partner boundaries, so does the Trust with a recognition that all partners have a contribution to make.
218. In order for Youth Offending Services to remain fit-for-purpose we need to maintain a focus on our core business as indicated by recent inspections of 2008 and 2008 - 2009. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation led these.
- 219. Core areas include:**
- **Case Management**
 - **The Reduction of Risk and Vulnerability and**
 - **Safeguarding Issues.**
220. The Panel was advised that the most recent action plan has now been agreed and will be subject to regular monitoring and scrutiny by the South Tees Youth

Justice Board Executive, the National Youth Justice Board and the Children's Trust.

221. In addition, the service is currently subject to external review to establish whether or not the model of service delivery remains fit-for-purpose and continues to provide value for money. A report was due to be available by the end of March 2010.
222. The Panel heard that the next 3 – 5 years, could bring about a more integrated approach to Youth Justice. It was said that The Youth Offending Service will be able to reduce in size should we be able to continue to reduce entrants to the system, however, due to the continued high profile of youth crime there will be further youth crime initiatives to be delivered.
223. The Panel heard that the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Children's Trust, will be achieved by considering how it manages and deals with vulnerable groups.
224. The Panel heard that a potential challenge looming, is for the delegation of commissioning of custodial services from central to local government. Whilst this may pose significant challenges, it may also create opportunities. With a better understanding of the challenges posed, the Children's Trust will pick up the commissioning agenda and service delivery will be based on research as to what works. It was confirmed that this means the decommissioning of some services, which are not delivering satisfactory outcomes.
225. It was confirmed that Vulnerable Children's service delivery will remain high on everyone's agenda and ensuring access to mainstream services will remain a priority. Work across age boundaries will also become even more important, with the transition agenda being critical i.e. from young people's services into adult services.
226. The Panel heard that the reduction of available funding challenges all sectors to deliver outcomes for less and look to the community and voluntary sector to work in partnership.
227. It was said that the continued focus on the prevention of youth crime will mean that those entering the Criminal Justice system will be among the most difficult to work with and engage positively. The Panel heard that the emergence of the Children's Trust, should see the investment decisions for all partners on areas of work that can potentially make the biggest impact

**Evidence from a Roundtable Debate
Representatives from: Middlesbrough LSP,
NHS Middlesbrough and Middlesbrough Council**

31 March 2010

228. As a final meeting, the Panel arranged a roundtable debate, with a number of senior stakeholders in attendance, to answer a number of questions put by the Panel.
229. The Panel initially raised the topic of accountability within the Children's Trust. The Panel heard that accountability within LSPs there are accountability sessions which take place on a regular basis, where progress against targets is monitored and discussed. Whilst not perfect, the Panel heard from those around the table that the sessions were felt to be useful. It was accepted that the concept of how partners are held to account within the Children's Trust for their actions is a much more debatable point and there is by no means a straight forward answer. It was mentioned that this is something that will need to be developed. The Panel also heard that people can get too 'preoccupied' with structures and systems, whereas people would probably benefit from more time being spent on considering outcomes and not getting too concerned with structures.
230. In terms of holding partners to account, it was said that all local organisations also have their own targets, emanating from their parent central government Department, so there is a skilled task involved with all partners balancing the targets expected of them.
231. The Panel heard that within the Children's Trust, there is a desire to move away from 'hard and fast' targets, and a wish to concentrate more effort on developing and meeting 'outcome based targets'.
232. Reference was made to the role that the accountability sessions play in considering the performance of the Children's Trust. It was acknowledged that the system is not perfect and those asking the questions do not have a 'encyclopaedic' knowledge of the Children's Trust. Still, it is felt that they provide a valuable forum. In addition, it was mentioned that to enable the accountability forum to have more information about performance, it would have to be provided by those being held to account. The Panel felt that this was drawback of the accountability regime within the LSP. Having made that point, it was also accepted that the Children's Trust does not suffer from being under-regulated with Ofsted and GONE also keeping an active interest in what happens.
233. It was confirmed that the Children's Trust became a statutory body on 1 April 2010 and guidance had recently being produced to direct the future operation of Children's Trusts.
234. The Panel understood the importance of taking heed of national guidance and ensuring local practice is consistent with it. Still, the Panel expressed the hope that the Children's Trust would also be proactive in setting priorities and devising strategy to tackle problem areas, and not just rely on the contents of national guidance. This point was accepted by those presented and it was agreed that local priorities, as well as national guidance, should be crucial in establishing future strategy and action for the Children's Trust. The point was made that the CYPP, and the requirement to publish a new one by April 2011

was central to this and the CYPP would be the ideal place to identify local priorities.

235. The Panel was also interested to raise the topic of Child Poverty and the action that the Children's Trust could and possibly should take in this respect. The Panel heard that the Children's Trust is presently considering what actions it can take to consider the topic of Child Poverty in detail, although it was accepted that the topic of 'family poverty', is a constant source of attention within the LSP. Still, the Panel heard that Child Poverty should be a major part of the CYPP, when it is published in April 2011.
236. The Panel was interested to hear about positive outcomes generated from the Children's Trust. The Panel heard that there has been significant progress around young people classed as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training), that has come about due to actions taken by a number of partners. In addition, the Panel heard that significant progress has been made around the topic of Childhood Obesity and arresting the rate of increase of obese children. The Panel heard that there has also been progress around the rate of Teenage Pregnancies in Middlesbrough.
237. The Panel heard that perhaps one of the problems was the fact that services or developments were not 'branded' as Children's Trust activity, so at times people could be given the impression that nothing really happens. It was acknowledged that the profile of the Children's Trust was something needing development.
238. The Panel was interested to hear about areas that require development. The Panel heard that Members of the Children's trust would like to see progress in the development of outcome based measures and a move away from some 'tick box' targets, which would be more meaningful when considering the Children's Trusts impact. It was said that this represents a change in direction for the Trust and would require some embedding, but it would be a positive development for the Trust.
239. The Panel was also told that further thought is required relating to how the Children's Trust Board could hold partners to account for action (or inaction) against particular priorities. It was accepted that this will be a major element of Children's Trust Board's operations, although it was not entirely clear as to how it may work in practice. The Panel felt that this remains an area where action is required quite swiftly, as the Trust Board can only hope to be the fulcrum for children and young people's wellbeing if it can hold partners to account effectively.
240. The Panel was interested to explore the topic of using resources effectively in the commissioning and provision of services, to ensure good value for money is obtained, which was felt to be even more important at a time of static or decreasing public spending.
241. Whilst it would be understandable for agencies to retreat into their organisational structures and protect budgets at a time of budgetary

constraint, it is precisely the time to be brave, innovate and attempt to get more for the amount of resource available. There was strong support for this concept around the table.

242. The Panel heard that connected to this point is the central question of how do the Children's Trust partners get the most out of their joint funding to improve outcomes. Getting the best outcomes from joint resources is absolutely critical for the success of the Children's Trust in the next three to five years. The Panel heard that the Children's Trust fully accepts this reality, but feels that relations within the Children's trust are excellent and ideally placed to take on that challenge.
243. In terms of influencing that spend, it was reaffirmed that the Children's Trust does not have its own indicative commissioning budget as such, nor will it be 'signing the cheques' on commissioning decisions. Still, it was agreed that a fundamental purpose of the Children's Trust would be to heavily influence the commissioning decisions and strategy of partner organisations pertaining to Children & Young People. It was noted that this could only be done if the Children's Trust had a detailed and current grasp on local need. This can only come from the intelligent and robust interpretation of data, turning it into usable intelligence.
244. The Panel was keen to discuss where the Children's Trust should go in the next three years and the areas, which it should make a priority. The Panel heard that the Children's Trust should consider whether it is entirely satisfied with the quality and accuracy of data it has at its disposal to influence and lead the debate on the commissioning and decommissioning of services. However, the Panel has heard previously, from a number of sources that the Trust would benefit from an enhanced research and intelligence function.
245. The Panel heard that the Children's Trust would accept that the Common Assessment Framework should be used on a more systematic basis and would accept that this was a point highlighted by Ofsted in a unannounced inspection.
246. The Panel heard that the meaningful and accurate representation of the Secondary Schools Community in Middlesbrough is a challenge and an area that the Trust is well aware needs to be developed, although there is reason to be optimistic about this. It was also considered that a GP is now a part of the Trust Board, although greater engagement of General Practice, and practice based commissioning regime, is required.
247. The major challenges for the next three years would be that the Children's trust needs to move away from looking to satisfy 'tick box' targets and looks to focus much more on outcomes based measurements. It was felt that The Children's Trust is right to focus on the topics of family poverty and promoting the value of educational attainment. It was said that dealing with the general economic context in Middlesbrough is crucial and considering employment opportunities for people, which has a huge impact on the wider determinants of health. The Panel also heard that risk-taking behaviour of young people

was an important area to tackle. It should also be noted that Children's Trusts have taken on responsibilities from the disbanded Learning & Skills Council, around the commissioning of education and training services for those sixteen to nineteen years old.

Conclusions

248. The Panel has seen a clear commitment of partners to the Children's Trust and the vision it has. On the basis of the evidence that the Panel has considered, there is shared vision across most of the partners and a desire to make a significant impact as a Children's Trust. A shared vision, partnership culture and aspiration are to be commended and welcomed. However, the Panel would like to highlight that a shared vision and strong partnership ethos are simply the building blocks required for a successful Children's Trust, they do not guarantee, nor are they intrinsic measures of, a successful Children's Trust. Now that these undoubtedly important aspects are in place, the Panel feels that the Children's Trust should move on from citing them as achievements, build on them and concentrate on identifying the outcomes it would like to deliver and commission for, through that partnership.
249. Statutory guidance is very clear that, Children's Trusts should be a fulcrum in the local community, adopting a high profile leadership role in advancing the debate on children's services, the wider determinants of child wellbeing and heavily influencing the commissioning and design of services. On the basis of the evidence received and the opinions considered, the Panel remains to be convinced that the Children's Trust is the fulcrum for debate and thought regarding service developments within Children's Services, and wider child wellbeing issues, across the town. The Panel feels this is at present an under utilised function of the Children's Trust.
250. One of the key functions of the Children's Trust is to heavily influence the Commissioning Strategies of the partners, particularly the local authority and NHS Middlesbrough, who spend a significant amount of money on services for Children. The Panel feels that there is undoubtedly scope for the Children's Trust to have a greater impact on the commissioning plans of partners, as the Trust starts to assert itself as the leading body for discussions and thought about children's services. Still, the Panel would conclude that the Children's Trust's impact on commissioning plans and commissioning decisions is still somewhat underdeveloped.
251. The Panel has heard that, the Children's Trust should be the fulcrum for children's services and the key forum for discussions about children's services and wider child wellbeing in Middlesbrough. It can only fulfil this role if it has swift access to detailed, current and reliable data, which can then be intelligently interpreted to support commissioning or decommissioning decisions. The Panel has heard on a number of occasions that concerns persist about the quality and currency of the data available to the Children's Trust, pertaining to local health outcomes and, therefore, local need. The Panel would make the point that if the Children's Trust is going to be a leading protagonist in the debate about the commissioning and decommissioning of

services for children and their families, the data and intelligence used is required to be beyond reproach. As such, the Panel wishes to highlight this point and ask whether the Children's Trust has access to a sufficiently well resourced Research & Intelligence function. The Panel acknowledges that in a time of budget constraint, such functions can be eroded, although it becomes even more crucial in such times of budget constraint that commissioning decisions are taken on the best possible evidence.

252. The Panel has heard on numerous occasions that the Children's Trust is not an organisation in its own right, nor is it a commissioner in its own right. Instead, the Children's Trust should seek to influence the strategic direction of partner organisations and how those partners deploy resources to improve the lives and outcomes for children and their families. With that influencing role in mind, the Panel finds it confusing and somewhat concerning, that the Children's Trust does not report on a systematic basis on its activities and achievements to either the Executive of Middlesbrough Council, nor the Board of NHS Middlesbrough. Without a regular and systematic link to these two crucial decision making bodies, it is difficult to see how the Trust can influence the commissioning decisions of the Council or NHS Middlesbrough. Further, given the profound importance of the subject matter that the Children's Trust considers, the Panel feels that the Middlesbrough Council Executive and Board of NHS Middlesbrough should receive systematic, detailed updates of progress. This would enable the Executive and Board to become more involved with the Children's Services agenda and question when required.
253. The Panel has considered a great deal of evidence and opinion on how well information is shared between partners within the Children's Trust, particularly relating to service delivery. The Panel has heard from the local authority and NHS Middlesbrough that information sharing in Middlesbrough is good and practices are well developed. On the other hand, it has heard from Cleveland Police that information sharing between partners particularly around local need, is in need of substantial improvement. The Panel has not been able to completely understand the reason for such a difference of opinion, but feels duty bound to report it. Clearly, if a statutory partner within the Children's Trust feels that information sharing between partners could improve, it should be a priority for the Children's Trust to tackle.
254. The Panel has heard from a number of contributors that some outcome measures, particularly around childhood obesity and teenage conceptions, are starting to show positive movement. Whether this is because of the Children's Trust or not is difficult to tell, but the Panel feels that improved partnerships and better organisational links, brought about by the Children's Trust, are likely to have had a positive impact. Still, when considering the impact that the Children's Trust has had, the Panel heard a lot of opinion and observations, which by their very nature are difficult to quantify. It is precisely this lack of objective performance or outcomes measures, which the Panel would like to see remedied. The Panel is mindful of a conversation with the Chief Executive of Middlesbrough Council, where it was accepted that someone in that position, has no readily accessible, impartial information source to consult and consider the performance of the Children's Trust. The

Panel accepts that this would be difficult to achieve. Nonetheless, the introduction of meaningful outcome measures is crucial for the Trust to demonstrate its impact and for those such as local authority chief executives, wanting to fulfil their own responsibilities, to satisfy themselves of its contribution.

255. The Panel also considers the relationship of the Children's Trust with the Middlesbrough Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to be absolutely crucial. In line with national guidance, it is critical that the LSCB's independence is respected, so challenge may take place where appropriate. In addition, whilst the Children's Trust is not a Safeguarding body per se, it is vital that the Children's Trust is actively considering issues that are connected to Safeguarding, such as child poverty, the family environment and levels of aspiration. The Panel wishes to make it quite clear that if the Children's Trust does not also focus on the wider determinants of child wellbeing, in addition to children's health services, it will be missing a vital aspect of improving outcomes for children and their families.
256. The Children's Trust has a good track record of engaging with children and young people to seek their views on the issues that affect them. This has also been noted by external inspection.
257. The Panel feels that progress has been made by the Children's Trust, although there remains a great deal to do. It is perhaps understandable that in time of public spending restraint, there could be a desire to retreat into organisational silos and protect organisational budgets. However, the Panel feels that a tighter financial climate is precisely the time when integration should be enhanced, to ensure expertise are shared and the maximum benefit is derived from every resource available. The Panel would like to see the Children's Trust further develop as a partnership, so this can happen.
258. The Children's Trust, as a partnership, is under a statutory obligation to prepare a new Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP), to be in place by April 2011. The Panel also feels that this is an opportune time for the Children's Trust to restate its ambitions, where it would like to be in 2014 and how it intends to get there, set against the backdrop of the new financial reality facing public services.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends:

259. That the Children's Trust establishes a clear and systematic link with Middlesbrough Council's Executive and the Board of NHS Middlesbrough, to ensure that there is a regular dialogue about children's services, with two key decision making bodies. The Panel also seeks assurance that the Chief Executives of NHS Middlesbrough and Middlesbrough Council regularly monitor progress, to discharge their own responsibilities.

260. That the new CYPP clearly identifies the priority areas for the Children's Trust to tackle until 2014. It should also clearly state how progress against those themes will be measured and specify what actions are expected from which partners to achieve those goals.
261. That the Children's Trust critically appraises whether the Trust has access to a sufficiently strong research and intelligence function, to provide the high quality and current intelligence the Trust requires to discharge its duties effectively and provide the detailed evidence required to advance arguments about service and policy development.
262. That the Children's Trust develops outcomes based measuring framework, which can outline the progress that the Children's Trust is making and the impact it is having. This should also be publicly available to ensure those not on the Children's Trust can satisfy themselves of the progress being made.
263. That the Children's Trust asserts itself as the principal forum for the discussion of children's issues within Middlesbrough and takes steps to raise its profile to a level consistent with its importance.
264. That the Children's Trust becomes much more heavily involved in influencing the commissioning and decommissioning of services for children and their families, making the case for service change where reliable intelligence supports the point. The Panel would like to hear how the Children's Trust will seek to do this.
265. That the Children's Trust becomes much more involved in the wider debate about children's wellbeing in the town and takes every opportunity to influence public policy, to ensure that it is consistent with the needs of children and young people.
266. That the Children's Trust partners increase the levels of integration between services to ensure maximum impact is delivered for the resources deployed. This should extend to the introduction of pooled or aligned budgets whenever most appropriate. The Panel would like to hear how the partners are advancing the sharing of expertise and resources to deliver a shared agenda.

**Councillor Jan Brunton
Chair, Childrens Trust Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Modern Social Services – A commitment to the future The 12th Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Social Services 2002-2003 © Department of Health. Please see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/AnnualReports/DH_4067095

- House of Commons Health Committee's *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report* Sixth Report of Session 2002-3, on pages 6 to 9. Please see <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmhealth/570/570.pdf>
- Department of Health, *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry, Report of an Inquiry by Lord Laming*, Cm 5730, January 2003.
- Speech made by Alan Milburn MP as Secretary of State for Health, at Annual Social Services Conference on 19 October 2001. Please see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Speeches/Speecheslist/DH_4000442
- *Child wellbeing and child poverty – Where the UK stands in the European table*, Spring 2009 as an example of this. Please See www.cpag.org.uk
- Children's Trust Pathfinders: innovative partnerships for improving the well-being of children and young people National Evaluation of Children's Trust Pathfinders March 2007. www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/about/aims/childrenstrusts/faq/childrenstrusts_fags
- Are we there yet? Improving Governance and resource management in Children's Trusts – Audit Commission, October 2008. Please see www.audit-commission.gov.uk
- Child Wellbeing & Child Poverty – Where the UK stands in the European Table. Child Poverty Action Group, Spring 2009 – can be accessed via www.cpag.org.uk
- Children's Trusts - Statutory guidance on co-operation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan. www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00346
- Together, delivering better children's services Review of the Middlesbrough Children's Trust © Childrens Service Consultancy. October 2009
- Please see the agendas, minutes and supporting papers of the Panel meetings on 2 October, 25 November, 18 January, 11 February, 10 March, 31 March.

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