

Implementing the Children Bill in Hampshire

Introduction

- 1 This consultation paper draws attention to the new duties in the Children Bill and seeks views from partners and others by mid December. In the light of comments from partners, the County Council will bring forward specific proposals for implementing the Bill in the New Year including some suggestions for the organisation of local teams. Once we have specific proposals for change a wider consultation exercise will be organised involving parents, children, young people and those working in universal services. The full consultation paper is available on [www.hants.gov.uk].

Co-operation to improve the well being of children and young people

- 2 The Children Bill envisages a new duty on Education and Social Service Authorities to make arrangements to co-operate to promote the well-being of children and young people. A corresponding duty is placed on partner agencies: the police authority and chief officer of police, the local probation board, the youth offending team, the Strategic Health Authority and Primary Care Trusts, Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council. The new duty to cooperate to promote the well being of children and young people should relate to physical and mental health; protection from harm and neglect; education, training and recreation; the contribution made by children and young people to society; and emotional, social and economic well-being. It is proposed to **measure progress towards those outcomes** by identifying measures of improved outcomes for children and young people. Existing measures identified are

- 1 Mortality rates 0-12months, 1-11 yrs, 11-19 yrs
- 2 % 0-19 yrs who have been immunised
- 3 Rates of sexually transmitted diseases
- 4 Under 18 conception rates
- 5 Excluded from school (school age)

- 6 Absence from school (school age) – authorised and unauthorised
- 7 Key Stage 2 (Age 11) percentage reaching levels 4 and 5 in English and Maths
- 8 Key Stage 3 (Age 14) percentage reaching levels 5 and 6 in English, Maths, Science and ICT
- 9 % of 16 year olds gaining 5 GCSEs at A*-C
- 10 % of 16 year olds leaving school with at least one qualification
- 11 Known offending by 10-17 yrs; 18-20 yrs
- 12 % of 16-19 year olds in continuing education, vocational training or employment with training.

Consultation question 1

- *Is the approach of identifying measures to capture changes in the well-being of children and young people in Hampshire agreed?*
- *Are the measures identified the best available ones?*

- 3 The county wishes to consider with partners **how targeted and specialised services are best organised** to promote positive outcomes for young people. Parents, families and universal services for children and young people, notably schools, voluntary organisations and health services (tier 1 services) are best placed to help children and young people achieve positive outcomes. But they sometimes need support from services targeted at children with particular needs (tier 2 services). There is also a role for specialised services in the community to help and support universal and targeted services (tier 3 services). A few children and young people may also need residential services (tier 4 services). Possibilities for organising tier 2 and 3 services include organising cooperation between different services around clusters of schools; district boundaries; Basic Command Unit; Primary Care Trust areas; areas of organisation and management that relate to current social services and education. Some specialised teams might serve the whole county.

Consultation question 2

- *Do partners have views on how the duty to cooperate to improve the well being of children and young people should be fulfilled?*
- *Should targeted services be organised by local area?*
- *How big should the local areas be?*
- *Which services should be targeted in local teams?*
- *Which services should be provided on a county basis?*

- 4 **Co-operation could be organised** through a variety of means such as common priorities and objectives; shared or common boundaries; shared or common schemes of delegation; jointly agreed policies; service priorities and standards; common processes for receiving referrals; through regular meetings to discuss support for individual children and young people; co-location; single-management arrangements, pooled budgets; and/or common recording systems.

Consultation question 3

- *Do partners see scope for improving multi-agency working at local level?*
- *Are there other services, which might be integrated at local or county level on a multi-agency basis?*
- *Which services could be better provided on a multi-agency basis?*
- *How should that be organised?*

- 5 **Criteria** will be needed to select between the different possibilities. These might include the extent to which different options promote positive outcomes for children and young people; allow priority to services for children and families in target areas; allow joined up service where possible.

Consultation question 4

Comments are sought on the right criteria to use when considering options for improving cooperation to promote the well-being of children.

- 6 Once the structure for taking forward local cooperation is determined there is a strong case for developing a **Plan for Children and Young People's Services** in Hampshire.

Consultation question 5

Do partners agree a Plan for Children and Young People's Services in Hampshire should be commissioned during 2005?

Information databases

- 7 The Secretary of State will have powers to make regulations requiring children services authorities to establish and operate databases containing information to promote the well-being of children and safeguard and promote their welfare. The information that may be held on the database will be limited by the primary legislation and will exclude personal records. However agencies will be able to indicate on the database if they know of any concerns about a child. Work promoting awareness in Hampshire of the information sharing provision in the legislation was initiated at the start of 2004 under the guidance of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. An information sharing and assessment strategy and protocol are being developed.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards,

- 8 The Bill requires each children services authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board for their area in cooperation with district councils, the chief officer of police, the local probation board, the youth offending team, the Strategic Health Authority and primary care and other NHS trusts the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service and Connexions. The purpose of the Board is to co-ordinate action by the partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area and to ensure the effectiveness of what each partner does. The Board is intended to replace the non-statutory Area Child Protection Committee, and is to have such functions as may be prescribed in regulations. A clear relationship needs to be established between the new Local Safeguarding Children Board and the new arrangements to promote the well-being of children and young people.

Local authority administration

- 9 Each children services authority must appoint a Director of Children's Service from a day to be appointed by the Secretary of State. The Government has expressed the hope that most areas will have a Director of Children Services by 2006 with all areas having one by 2008. When the Director of Children's Services is appointed each children services authority must also designate one of their Members as their "Lead Member for Children Services".

Joint area reviews

- 10 The Bill provides for joint area reviews of all children's services provided in each children's services area. Joint area reviews replace separate inspections of local education authorities, children's social care, Connexions and youth services and will be conducted at the same time as inspections of youth offending teams. The scope will include children's health services and the work of the police in relation to their work with children and young people. Fieldwork is planned only when a judgement cannot be made in any other way and will focus on areas of weakness. Joint area reviews are planned to start in September 2005 with a small number of pilots taking place before then. The current plan is for joint area reviews to take place every three years.

Action

- 11 In the light of comments from partners, the County Council will bring forward specific proposals for co-operating to improve the well-being of children and young people in Hampshire in the New Year. Once we have specific proposals for change a wider consultation exercise will be organised involving parents, children, young people and those working in universal services. Comments, by 15 December please, should be emailed to Colin.hardy@hants.gov.uk or posted to

Colin Hardy
Project Director
Trafalgar House, The Castle,
Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UQ

Circulation

Full consultation paper to statutory partners in Hampshire

- Primary Care Trust chief executives
- Strategic Health Authority chief executive
- District Council chief executives
- Chief Constable
- Chair of the Police Authority
- Youth Offending Team Manager
- Chief officer of the national offender management service
- Chair of the Local Probation Board
- Chief executive of Connexions –Southern
- Chief executive of the Learning and Skills Council
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
- Hampshire County Council Members
- Hampshire County Council Corporate Management Team
- Children Service Board members

Three page summary to other partners

- Joint chair of the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership
- Chair of the Drug Action Team
- Chair of the Hampshire Strategic Partnership
- Chair of the Early Years Partnership
- Chair of the Children Fund Partnership
- Chair of the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership
- Chair of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Board
- Chair and Secretary of Primary Headteachers' Conference
- Chair and Secretary of Secondary Headteachers' Conference
- Chair and Secretary of Special Headteachers' Conference
- Teachers Liaison Panel
- County Governor Forum
- Diocesan Education Officers
- Chair of the Hampshire Council for Voluntary Youth Service
- Chair of Care Action team
- Chief Executive Community Action Hampshire
- Chief executive of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Nick Goulder at Hampshire and Isle of White Local Government Association, Eastleigh