

CHILDREN'S TRUST GOVERNANCE

Proposals to simplify arrangements



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper follows a review of the governance arrangements for the Children and Young People's Trust. The Children's Trust has a high level of commitment from partners and is committed to delivering the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan. However, in recent years there has been an increasingly complex proliferation of groups and activity that steer the health and wellbeing of children and young people in the city.

This review has been carried out at multiple levels – looking at communication across citywide strategic partnerships including the Health and Wellbeing Board and other Plymouth 2020 groups, at delivery groups that directly support children and young people's outcomes such as the Early Years Partnership, and independent partnerships such as the Safeguarding Children Board. At face value, without clear linkage and transparency around the work of these groups, we are not capitalising on the effective partnerships across the City, we are not reinforcing priorities from the Children's Plan, and we are not holding people to account effectively for their work in improving the health and wellbeing of children.

The abundance of groups showed clear ambition and drive from professionals to make a difference but represents significant resources being tied up in meetings. In addition to tightening relationships with existing groups or rationalising the number of existing groups the Children's Trust must design relationships with emerging new statutory bodies such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and re-consider membership of groups to engage with new stakeholders including GPs and head teachers.

In summary the complexity and numbers of existing partnerships are leading to the absence of key decision makers for meetings and a lack of co-ordination of messages. There is also a concern about a lack of transparency around direction and decision making across the City.

2.0 LEGAL CONTEXT FOR A CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP

From 31 October 2010 the Department for Education (DfE) withdrew statutory guidance on Children's Trusts but the requirement for local authorities and partners to have a children's trust board and the wider duty to cooperate to improve children's wellbeing, as set out in section 10 of the Children Act 2004, remains in force. As a result many local authorities are using the flexibility to ensure their Children's Trust Board fits with local Health and Wellbeing Board arrangements.

The DfE has also set out the role of the Director for Children's Services (DCS) and the Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) to work together to provide strong, strategic local leadership and development of an increasingly autonomous and diverse education and children's services sector. Working with head teachers, school governors and academy sponsors and principals, the DCS and LMCS should support the drive for high educational standards for all children and young people, paying particular attention to the most disadvantaged groups. They should also ensure that children's services are integrated across the council, for example to

support a smooth transition from children's to adults' services. The DCS and LMCS have a key role in ensuring that the local voluntary and community sector, charities, social enterprises, the private sector and children and young people themselves are included in the scope of local authority planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services where appropriate.

Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities and certain named partners (including health) to co-operate to improve children's well-being. The DCS and LMCS must lead, promote and create opportunities for co-operation with local partners (for example, health, police, schools, housing services, early years, youth justice, probation, higher and further education, and employers) to improve the well-being of children and young people. Local authorities must also (by virtue of the Child Poverty Act 2010⁶) establish local co-operation arrangements to reduce child poverty, prepare and publish a local child poverty needs assessment, and prepare a local child poverty strategy.

The Children and Young People's Trust partnership has been recognised through Ofsted as providing strong leadership and has provided an efficient delivery vehicle for exerting DCS and LMCS powers and responsibilities. Locally, partners continued to be highly engaged in the partnership but are looking for greater clarity around the strategic fit with other elements of the partnership governance architecture. This is an ideal time to reduce bureaucracy, provide more focus and increase potency for a children's partnership.

3.0 FUNCTIONS OF THE CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP

Currently, the Trust Board and Trust Executive operate separately with different membership and mandate. It is recommended that the Children's Trust Board and Executive Group be replaced with a new Children's Partnership¹. This will be an opportunity to review membership and create a smaller, more strategic body.

The Children's Partnership will oversee the delivery of current Children and Young People's Plan, and related priorities established in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Plymouth Plan when completed.

Children's issues will inevitably form part of other strategic partnership bodies' work but the vision and direction of children's services will be championed through these bodies by representatives of the Children's Partnership. For example, the Lead Member for Children's Services is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board whose focus is on achieving the best possible health outcomes for children, young people and adults. The Lead Member will take a mandate from the Children's Partnership to the HWBB and will ensure that children's needs are represented within the work of the HWB. Similarly, services for children and young people will provide support to the broader vision for the city and sub-region.

The Children's Partnership will oversee commissioning and delivery of services for children and young people in the city and will champion children and families' needs on a broader citywide platform. Delivery of services will be driven within organisations and through delivery partnerships. This governance review reinforces the links between the overarching Children's Partnership and these groups.

The partnership will act as a forum for ideas - for developing strategic relationships between members, pooling collective knowledge, and joint problem solving. The format of meetings will encourage creativity among members and will offer an arena for peer challenge.

¹ Children's Partnership is used here as shorthand for a revised Children and Young People's Trust partnership. The Trust has a strong identity and brand and at this stage it is proposed that the brand is not changed..

Finally, the partnership will provide an overarching brand and identity enabling partnership working among staff *supporting children and young people* at every level. It is important that the partnership is accessible and provides visible leadership throughout organisations.

3.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Use evidence from the JSNA (and other needs assessments such as the Audit of Crime and Disorder) to develop and recommend a range of commissioning plans for agreement by the H&WB, Clinical Commissioning Group and other bodies as appropriate to ensure implementation of the JHWS to achieve the strategic outcomes, including reducing inequalities.
2. Oversee delivery of services for children and young people and elements of the Plymouth Plan when developed and Health and Wellbeing Strategy relating to children and young people
3. Ensure the Plymouth Plan delivers for children and young people and services for children and young people contribute to the broader elements of the Plymouth Plan
4. Monitor delivery plans and provide peer challenge on delivery
5. Champion the voice of children and young people and parents in service design
6. Set out priorities and key principles for services for children and young people
7. *Advise commissioners of the needs of children and young people*
8. Gather intelligence and align strategic priorities from other related Strategic Partnership Boards

4.0 CO-ORDINATION WITH OTHER PARTNERSHIP GROUPS

4.1 PLYMOUTH 2020 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

There are a series of partnerships – the Health and Wellbeing Board, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (currently Safe and Strong Board), Growth Board and Plymouth Culture Board which operate at the same level as the Children and Young People’s Trust and deliver to the wider shared strategic priorities of the city –

Reduce inequalities – reducing the gap, particularly in health, between communities.

Deliver Growth – develop Plymouth as a thriving growth centre by creating the conditions for investment in quality new homes, jobs and infrastructure.

Raise aspirations – promote and encourage aiming higher and taking pride in the city.

Provide value for communities – work together to maximise resources to benefit customer and make internal efficiencies.

Their remit inevitably covers children, young people and families and it will be critical that the Children’s Partnership is connected into their activity. There is at present a sliding scale of involvement, with some members attending with a specific remit to champion children and others attending in their own right as a provider. In each case, it is imperative that key relevant messages are communicated out of those meetings to the broader children’s partners and attendees feel that they are able to represent the broader partnership.

The Children’s Partnership has a special relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Board. HWBB has strategic influence over commissioning decisions across health, public health and social care by reviewing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and developing a joint strategy for how these needs can be best addressed. The Board will hold commissioners to account for their decisions ensuring they are aligned to the Joint health and Wellbeing Strategy. This will include recommendations for joint commissioning and integrating services across health and social care.

The agenda across health and wellbeing is substantial and it is recommended that the HWBB delegates children and young people's specific topics to them.

4.2 COMMISSIONING PARTNERSHIPS

The Joint Commissioning Partnership and the Children and Young People's Clinical Commissioning Group (CYPCCG) are both key groups translating the Health and Wellbeing Strategy into commissioning plans and facilitate joint commissioning on behalf of Plymouth City Council (PCC), New Devon Shadow Clinical Commissioning Group (Western Locality) and other partners for those services where joint commissioning provides the best means of securing health improvement, increased quality and better value for money.

The Joint Commissioning Partnership forward plan initially focuses on commissioning services for adults. However there are clear links to children's services in particular around vulnerable families with multiple needs (requiring coordinated delivery of adult and children's services) and supporting improved transition for young people who will require ongoing health and social care support into adulthood.

The CYPCCG has been established to ensure that Children's healthcare Services are commissioned in line with the development of the local strategy and national priorities to improve the welfare and health outcomes for all children in Plymouth.

It is recommended that the Children's Partnership has a formal role in scoping and setting the agenda for JCP to ensure that children's issues are included. An additional recommendation has been put forward to combine the Children's Partnership and the CYPCCG so that the Children's Partnership makes commissioning decisions.

4.3 INDEPENDENT PARTNERSHIPS inc Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, Youth Offending Management Board

Some partnerships have a specific statutory remit to scrutinise or challenge performance. At present, PSCB provides quarterly reports to the Children's Trust Board. This is an overview of what they see as the strategic challenges for partners, detailed challenge is offered directly within PSCB meetings. It is recommended that these groups are given regular opportunity to provide feedback and challenge to partners through the Children's Partnership. This is intended to identify and unblock strategic challenges. This will be the first time that the Youth Offending Management Board will have a direct link back into the Children's Partnership

4.4 OTHER DELIVERY FOCUSED PARTNERSHIPS eg Carers Strategy Group

There is a selection of partnerships which indirectly driven by the children's agenda – for example, the Domestic Abuse Partnership or the Carers Strategy Group. These may have an all age group focus or part of a different reporting structure. Nevertheless decisions made have an impact on children and young people's outcomes. It is recommended that representatives are requested to communicate updates to the Children's Partnership at significant milestones – for example when delivering an action plan or around key projects and to take issues to the Children's Partnership for resolution.

4.5 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DELIVERY PARTNERSHIPS eg Early Years Strategic Partnership

There are currently a number of different delivery partnerships operating in the City to support the children's agenda. These partnerships are seen to be an engine room for progressing actions and it is recommended that these groups be more explicitly charged with delivering the priorities from the Children and Young People's Plan. It is recommended that the Children's Partnership holds these groups to account for performance and receives regular performance management updates on progress.

In addition, the number and variety of groups needs to be explored further and changes need to be made to make these more effective, for example extending the remit for the 11-19 Partnership group to include all outcomes for young people – including health and risk taking behaviours such as substance misuse and sexual health. It is recommended that more detailed work is carried out to challenge and where appropriate streamline delivery groups to gain maximum effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Proposals in section 3.0 regarding a single children's partnership be agreed.
2. Terms of reference outlined in 3.1 be agreed with further work to identify membership
3. Further work is carried out to review delivery partnerships and interlinkages.

Appendix I – Governance Arrangements – Questions for discussion

Please consider your response to these questions in advance of the board meeting:

1. Do you agree the name of Children, Young People and Families' Partnership?
2. Is it appropriate for Board and Executive functions to be integrated into a single function?
3. Do you agree with the proposed functions described for the new group?
4. Do the proposed functions fulfil the functions of the current CYPCCG
5. How do we ensure parent, children and young people's voices are heard?
6. Do you agree with the proposed terms of reference?
7. Do you have views on the linkages with other city-wide partnerships (Plymouth2020 Partnerships, Commissioning Partnerships, Independent Partnerships, Other delivery focused partnerships and Children and Young People's Delivery Partnerships)
8. Do these proposals ensure that children and young peoples;' interests remain high profile?