

# 1. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

## 1.1 Introduction and background

**Children's Services in Cornwall, as elsewhere in the country, are in the middle of a radical change process, initiated by the Every Child Matters agenda, the Children Act 2004, the Education Act 2005, The Education and Inspections Act 2006, The National Childcare Act 2006 and other central government directives such as the Integration of Youth Support Services and the development of the 14 – 19 vocational initiatives.**

The key principles underlining all these directives are the integration of services for children, young people and their families; integration not just within the local authority but across all agencies that work with and for children and young people, including the voluntary and community sector.

The development of the Children's Trust arrangements to enable joint planning, pooling of budgets, joint commissioning and robust governance has been a major focus and will continue to be so over the coming months.

Children's Centres and Extended Schools are being developed throughout the county and through the Local Area Agreement we have used the freedoms and flexibilities afforded to ensure a programme of implementation across the county by 2009.

Integrated Youth Support Services are currently being developed through an intensive project which is looking at bringing together the county youth service, Connexions, young people's DAAT, reducing teenage pregnancy and all other youth work including that within the district councils. A multi disciplinary project team is leading on this work with a target implementation date of April 2008.





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The annual refresh of the LAA has led us to decide that over the next 12 months we will reshape the children and young people's block of the LAA around the 5 Every Child Matters Outcomes to give even greater alignment with the Children and Young People's Plan.

Engagement of children, young people and their families in the design and delivery of services is a priority for the Children and Young People's Partnership. Overload of consultations with certain groups of young people, with not enough emphasis on the younger age range and no formal way of feeding back to contributors is currently being addressed at both a county and community level. Young People and their families do not care who provides the service, they just want local improvements and to see that agencies are really working together.

### **Opportunities for improvement**

The Children and Young People's Partnership in Cornwall is very strong and is determined to work together to ensure improved outcomes for our children and young people. The Partnership is continuously exploring ways in which we can jointly plan, pool resources and jointly commission services. A joint commissioning strategy has been agreed and the terms of reference for a Joint Commissioning Board are being agreed.

Currently effectiveness is constrained by the dissipation of resources required to negotiate arrangements with the six districts who all place varying levels of priority on the development of children, young people and family services. So, for example there are different approaches to planning and the use of community leisure facilities, and our ability to use and develop the voluntary and

community sector is hampered by confusion of responsibility as to which council does what.

Under a single local government structure there would be much more cohesion and equality of opportunity across the county, particularly in terms of those activities which are not necessarily statutory, but which can greatly impact on child poverty, exclusion and general well being, such as play and leisure activities. Within a Community Network the extended services network could be given the local responsibility for organising play and leisure activities, both in and out of school hours, ensuring cohesion across the age ranges and better use of public resources. Then at a countywide level (through an Extended Services Team) there could be coordination of those activities that are better organised at a more strategic level, for example in liaison with the Cornwall Sports Partnership.

With the recent creation of a single Primary Care Trust for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly we are already seeing benefits of working with one Care Trust as opposed to 3. Through the CYP Partnership we have a good record of joined up service delivery with health and the police which can be demonstrated in several ways

- The National Service Framework (NSF) for Children, Young People and Maternity services and the Force Youth Strategy are totally embedded with Cornwall's CYP Plan
- For the last 3 years health and the police have seconded full time senior members of staff into the CYP Partnership Support Team. Their remit is to ensure links at all levels and to lead on the development of the CYP Plan
- Since 1996 we have had a joint service with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

which ensures co-location of health professionals alongside educational psychologists, behaviour support workers, education welfare officers etc

- The Joint Consultancy Team (JCT), which focuses on child protection, has integrated social care, education and medical staff, including the designated doctor and the designated nurse for child protection. The police also play a key role in the Local Safeguarding Children Board and with JCT
- The Healthy Schools initiative has ensured really close working particularly between the Health Promotion Unit, schools and the Education Advisory Service
- Representation on the CYPP from health and the police is at the highest level of Chief Superintendent, Chief Executives, Directors of Public Health and Children's Leads from each of the Trusts
- The development of Sure Start Programmes, Children's Centres, the Family Service, the Integrated Youth Service etc has all taken place in very close co-operation with Health and the Police
- Through the Children's Fund we are now in the process of rolling out Youth Inclusion Support Panels across the county, linking YOT, police, social care, the VCS, health and education

However, as a unified council we will be looking to integrate fully preventative and early intervention services around the needs of the children and young people of Cornwall. By 2010 every neighbourhood will have access to a Children's Centre and the extended schools agenda will require all schools to be delivering joined up services, including health aspects. Alongside the development of One Stop Shops as part of the Integrated Youth Support Services this

will ensure that the whole age range 0 – 19, and their families, have access to a variety of integrated services delivered locally.

Within Cornwall we have a very successful Learning Partnership (a sub-group of the CYPP) which focuses particularly on the development of the 14 – 19 agenda. The Local LSC is very involved with us on this agenda. The 14 – 19 agenda and the development of the workforce in relation to improving the skills capability of the county is key to our future economic success. We have very close working with the FE Colleges, particularly around the 14 -19 agenda, but also in relation to other things – simple examples like FE students taking part in the LA organised county foreign language exchanges, SLAs with some of our business units such as the Music Service and Cornwall Outdoors to more complex development issues around NEETs working. One of the freedoms and flexibilities we may need to explore in the future could be in relation to funding 14 – 19.

The LSC and FE sit on both the LSCB and the CYP Partnership and are very involved with us on our groundbreaking NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training) national pilot. They also provide us with great help in relation to ESF funding and training. We already have a very partnership orientated joined up service providing initial and in service training to the whole of the workforce in relation to children and young people.

The Reducing Child Poverty agenda means that our links with Job Centre Plus have become much more developed over the last couple of years with the development of our innovative Family Service. All of our Children's Centres link with Job Centre Plus to provide advice and support on things like benefits, preparing for work and work opportunities. Our Extended School plans and our One Stop Shop plans,

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in relation to the Integrated Youth Support Service, would also be looking to house Job Centre Plus Staff. Our recent joint bid to ISB to assist with Reducing Child Poverty, particularly in relation to those on incapacity benefit, demonstrates our very close working. Here is an opportunity to look at aligning/ pooling resources not just in terms of backroom staff, but in terms of facilities and professional staffing.

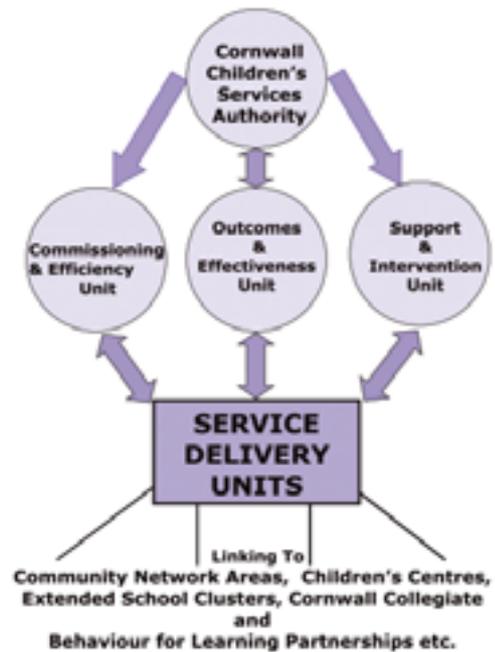
The Children’s Services Authority is moving from transitional arrangements that brought together the functions of the Local Education Authority and Children’s Social Services to a transformational integrated Children’s Service that has a powerful outcomes focus and commissioning role.



The system makes no assumption as to which units are internally or externally provided other than the CSA which is a core statutory function of the Local Authority.

Neither is it only assuming the full integration of education and social care but, through leading the Children and Young People’s Partnership, all services that work with and for children and young people.

Through working in partnership we know that a unified council will better serve the children and young people of Cornwall and provide support to their families.



The community networks will provide an opportunity for local scrutiny and highlight both strengths and deficiencies in services for children within each community.

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