

'Children Gateshead' (Children and Families Plan 2011-2013)

Summary of responses to consultation on the draft plan

Introduction

There is no longer a requirement to develop a Children and Young People's Plan. However, Gateshead Council and its partners have made a commitment to continue to work together in partnership to improve the lives of our children and young people. Our aim was to bring together a new version of the Children and Young People's Plan with the Child Poverty Strategy into one single strategy, with a specific focus on children, young people and families.

Children Gateshead, our draft Children and Families Plan was subject to a six week consultation period. During this period we posed several specific questions about the plan in an online survey located on the Council's website. This report is a summary of the responses received.

Question 1 Overall views

Most respondents liked the idea of a shorter plan with fewer priorities. There was a view that having less priorities would enable resources to be targeted more appropriately, helping make the priorities more achievable. Some respondents queried the level of detail in the plan in relation to the priorities, objectives and outcomes and suggested that more work should be done to ensure linkages across. Other respondents felt that the plan could be clearer on how the expected outcomes should be measured and should include statistical targets in areas of challenge (e.g. childhood obesity).

In general respondents welcomed the format of the plan, and felt that it helped makes the plan more accessible and would be beneficial for strategic planning.

There were positive comments on the approach to prevention as opposed to tackling consequences of actions. A number of respondents commented on the importance of engaging parents and carers and helping them to engage with other parents to engender a community approach.

There was a query as to the target audience for the plan, and how far partners had been involved in developing it, and in particular the voluntary sector.

Suggestions for further inclusion in the plan were around changes that may affect future delivery of services including the impact of Government's Health Strategy and the role of GP commissioning. It was also suggested that the plan make reference to evidence based commissioning to ensure awareness of our approach and also highlight some of Gateshead's past successes.

Question 2 Views on our approach to a focus on families and parents

Almost all respondents supported the approach that families are central to this plan, with only one comment suggesting that "families are not always the answer". Another respondent agreed with the approach but wasn't sure how strongly this was conveyed in the new plan and how we would measure our success in relation to the impact on families. A further respondent highlighted the need to educate parents. The importance of families as the building blocks of our society was highlighted and how parents should have access to help, to reduce family breakdown which can be a major factor contributing to child poverty and well being.

Question 3 Views on how we can best tackle Child Poverty

A number of themes emerged in relation to this. Unemployment was acknowledged as a major cause of child poverty and how important it is not to lose sight of how we can support those of working age to find employment. Job creation schemes were suggested, such as investing in the development of industrial areas to attract new business, as well as improving public transport and road networks to enable local people to be able to access jobs further from home. Others felt that parents, including single parents should be encouraged to return to work, with more flexible child care available and access to facilities that ensure their children remain in a safe learning environment. Some respondents commented on the need to involve communities in finding their own solutions to problems. It was felt this would help reduce waste, through avoiding an over dependency on providing resources that people may choose not to access, need or want and money could then be spent better elsewhere. A number of respondents commented on the need to improve educational achievement, through striving for excellence in our schools and by working with families to help them better manage their lives and lessen the reliance on benefits for some families. A need to encourage and foster a sense of aspiration within families was also highlighted, as well as a need for organisations to embrace technology and improve the sharing of information about families in poverty, while maintaining confidentiality.

Question 4 Views on the four key priorities of: *Safeguarding children and young people, tackling poverty in families, starting and staying healthy and attainment, achievement and ambition*

There was general agreement that these are all good broad based priorities, but that the challenge lies in how they can be achieved to ensure we create the biggest impact. There was a view that early intervention should be "key" across all the priorities. The importance of teaching young people life skills was highlighted, with achievements and praise put forward as key motivators to help break the cycle of poverty, anti-social behaviour and underachievement. Robust safeguarding practices were viewed as being a key starting point for ensuring a happy, successful future for any child, with schools and in particular primary schools playing a very important role.

The problems caused by the breakdown of families were raised, and the value of promoting and supporting stability within families.

In terms of health, some respondents felt that this priority requires further work, particularly in terms of clarifying exactly what can be done through a targeted approach and how we will reduce inequalities.

Question 5 - Views on outcomes we ought to be achieving

There were mixed views on this question. Some concern was raised as to how some of the outcomes could be achieved in a climate of cuts and the need to ensure that outcomes are SMART and reflect those identified in the wider Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. It was suggested that it is worth looking at what actually works currently to make sure that money is targeted appropriately. Other ideas included a focus on early intervention which is likely to prove more cost effective, and the importance of inclusive services for all children and young people. There were also comments around the need to ensure that outcomes and indicators read across, are measurable and able to demonstrate real improvements.

Question 6 Your 3 priorities to help children, young people and families.

These ranged from general priorities around supporting families in terms of education and employment to helping them with lifestyle choices including health, diet, positive stable relationships and actively promoting that people take responsibility for their own actions. Others focused on having robust early years services and good community facilities to support all children and families. Another suggestion was linked to the use of technology via a "single" software system for referrals and a digital service which would follow a child through the full education system, enabling practitioners to fully understand educational and social needs and respond to individual needs. A proposal to include the availability and promotion of "independent advocacy" was put forward to be a priority in the plan. The current good practice around engagement highlighted in the report was welcomed and the guiding principle of involving, respecting and hearing the voice of young people.

Question 7 Other suggestions on how we can work together.

- Consider role of wider workforce e.g. GPs and schools
- Develop sure start centres, local community groups, promote good parenting
- A specialised SEN Service, not devolved to school budgets
- Organisations to engage with each other through cultural change
- Community partnership consultation to ascertain problems and find solutions
- Strengthen links with voluntary sports clubs and other youth organisations
- Use the experience of ex nursery nurses
- Encourage communities to work together
- Work with faith groups who can provide peer support, help and guidance.

Final Version of the Children Gateshead Plan

The responses summarised above have been used to finalise the Children Gateshead Plan. The Plan can be viewed below:

‘Children Gateshead’

**The plan for Children, Young People and Families
in Gateshead**

Gateshead Children’s Trust

2011-2013

**Final Draft
November 2011**

Foreword

There is nothing more important than making sure our children are able to lead rich rewarding lives and to fulfil their potential.

Parents have the key responsibility, but they need help – from family, friends, neighbours, community and Government.

In Gateshead we always believe that there is a key role for the Council, especially when parents are not able to provide the care and support that children need. Many services provided by the Council and partners impact on the lives of children and families.

Despite the removal of the requirement to have a Children's Trust partnership, and to develop a Children and Young people's Plan, partners in Gateshead remain committed to work together in partnership to improve the lives of our children and young people. We have achieved some significant changes over the past ten years – Gateshead's educational performance has been transformed, and the quality of our early years and health services is now excellent.

But we know we need a different approach. The Gateshead Commission on Child and Family Poverty highlighted a number of areas of concern, including the gap between some of our services and the people that need them; the problems of cultures of low aspiration and worklessness in some of our communities, and the need for a greater focus on early intervention, especially in the early years, where we can stop problems escalating. Crucially, it identified the need for all partners to focus on the family, and the role of parents, as the best way of giving children the start they need, and supporting young people to achieve their potential.

We must also be realistic about the challenges over the next two years, at a time of reduce funding. We need to be clearer about our priorities, more focused in our approach and more transparent about how we are using resources and what the impact is for children and families in Gateshead.

This Plan sets out a new approach, and a new focus for us. We intend to transform our services to meet the needs of children, young people and families in Gateshead.

We invite you to join us in meeting this challenge.

Cllr Angela Douglas
Chair, Gateshead Children's Trust

Margaret Whellans
Director of Children's Services

Executive Summary

The Gateshead Children's Trust has agreed this new Plan as our strategy for improving the lives of children, young people and families in Gateshead for the next two years.

It sets out a clear, new direction for our approach. It sets out the priorities across all partners responsible for providing services to children and young people, our objectives and how we will deliver them, with specified targets.

Our aspiration and vision for our community is that "all children and young people are empowered and supported to develop to their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play an active part in society."

It identifies four strategic objectives for partners to achieve, and is backed by a new focus on commissioning as the basis for how we will deliver them:

1. Safeguarding children and young people
2. Tackling poverty
3. Starting and staying healthy and safe
4. Attainment, achievement and ambition

We will develop an annual commissioning plan to set out how we will deliver these objectives, and we will engage widely in the development of our joint approach.

Introduction

This section sets out...

What this Plan is about
Why have it?
What's different?

This is a new kind of Plan, our first such Plan for Gateshead. It sets out our priorities for children, young people and families in Gateshead in a different way than we have done in the past. It is both more strategic and more specific. It is clearer about what we think we need to achieve, and how we will do it.

It brings together the previous Children and Young People's Plan with the work of the Gateshead Commission on Child and Family Poverty into a single Plan. It is about children and young people, but it also addresses the wider issues of family and community which have an impact on life chances, aspiration and success, and so is more closely related to Vision 2030, the overall community strategy for Gateshead.

Why do we need a new approach?

At a time of significant change, it is more important than ever that all partners agree a shared vision, principles and objectives for how we work, and how we make a difference to the lives of children and young people and their families. It will not be enough to continue our previous approaches, because they are not sustainable financially, some are not working, and because they do not place enough emphasis on the role of the family and communities in helping children and young people to succeed.

The Gateshead Commission on Child and Family Poverty placed a major focus on the need to support and sustain families, to enable them to play the leading role in looking after and caring for children and young people, and that we need to redesign our services in a radical way to respond to some of the most deep rooted issues in some of our communities.

- We need to fundamentally rethink the role of local organisations and partners in supporting families and wider communities to playing the leading role. We need to shift the balance of responsibility, because in some of our communities there is an over-dependence on public services and a lack of parental responsibility. We need to focus more on empowering families and less on seeking to replace them as the primary influence in children's lives.
- We still focus too much on addressing the symptoms of failure, rather than tackling the causes, and we need a focus on more integrated, responsive and personalised services that can intervene earlier and prevent problems from getting worse.
- We need to focus on progressively shifting resources towards prevention and early intervention to reduce the demand on specialist and crisis services, and to do this we need to focus on early identification of those children and young people with high risk factors, and design new ways of supporting them.
- We need to address entrenched and acute problems faced by some families around debt and low incomes as a key structural issue in Gateshead's economy, which will be exacerbated by welfare reform proposals.

What's different about this Plan?

- It includes our strategy for addressing child and family poverty, as required under the Child Poverty Act 2010
- This plan is shorter, sharper and more specific about what we will do

- It places a bigger emphasis on the role of the family
- It is more closely related to Vision 2030, the overall community strategy for Gateshead
- It is more specific about how we will allocate resources to deliver, and how these priorities influence where the money goes
- It does not include a traditional action plan or a schedule of detailed actions. This will be included in the commissioning priorities document which will be published on an annual basis

The role and purpose of this Plan

This section sets out:

What's changed?
What this Plan does

What's changed since the last plan and updates?

Many things have changed since the previous Children and Young People's Plan for Gateshead, first published in 2006.

- National policy is changing - the change of Government in 2010 has brought an increasing focus on localism – enabling local authorities and their partners more ability to do things differently at a local level, and removing some of the duties and requirements around structure, planning and performance. Changes to the way health services are commissioned and delivered, and to the way the welfare system works are also major factors influencing what we need to do at a local level, especially with significant reductions in public sector funding over the next few years.
- Roles and responsibilities for children and young people are changing – the Government no longer requires us to have a formal Children's Trust, or to produce a specific Children and Young People's Plan. It wants to see local areas develop their own approaches to their own local challenges
- Funding is changing – there is less funding available for initiatives and projects now, but there is also more local freedom on what funding can be used for
- Gateshead is changing – partners in Gateshead have recently reviewed Vision 2030 to check if the priorities and ambitions are still the right ones. The commitment to the Big Ideas remains. However, our understanding of recent changes and key issues in Gateshead has improved through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Child Poverty Needs Assessment and the Narrowing the Gap review undertaken by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the past years.

What this Plan does

This Plan is the key document for all partners delivering services to children, young people and their families in Gateshead. It sets out:

- The vision that we have for our children and young people
- The key priorities and actions we commit to undertaking in partnership
- The improved outcomes we want to achieve for children and young people

Our plan describes how all partner agencies in the borough will work together to mitigate the effects of child poverty on the life chances of children and young people. We aim to

improve outcomes for all children and young people and their families, with a particular focus however on those who are disadvantaged.

Our aspiration and vision for our community is that “all children and young people are empowered and supported to develop to their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play an active part in society.” We will achieve this through a focus on commissioning – basing what we do on a continuous process of needs assessment, testing out how best to respond to need and holding deliverers to account for their performance.

This new Plan is specific, focused and clear about what we will do. It sets the context for our work, but also makes clear how we will engage children, young people, parents, providers and other partners in delivery.

This plan concentrates on the key areas where partners working together need to make a difference. This is a single plan about the needs, priorities and services for children, young people and their families and has been developed by the partner organisations that form Gateshead’s Children’s Trust.

Our key principles – what matters for children, young peoples and families in Gateshead?

This section sets out:
Our key principles

Vision 2030

Vision 2030 sets out our overall priorities for Gateshead, developed in 2007 following extensive consultation, and refreshed again in 2010, again following a major consultation exercise.

The Vision for Gateshead is:

Local people realising their full potential, enjoying the best quality of life in a healthy, equal, safe, prosperous and sustainable Gateshead.

Our Plan focuses on the application of this vision to children, young people and families, recognising that we need to do more to create the opportunities for young people to flourish by addressing some of the key barriers and challenges facing them and their families.

Our principles

We have identified a number of key principles which underpin our whole approach. We have not undertaken a major new consultation exercise, as young people and partners have consistently told us what their priorities are, so we have focused on understanding these issues and ensuring we are focusing on the right things.

- 1. Involving, respecting and hearing the voice of young people**
- 2. Giving all children and young people the best chance of success**
- 3. A focus on families**
- 4. Early intervention and prevention**
- 5. Focusing on outcomes and what works – taking an evidence led approach**

Involving, respecting and hearing the voice of young people

This plan is about improving outcomes for children and young people. We cannot achieve this without understanding, learning from and respecting the views of children and young people.

We are committed to ensuring that all partners children and young people actively take part in the development of appropriate services. There is a lot of existing activity and good practice in place to build on – from the various structures to ensure involvement, including the Youth Assembly, school councils, Area Forums and One Voice to more informal involvement through surveys, drop ins and ongoing engagement. In 2011 we will adopt a new strategy for engagement which embeds engagement in everything that we do.

Keeping children and young people safe and healthy

Enabling children and young people to live healthy lives in safe communities is a major challenge and focus for all partners. We continue to face challenges around obesity; emotional health and wellbeing; sexual health and risky behaviour in some of our young people.

In addition, where families cannot cope, agencies need to be prepared to step in, and bring children into the care of the local authority.

We need to do more to ensure that we get the right information to children, young people and families to enable them to make better choices about health, and we need to ensure that communities are safe, secure and cohesive to create the right environment for success.

Tackling child and family poverty

Poverty is a reality for many of our communities – 25% of children in Gateshead live in poverty. For many this is the most critical issue in their lives. It supports a culture of dependency, and deprivation. The Gateshead Commission on child and family poverty identified a number of recommendations for action, based on the challenges of both increasing incomes, but also in supporting families and communities to address challenges locally:

1. Redesigning services to focus on intensive support to those in need;
2. Focusing on how partners can build the capacity in communities;
3. More integration of services around the needs of families;
4. A greater focus on prevention and early intervention;
5. Continuing to focus on financial inclusion, reducing debt and improving access to credit;
6. Getting people into work.

Giving children and young people the best chance of success

We need to retain the focus on attainment and achievement. Our educational performance has improved beyond recognition in recent years, and we need to retain the emphasis on achievement. There will be an increasing focus on the primary role of schools, with the role of the local education authority changing to a strategic commissioning role, working with schools to ensure parents and children have access to the support they need.

We need to continue to focus on the needs of vulnerable children and young people who are at risk of failing or falling behind, including the needs of children with disabilities and special educational needs.

There are particular issues post 16, where there are major changes to funding, provision and accountability which we need to tackle if we are to create choice and quality in these services for all our young people.

A focus on families

We believe that the family is the key influence on children and young people, and we need to do more to reinforce the role of the family in supporting and caring for children and young people. Helping to support families will become an increasing priority for partner organisations, and we need to develop new approaches to supporting families, including exploring the ways in which individuals, families and communities can be empowered to tackle problems early.

Early intervention and prevention

We need to shift the balance of provision towards early identification of issues and away from seeking to solve problems when it may be too late. We recognise that there will always be a need for specialist services and that there are families where specialist intervention and support are necessary, however by identifying issues earlier and providing appropriate support we would look to ensure that problems do not become entrenched.

Focusing on outcomes and what works

At a time of reducing resources, we need to ensure that we are basing our actions on solid evidence. We have worked with NICE on the production of this Plan, to ensure we are taking an evidence led approach, within the framework being established by the Council, the primary care Trust and Gateshead Clinical Commissioning group.

Equally, our commitment to the implementation of early intervention as one of the pilot Early Intervention Place, means we are committed to basing our interventions on evidence of what works. Commissioners will increasingly focus on outcomes approaches, and be less concerned with the day to day processes and delivery activity of services.

Our priorities

From the principles of our approach, and the evidence we have about needs in Gateshead, we have developed four key priorities for action

1. Safeguarding children and young people and supporting families
2. Tackling poverty
3. Starting and staying healthy and safe
4. Attainment, achievement and ambition

How have we developed these priorities?

We have made use of a range of information, in developing a needs assessment which underpins these priorities, and we will publish this needs assessment alongside the Plan.

The key sources for information, evidence and analysis are:

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Director of Public Health Report
- The Child Poverty Needs Assessment
- The Economic Assessment
- The views of children and young people collated from various sources
- Key performance data on how well we are performing on a range of issues

The big challenges

We have identified 12 key challenges we need to tackle from this needs assessment:

- 1. *Rising numbers of children subject to child protection plans***
- 2. *Increasing numbers of children being taken into care***
- 3. *Continuing concerns over the levels of children and families living in poverty***
- 4. *Getting the best start in life: infant mortality and low birth weight; breastfeeding and immunisation rates***
- 5. *Mental health and emotional health and wellbeing***
- 6. *Lifestyle choices, including sexual health and substance misuse amongst young people***
- 7. *Childhood obesity – physical activity and healthy eating***
- 8. *The prevalence and impact of domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse in families***
- 9. *Preventing young people from being involved in youth crime***
- 10. *The particular issues faced by families with multiple needs where traditional ways of working do not seem to work***
- 11. *Narrowing the gap in educational attainment, at a time of significant change in the way education is planned and managed***
- 12. *The provision of support for children who have additional needs or who are most vulnerable, including children with special educational needs and disabilities and young carers***

Our priorities

From these key challenges we have developed our priorities to underpin everything we do in the Children's Trust.

Our strategic and operational priorities for the next two years:

Strategic Objective	Operational objectives
<i>Safeguarding children and young people and supporting families</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure an effective approach to safeguarding and child protection 2. Increase the focus on early intervention to identify and address problems earlier, with a greater role for the voluntary and community sector 3. Continue to improve our corporate parenting role and improve services for looked after children 4. Redesign services to develop a simple gateway of support to families including a range of support to families with complex needs
<i>Tackling poverty</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Increase the focus on financial inclusion to reduce debt and increase access to affordable credit, including benefit uptake 6. Refocus services to get more people into work, focusing on those furthest from the labour market 7. Provide more effective early support to families who are struggling
<i>Starting and staying healthy and safe</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Work with the PCT and GPs to deliver early years support that works 9. Develop a new model for healthy schools 10. Tackle the key priorities of obesity and sexual health 11. Develop an approach to promoting emotional health and wellbeing for 0-19 12. Prevent and reduce youth crime
<i>Attainment, achievement and ambition</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Refocus services to support the role of schools in driving forward achievement 14. Improve levels of attainment for all children 15. Implement a new approach to Special Educational Needs 16. Develop our approach to 14-19 education, including for those with additional needs

Outcomes

We have also developed a simpler outcomes framework which sets out how we will demonstrate our impact.

The Outcomes Framework for the Children's Trust

Strategic priority	Outcome	Indicators – how will we measure
Safeguarding and supporting families	Children are safe	LAC numbers reducing Child Protection Plans reducing
Starting and staying healthy	Free from depression and anxiety	
	A healthy start	Infant mortality rates Health Visitor and nurse data
	Staying healthy	Obesity in Year 6
	Absence of risky behaviour: Youth justice entrants Does not try drugs or alcohol No risky sexual behaviour Not pregnant	Entrants to Youth justice system Teenage conception rates Drug and alcohol consumption from surveys
	Emotional health	Self reported from surveys
Poverty	Free from poverty	Child poverty rates Working age people on out of work benefits reduced
Attainment	Ready for school	
	Good academic performance	GCSE attainment
	Progression to higher education	Transition data
	Narrowing the gap	SEN performance Services for disabled children LAC attainment
	Absence of bad behaviour, positive behaviour	Reduced exclusions Reduced bullying

Our four priorities in detail

Safeguarding children and young people and supporting families

The issues

- Many children in Gateshead born into difficult environments – cultures of dependency, low aspiration, poor health and issues such as domestic violence
- Increasing levels of child protection
- Increasing rates of children being looked after by the Council
- Levels of children with disabilities

We will...

- Ensure effective child protection procedures
- Raise standards in looked after children, including a focus on those leaving care
- Develop a focus on early intervention, including the use of the Common Assessment Framework to identify issues at an early stage and ensure effective support
- Redesign services for families to ensure a single, simple gateway is in place to provide targeted support
- Work to reduce the impacts of bullying

Tackling poverty

The issue

- Increasing levels of child poverty
- Cultures and low aspiration and low ambition in families and communities

We will...

- Work with local partners to reconnect families to the labour market and maximise the opportunities of the Work programme and other national reforms
- Increase our focus on debt and credit issues – credit unions and a clampdown on high interest rate loans
- Work with communities to break cycles of disadvantage through a community mentor programme
- Use family support programmes to develop greater resilience and empower families

Starting and staying healthy and safe

The issues...

- Infant mortality
- Obesity
- Teenage pregnancy and sexual health
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Youth crime

We will...

- Reduce levels of obesity
- Increase focus on emotional health and wellbeing through a focus on schools
- Provide a comprehensive approach to the delivery of SRE (sex and relationships education) and accessible young people centred contraceptive and sexual health services (CASH)

- Develop a targeted approach to reducing health inequalities
- Work to prevent young people from becoming involved in crime and help young people to make amends for any involvement

Attainment, achievement and ambition

The issue

- Generally high levels of attainment, but gaps in outcomes
- Increasing challenges around the provision of support to children with Special Educational Needs, including the costs of out of borough provision

We will...

- Change the way we deliver SEN through more integrated assessment and personalised approaches
- Narrowing the gap in outcomes in educational attainment
- Work in partnership with schools to continue to drive forward educational attainment and performance, including a new business relationship with schools to support their continued excellence

How will we deliver?

This section covers:

Children's Trust, leadership and strategy
Commissioning and the use of resources
Performance management
Skills and capacity

We need a strong, clear and accountable model for delivery. In the past we have tried to do too much, have created a complex set of partnerships and action plans and confused roles and responsibilities.

The Gateshead Children's Trust

The statutory roles of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead member for Children's services are currently the subject of a consultation from Government, and will remain central to the delivery of services for children and young people.

The Lead Member will continue to Chair the Gateshead Children's Trust, and the Trust will continue to be the partnership body for the delivery of Children Gateshead. Our new approach will be based on the primary leadership role of the Children's Trust as the accountable body for delivery. This will be the body which allocates and approves resources; holds partners to account for delivery; and takes a lead on engaging and involving children, young people and parents.

Commissioning

We will adopt a commissioning approach to the delivery of all services to meet our priority objectives in this plan.

Current commissioning arrangements within Gateshead Council are increasing in both scope and complexity, broadening the role of the commissioning area within the council as a 'strategic' body with a range of functions. This approach brings with it an opportunity to stimulate new and creative forms of support that are more responsive to the needs of users. For joint commissioning to become a success, strategic commissioners must be able to build upon the current system to develop alternative models of service delivery, while also ensuring that services to children, young people and their families, especially hard to reach groups, do not become disadvantaged in the process.

A commissioning approach enables us to

- Focus on outcomes rather than process
- Ensure we are meeting need, and testing our effectiveness in a consistent way
- Ensure we are challenging what we are providing and how we provide it
- Monitor and ensure quality in service delivery
- Take decisions based on evidence

An operational lead for each of our operational priorities will be identified. We will publish these leads in our annual Commissioning Priorities Plan, and we will develop a clear summary of proposals in each priority which will form the basis of the Commissioning Plan.

A Commissioning Support Team will manage the commissioning process for Gateshead on behalf of the Trust and will report to the Trust, and be accountable directly to the Director of Children's services. This Team will:

- Assist in bringing together needs assessment information

- Ensure components of the Plan are completed in their area
- Meet regularly to monitor performance of joint commissioning strategy and commissioning approach – reports progress to PSB
- Ensure joint commissioning opportunities (across the themes) are maximised
- Champion commissioning, including the principles, within Partner organisations and extend understanding across the LSP, including disseminating best practice
- Undertake a Market development role
- Promote effective procurement practices and workforce development

Resources

This Plan takes a different approach to the issue of resources. In the past we have identified a range of priorities, set out an action plan, but said little about the resources being deployed to address the priorities. The extent to which funding follows priorities has not always been clear.

This Plan is different. We will develop an annual commissioning plan which will set out what resources are available, and how we intend to commission services to deliver against our objectives. Commissioning Intentions will be published in October / November each year and will set out proposals for how the Trust will deliver against its priorities. This will be finalised as a Commissioning Plan for the following year by January and so will set the context for the budget decisions of each of the main commissioners.

Resources for delivery will come from all partners. The Council, the PCT, GPs and schools have a particularly important role to play in identifying resources for delivery. The Council is currently reviewing its resources across Learning and Children and associated services to align them with the priorities in this plan.

Performance management

We will publish an annual data and evidence document every year alongside the Commissioning Intentions, which sets out the key evidence and assessment of need informing our Commissioning Intentions.

The Gateshead Strategic Partnership is currently reviewing its performance management framework in the context of a more localist approach to accountability. We will develop our new approach by June 2011 and publish it.

Skills and capacity

It is crucial that we have the right mix of skills and expertise across partners to be able to achieve our objectives. As we develop and deepen our commissioning approach, it is likely that some services will be delivered in different ways and by different partners, and our approach to building capacity will start to focus on developing a new range of skills around commissioning for statutory partners, with a corresponding need to develop the market and the skills in a more diverse range of providers than we have seen up to now.

The key elements of our approach are:

- **A child and family centred workforce** – we need to build a greater commitment to ensuring that the needs of children and young people are at the centre of our approach, and delivery is based on integrated services

- **A commitment to early intervention** – we need to ensure that partners can identify those children who are at risk of not fulfilling their potential, and are empowered and capable of putting in place the right support
- **Commitment to safeguarding** – we need the highest standards of commitment and implementation around safeguarding, including through the recruitment process
- **Commissioning skills** – new skills are required for both commissioners and providers. Commissioners need to be more focussed on evidence and the development of service specifications more focused on outcomes, ensuring that alternative models of delivery are explored and promoted. Providers need to become more familiar with the commissioning process, and the requirements of meeting service specifications
- **A commitment to the involvement of children and young people at all stages** – we need to ensure that the need and views of children and young people are addressed at all stages, and that we have effective skills and capacity to support this engagement.



Gateshead Children's Trust

17 November 2011

Children Gateshead – the plan for children, young people and families, and draft Commissioning Intentions for 2012/13

Purpose

1. To seek the Children's Trust Board's approval of Children Gateshead, the plan for children, young people and families in Gateshead, and to authorise further consultation and engagement on the draft Commissioning Intentions for 2012/13.

Background

2. Children Gateshead, the draft plan for children, young people and families in Gateshead was presented to the Children's Trust in May 2011.
3. Following the approval of this draft for consultation, a series of consultation events and sessions have been held with partners through the Children's Commissioning Forum over the summer, culminating in a formal consultation process launched in September. The expectation throughout, is that this would not replicate the extensive consultation processes of previous years, but would seek to build on existing intelligence.
4. In terms of statutory requirements and the policy context:
 - i. The Government signalled its intention in 2010 to remove the requirement to have a formal Children's Trust, and to develop a Children and Young People's Plan. This is expected to be confirmed in the Education Act.
 - ii. At the same time, whilst the five Every Child matters outcomes have not been formally removed at a national level, Government no longer uses them as part of its strategic planning process.
 - iii. In January 2011, The Gateshead Commission on Child and Family Poverty made a number of recommendations about addressing child poverty, including the need to review existing service provision to make a focus on tackling poverty more of a mainstream function.
 - iv. The Children's Trust Board, in March 2011, agreed an approach which was based on:
 - A new single streamlined Plan which would serve as the Child Poverty Strategy and a new version of the Children and Young People's Plan.
 - An annual commissioning intentions document as the delivery vehicle

- A data and evidence document, which will draw together information from existing needs assessments and establish the basis for defining outcomes

Children Gateshead – the plan for children, young people and families in Gateshead

5. The first step in the process was the production of the new Plan which has been consulted on over the summer, following the discussions at the Trust in May. Over 60 organisations have been involved in the development of the Plan, with a formal consultation process resulting in 22 written responses. This process was managed by the Council on behalf of the Children's Trust.
6. The broad outcomes of the co design and consultation process were:
 - i. broad agreement with the new approach, and in particular a simpler, more streamlined plan
 - ii. Agreement with the 4 strategic objectives
 1. *Safeguarding children and young people*
 2. *Tackling poverty in families*
 3. *Starting and staying healthy*
 4. *Attainment, achievement and ambition*
 - iii. Broad agreement with the focus on families and parents and their key role in improving outcomes for children and young people
 - iv. Support for the integration of child poverty and the focus on employment and income issues within this approach
 - v. Support for the focus on early intervention, prevention, evidence based approaches and new ways of delivering
 - vi. Concerns over the impact of budget pressures on ability to deliver
7. The draft Plan has been amended slightly in light of these comments and is attached at Annex 1.

Draft Commissioning Intentions

8. The second element of the new approach is the development of the Commissioning Intentions, to serve as the delivery plan for Children Gateshead. A draft of the Commissioning Intentions is attached at Annex 2.
9. The key points to note are:
 - i. That this document forms a key staging post in the development of the commissioning approach for services to children, young people and families. It sets out our priorities for 2012/13 in the form of a specific set of programmes which are based on the Plan's priorities and have a clear rationale and evidence base;

- ii. That the document is the key product of the Plan and Design stage of the Commissioning cycle, in that it draws together the outcomes of the needs assessment and the discussions with stakeholders into a set of specific objectives for 2012/13 and outlines the evidence base, rationale and proposed approach to delivering them;
- iii. That it will be subject to further consultation with partners and stakeholders to refine and add detail; again following the principle of co-design and that it is a partnership approach, owned by the Trust. In particular the links to the Primary Care Trust and the Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group's outline 2012/13 Commissioning Intentions and the Gateshead Integrated Strategic and Operational Plan as they relate to children and young people will be developed in more detail – the current version includes the key actions from the PCT's plans, though there are differences in language and style.
- iv. That it will be finalised at the end of January and agreed as the Commissioning Plan for the Gateshead Children's Trust for 2012/13.

Next steps

- 10. The draft plan will be presented to the Council's Cabinet on 13th December for endorsement.
- 11. The draft Commissioning Intentions will be subject to further consultation with the Children's Commissioning Forum and key stakeholders to be completed by January for reporting back to the Trust for approval at its meeting on 19th January 2012.

Recommendations

- 12. Children's Trust Board is asked to:
 - i. Approve Children Gateshead, the plan for children, young people and families in Gateshead
 - ii. Comment on the draft Commissioning Intentions for 2012/13 and authorise further consultation for finalisation at the Trust's meeting on 19th January 2013.

Contact: Martin Gray

Tel (0191) 433 3919
