

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Every Child Matters*, the government's vision for children's services was published in **September 2003**. It proposed reshaping children's services to help achieve the following five key outcomes for children and young people:

- **Be healthy** – physically, mentally and emotionally healthy, sexually healthy, healthy lifestyles, and choose not to take illegal drugs.  
**Parents, carers and families promote healthy choices**
- **Stay safe** - safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, safe from accidental injury and death, safe from bullying and discrimination, safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school, and have security, stability and are cared for.  
**Parents, carers and families provide safe homes and stability**
- **Enjoy and achieve** - ready for school, attend and enjoy school, achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school, achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation, achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school.  
**Parents, carers and families support learning**
- **Make a positive contribution** - engage in decision-making and support the community and environment, engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school, develop positive relationships and choose not to bully and discriminate, develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges, develop enterprising behaviour.  
**Parents, carers and families promote positive behaviour**
- **Achieve economic well-being** - engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school, ready for employment, live in decent homes and sustainable communities, access to transport and material goods, live in households free from low income.  
**Parents, carers and families are supported to be economically active.**

## 2. THE CHILDREN ACT 2004

This was followed by legislation (*the Children Act 2004*) which forms the basis of a long-term programme of change to the way in which children's services work together. The Act established for England:

- a **Children's Commissioner** to champion the views and interests of children and young people;
- a **duty** on Local Authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies and other appropriate bodies (*eg. voluntary and community organizations*) in order to improve children's well-being (*where well-being is defined by reference to the 5 outcomes*), and a **duty** on key partners to take part in the co-operation arrangements;
- a **duty** on key agencies (*inc. schools*) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and play a full part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect;
- a **duty** on Local Authorities to set up **Local Safeguarding Children's Boards** (*replacing the current Area Child Protection Committees*), and on key partners to take part;
- provision for **indexes** or **databases** containing basic information about children and young people to enable better sharing of information;
- a requirement for a single **Children and Young People's Plan** to be drawn up by each Local Authority;
- a requirement on Local Authorities to appoint a **Director of Children's Services** and designate a **Lead Member**;
- the creation of an **integrated inspection framework** and the conduct of **Joint Area Reviews** to assess local areas' progress in improving outcomes; and
- provisions relating to foster care, private fostering and the education of children in care.

### 3. CHILDREN'S TRUSTS

Local authorities will be expected to develop children's trust arrangements to integrate front-line services, backed up by integrated processes, planning and inter-agency governance. **Children's Trusts** will work together with local partners from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to assess local needs, agree priorities and commission local services to meet those priorities. From **April 2006** these will be reflected in a new **Children and Young People's Plan** that brings together all Local Authority's planning for children and young people. The government expects children's trust arrangements to be developed in most areas by **2006** and all areas by **2008**. This will mean for schools:

- children's trust arrangements involving schools in local partnerships so that schools can feed their views into local service planning and, if they wish, provide services individually or in partnership with other schools;
- children's trust arrangements and schools working together to find places for hard-to-place pupils. The government would like local protocols for hard-to-place pupils to be agreed by **September 2005**; and
- Local Authorities working closely with schools in fulfilling their **duty** to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children.

### 4. PUPILS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

Integrating services should mean more effective support for pupils with complex needs who require multi-agency support. Two common processes that should make this easier are;

- a **Common Assessment Framework** to help schools identify when a pupil's needs can be met within the school and to enable better targeted referral to other specialist services when needed so they can respond more effectively. The framework will be published in **2005** with the expectation that Local Authorities will introduce it in their areas by **2008**.
- **Cross-government guidance on information-sharing** between schools and other agencies about individual children with additional needs. In time this is likely to be supported by new **databases** or **indexes** containing basic information about each child or young person that will enable schools to make contact more easily with other practitioners involved.

In re-thinking service provision, Local Authorities will be developing with their partners the use of a **lead professional** to ensure that a child with additional needs receives co-ordinated support from different agencies. A lead professional may come from the school or partner agency, whichever is more appropriate.

### 5. NEW INSPECTION ARRANGEMENTS

New Inspection arrangements currently under discussion mean that the criteria for school inspection would in future cover the contribution schools make to pupil well-being. This would be reflected in school's self-evaluation. The new school **Profile**, now being tested, will give schools the chance to set out for parents the full range of services they offer. New **Joint Area Reviews** of children's services will assess how successfully services are working together to improve outcomes.

### 6. EXTENDED SCHOOLS

The government is looking to all schools, over time, to provide a core offer of extended services either on site or across a cluster of local schools and providers. For **primary schools** this core offer includes study support, family learning and parental support opportunities, and better referral systems to multi-agency support where needed. For **secondary schools**, the core offer is similar, encouraging schools to open up facilities such as sports, arts and ICT.

By **2008** the recently announced **ten year strategy for childcare** also sets out ambitious targets for childcare provision for parents of children aged 5-11yrs (*at their child's primary school or at a nearby school or provider with transfer arrangements*) at least between 8am – 6pm all year round. Secondary schools will also be expected to be open on the same basis offering a broad range of things for young people to do. The strategy also proposes an enhanced free early education entitlement for 3 & 4 yr olds that parents will be able to access flexibly (*15 hrs a week across 38 weeks by 2010 with a longer-term goal of 20 hrs per week*). An **extended schools prospectus**, to set out the extended schools strategy and the support available, will be launched early in **2005**. The **Youth Green Paper**, also to be published early in **2005**, will set out what the offer should be for the older child.

**Copies of the full document can be obtained from DfES Publications, Tel. 0845 602260 or downloaded from the following website: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)**