

## Every Child Matters: Change for Children

### A summary

Children and young people have told us that **five outcomes** are key to well-being in childhood and later life – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. The Government's ambition is to improve these outcomes for all children and to narrow the gap in outcomes between those who do well and those who do not.

These five outcomes are central to the programme of change and are at the heart of the **Children Act 2004**, which provides the legislative foundation for the programme. The 2003 Green Paper *Every child matters* recognised that, in order to realise our ambition to improve outcomes, we need radical **change in the whole system of children's services** including shifting from intervention to prevention and services working together more effectively.

**Every Child Matters: Change for Children** sets out a national framework for 150 local programmes of change to be led by Local Authorities and their partners. A more detailed **Outcomes Framework** has been developed with the Inspectorates and other partners to inform local needs analysis and the monitoring of progress towards priority targets and indicators.

The *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (NSF)* is integral to this programme and everyone delivering services for children and young people has a role in improving outcomes, including those working in childcare settings, schools, health services, social care, youth services, the police and criminal justice system, the voluntary and community sector and cultural, sports and play organisations.

Effective integration of children's services is already in place in many areas. The Children Act 2004 strengthens this through a **duty to co-operate** and a leadership role for Local Authorities to bring together local partners through children's trust arrangements. All organisations need to listen and be responsive to the diverse needs of children, young people, their families and communities, and to recognise that **safeguarding children and young people from harm** must be everyone's business.

**Children's trust arrangements** will have four essential components:

- Professionals enabled and encouraged to work together **in more integrated front-line services**, built around the needs of children and young people.
  - This will mean **both high-quality universal services** such as early years and childcare provision, personalised learning in schools and a wider range of opportunities and support for young people and **effective targeted and specialist services** such as services for children with disabilities, for those looked after by Local Authorities, or engaging in offending behaviour or substance misuse.
  - Delivering more integrated services requires new ways of working. A **Pay and Workforce Strategy** will set out the action needed nationally and locally to help shape and deliver the workforce of the future;

- Common processes which are designed to create and underpin joint working, supported by a **Common Core of skills and knowledge**, a **Common Assessment Framework** and improved practice in **information sharing**;
- A planning and commissioning framework which brings agencies and their resources together where appropriate and ensures key priorities are identified and addressed **through local needs analysis** and the development of a **Children and Young People's Plan**; and
- Strong inter-agency governance arrangements, in which shared ownership is coupled with clear accountability, including in the development of **Local Safeguarding Children Boards**.

**Regional Change Advisers and other strategic advisers based in Government Offices** will have a key role working with Local Authorities and their partners to support the development of children's trust arrangements. The Government, working with a wide range of national partners, will also provide leadership support and development. Progress will be monitored and reviewed through an **improvement cycle for children's services**, including the development of Annual Performance Assessment based on the Outcomes Framework and Joint Area Review.

There are already significant **resources** devoted to improving outcomes for children and young people. Specific resources are being made available to support the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme, including £22.5 million in 2006-07 and £63 million in 2007-08 to help Local Authorities implement these changes.

The Government is developing **further ways of communicating** to ensure that everyone involved knows what Every Child Matters: Change for Children means for them. *Working with voluntary and community organisations to deliver change for children and young people*, published alongside *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, sets out how the Government intends to work with the **voluntary and community sectors** in delivering this agenda. And we will shortly be publishing **four specific documents for those working in social care, the criminal justice system, health services and schools**. More information is available on [www.everychildmatters.co.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.co.uk), including copies of the documents, downloadable presentations and a forward look of forthcoming publications and consultations.