

Comprehensive Spending Review 2007

Call for evidence: DfES/HM Treasury Joint Policy Review on Children and Young People

Annex A – Covering Template for Responses

Please complete the attached cover sheet when sending evidence, indicating the set of questions to which a response is being provided and contact details of the person for any follow-up queries.

Contact details for respondent	
Name	
Job title	Director of Children's Services
Do you represent an organisation? (if so, name of organisation and type: e.g. voluntary, public body, private company).	Hertfordshire Children's Trust Partnership
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	Which area of the review are you responding to? (please mark X)
Prevention strand	X
Review of disabled children	
Strategy for youth services	X
Review of high cost, high harm families	

Annex B1: Terms of reference for the Children and Young People's Review (prevention strand of review)

Objective:

To identify how services for children and young people from 0 to 19 and their families can build on the three principles identified in *Support for Parents, the best start for children*¹ – rights and responsibilities, progressive universalism and prevention - to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The scope of the review:

The review will develop the analysis set out in *Support for Parents, the best start for children* by focusing on the following factors that influence outcomes for children and young people:

- family prosperity,
- parenting and parents' behaviour,
- neighbourhood; and
- public services.

The review will look at risk and protective factors across these different areas and identify those that are most significant and the potential for and impact of more preventative services and early intervention on the life chances of children and young people.

The Review will exclude direct government financial support for families but include other aspects of policy as it relates to family prosperity such as support for employment. The Review will not address classroom teaching and learning practice, school admissions or other school organisation issues.

The key questions the Review will address are:

What should be the role of universal services in providing access to protective and preventative support, risk assessment and referral?

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) could be used to reach out to vulnerable families. The form and the 'assessment' must be used in a 'problem solving' and empowering way. Engaging the family as part of the solution, and not seeing it as a problem. In the Stevenage Pilot Children's Trust we are using the CAF across all agencies to gather the 'bigger picture' and then emphasising the importance of the 'team around the child' (TAC), the importance of then the multi-agency commitment to the 'CAF Plan.' This is beginning to work for individuals in the Pilot Trust.

¹ HM Treasury and Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Support for Parents: the best start for children*.

How can targeted and specialist services intervene earlier to address problems before they become acute?

Services need to examine their service criteria to ensure that they dovetail into the different tiers of service or levels of need. So many times a child or young person is 'not bad enough' to receive a service from a specialist service, so we have to wait until the issue is much more problematic – then often more difficult to address.

How can the impact of intervention to prevent children, young people and families with complex needs repeatedly moving in and out of contact with targeted services be sustained?;

The introduction of the Lead Professional should enable there to be a much more coordinated approach to presenting issues. There should be opportunities for families to gradually lessen their support from agencies until they are able to cope. The CAF could be used to 'pass the baton on', up and down through the services.

How can rights and responsibilities for individuals, families and communities be integrated into services to improve the lives of children and young people?

If families and communities are more involved and planning services, they are more likely to be services that they would use. If they are seen as part of the solution instead of part of the problem, hopefully they are empowered to engage with their responsibilities to the local community.

What would be the impact of more preventative services and early intervention on the life chances of children and young people and on the value for money of public spending on children, young people and families?

Many more problems could be 'nipped in the bud'. There is an urgent need for people/professionals with 'time' to develop a relationship with a child or young person. There is still an emphasis on 'referring on'. This is often not helpful with child and young people whom have problems with social skills, expecting them to engage with numerous agencies/professionals.

Supplementary questions posed as part of the 'call for evidence':

What works in reaching out to the most vulnerable families to ensure they are able to take full advantage of service provision, especially in the early years?

Families having a support network in times of need. This will set them up for life, rather than having to rely on statutory services.

What evidence is there of major barriers to developing a preventative system? Are there examples where you have overcome these barriers?

Schools need support in dealing with vulnerable and difficult children. We need to be able to listen to our partners in other children's services to take on their advice and try their ideas. A whole school approach is just that, but how feasible is it? If there is a plan for a child, everyone has to follow it. There is evidence from the CAF's that this is not being done, young people are then set up to fail. Hopefully the Lead Professional's role will be given enough 'clout' to overcome this.

What evidence is available on how funding can be freed up at the acute end of provision to spend on preventative services?

If we can support schools not to exclude children, this would be productive in dealing with a whole range of other issues. A pattern of a child entering the care system often begins with school exclusion.

How can we build the capacity of parents, families and communities to shape the design and delivery of services for children and young people?

Local reference groups of parents and children need to be set up in each district to support the local children's partnerships. This work is now beginning in Stevenage.

Some specific examples of preventive work being carried out in the Stevenage Pilot Children's Trust are as follows:

Drop in Clinics in Primary Schools – staffed by school nurses and health visitors. These clinics are run on a fortnightly basis before school so that parents can drop their child off and come and get advice from a health professional. As well as advising on health, she can direct parents/carers to other services as appropriate. This has been shown to be a preventative service in allaying parents concerns about illnesses/injuries, has probably prevented inappropriate attendance at A & E departments and school absence.

TicTacTas School-based Information and Advice Service – open twice a week and staffed by professionals from Health, Connexions, CSF and the voluntary services. Young people at the Thomas Alleyne School can attend at lunch time for information on health, careers, advice and support. It is hoped to expand this service to run one afternoon after school, and to have it open to the community. It is also hoped that we can issue contraceptives in the evening clinic, after we have undertaken the necessary consultation. Hopefully this encourages young people to deal with their issues at an early stage.

Speech and Language Therapy Service in Schools – an alternative to attending at the clinic in town. SALT services are offered on school site. Attendance is, as envisaged, vastly improved. Schools/teaching assistants are

offered training, which is often beneficial to all children, not only those with speech/language problems. Support around communication is tremendously supportive to children's emotional and mental health, and can prevent behaviour problems.

Information Sharing Meetings and Common Assessment Framework – Multi-agency meetings to discuss problems at an early stage, to prevent exacerbation. In time these will become CAF meetings. Results are positive.

Further examples of preventive work being carried out elsewhere in Hertfordshire are:

Hertfordshire Children's Fund "Aiming High" Project

"Aiming High" is a community mentoring project supporting underachieving Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) pupils in years 3, 4 and 5 of primary schools and more recently the transition period from primary year 6 to secondary school.

Barrier – perception of parents who were potentially isolated, or not conversant with school systems, initially reluctant to access services that they felt would not best meet their children's needs.

The support received from the Aiming High mentors meant that the gap between school and home was bridged at difficult times by a 'neutral' worker. Parents developed trust in the process and saw improved outcomes for their children. This enabled them to consider accepting wider preventative or specialist support for their children over and above the mentoring support (i.e. referrals into other services where appropriate).

The independent external evaluation of HCF services concluded that the parents interviewed "were more likely to seek any further advice that was needed....In all three of the case studies (including Aiming High) this can be seen as a fundamental shift in parents perception of support, as all had a somewhat negative view of support prior to accessing HCF services."

Hertfordshire Children's Fund Model of Participation

Effective participation of children and young people has been considered and incorporated at every level within the HCF Programme.

Children's Fund Partnership was the first Partnership in the County to establish and support the involvement of children and young people on the Partnership board. They have influenced the strategic priorities identified (e.g. to raise the profile of the need to address bullying), and taken specific responsibility in making funding decisions (e.g. within the Children's Healthy Living RUFit4it? initiative).

Involvement of children, young people, parents, families and communities in all aspects of service development from conception, planning, delivery and

evaluation is essential in developing their participation. Hertfordshire Children's Fund has built a requirement to establish appropriate mechanisms for participation within the commissioning process, and monitor all services on how effectively they have achieved this (including attendance of parents/carers/users at monitoring meetings). Some HCF services invite parents to open and decision making meetings and conduct consultation exercises with parents to seek their views before major service decisions are taken.

This approach is underpinned by training and support to service providers to build capacity in this area e.g. development of a CD ROM as a tool to consult children and young people; training on consultation methods for disabled children. The Children's Fund also established a Participation network to support providers to develop and share best practice.

The independent external evaluation noted that 'this capacity built in services to consult and involve users in all aspects of service development has led to an increase in the feed back received about the services and this has had a direct impact on the design, delivery and development of services.'

HCF has also developed 513, a countywide children and young people's forum to reflect the views of service users on the services provided and the Children's Fund Programme as a whole. 513 recently planned and led an acclaimed high profile countywide conference that promoted the Participation of children and young people aged 5 to 13.

Hertfordshire Sure Start "Positive Beginnings" Project

Hertfordshire did not attract central government funding for a full scale Sure Start Local Programme as it did not meet the deprivation criteria. We developed our local solution on limited HCC funding in some of the most deprived areas of the County called "Positive Beginnings". The projects were small scale and featured drop in sessions that involved health professionals including health visitors, speech and language therapists and play workers. The first part of an evaluation study has recently been completed by Hertfordshire University on two of the projects in Waltham Cross and Central Watford. The key findings included:

- Parents valued the opportunity to seek professional health advice at drop in sessions and prefer on the spot advice rather than attending health clinics or surgeries.
- Cuts down on waiting lists for referrals and reduces unnecessary referrals
- The wide range of structured activities contributes to children's social emotional and educational development
- Positive parenting and positive child behaviour is constantly reinforced
- Promotes early identification of need.
- Provides good value for money

The service model could be developed with further funding particularly outreach to harder to reach families and more sessions linked to our developing Children's Centres

Ten Year Child Care Strategy

Further important areas in relation to the delivery of the 10 Year Childcare Strategy are the affordability of childcare and support to providers for enable children with complex disabilities to access childcare and the increasing entitlement to funded early years provision.

In Hertfordshire the cost of living is high so tax credits have less impact for families and providers costs are equally high particularly staff costs. HCC supports providers with a robust recruitment strategy and good business support. Supply side funding seems to be the only solution that will have a significant impact. Many of the most disadvantaged families still find non funded childcare beyond their reach. Quality is important to outcomes and comes at a price. We have limited Community Childcare scheme funded from GSSC for the most at risk children but would like to do more as an early intervention preventative measure.

Childcare providers in Hertfordshire are getting the message about inclusion and there is some excellent practice in relation to children with disabilities. We are developing schemes to support inclusion (Inclusion Officers to champion and model good practice and training) but the costs for providers are higher for children with the most complex needs. We welcome the raised expectations in the Childcare Act in relation to children with disabilities but it will require additional resource to providers to implement fully.

Extended Schools programme

Informal unsolicited feedback from FLLN, short courses such as, Keeping up with your Children, and Wider Family Learning programmes demonstrates that:

- parent/carers value the opportunity to share the learning experience, have fun together with the shared learning providing a focus for conversation
- increase in parent/carer confidence to support the child's learning
- parent/ carers more willing to approach schools

In context where LSC funding is becoming focussed on longer courses and Level 2 accreditation, funding for short courses and wider family learning is likely to be at risk.

Feedback from schools and parents demonstrates that support from counselling in schools service can have a significant difference to the child's behaviour in school and at home.

The need to attract and secure funding, and breakdown the funding barriers, to meet the needs of 14-25 year olds, where specialist programmes are required to develop skills, employment prospects and social skills. This is evidenced by requests from voluntary and statutory sector organisations where one off funding has allowed a specific project but this funding is short term.

Annex B3: Terms of reference for the Strategy for Youth Services

Objective:

To review the current provision of youth services and support for young people with a view to identifying longer term policy directions that will bring about improvements in the life chances of young people.

The scope of the review will cover:

the services / support provided for young people in the following areas:

- positive activities to engage young people and also places for young people to go;
- opportunities for active citizenship such as mentoring or volunteering;
- young people's access to youth activities and places, for example their location and consideration of transport needs;
- the current role and practice of the youth worker and the support and advice they provide as an integral part of youth activities.

The review will examine existing provision, the impact of different services and support on outcomes for young people and how outcomes could be further enhanced. The review will also consider the role and opportunities for children and young people's participation in the design of services and decision-making.

What is the current distribution of youth services and youth engagement activities available across the country? How is that likely to evolve following the Youth Green Paper?

Throughout the last 20 years national Govt approach to the development of youth services has been to allow them to develop flexibly according to local needs. Theoretically services can be responsive to local need; in practice it has meant that no clear policy about what youth services should look like has ever emerged.

One consequence of this is that services vary dramatically across the country and it would be very difficult to create a 'blueprint' that effectively describes the distribution. They are affected by the amount of money LA's put into the budget, by the emphasis authorities place on the educational aspects and by the focus on local voluntary sector inputs amongst other things.

Youth services are located under different portfolios and this too affects how they operate. There is no reasonable comparison of like for like possible. Even the most recent guidance from national Govt has an impact. Youth service targets are perverse in that they ask services to increase the number of young people

they work with and at the same time require more intensive work that leads to measurable outcomes. The targets ask for two different approaches to youth work, requiring different levels of resource. Many authorities can only achieve one set of targets at the expense of the others.

Having said all that, the NYA does attempt to provide an audit of services each year so actual budget figures and numbers can be accessed from them, though even that should carry a caveat in that each LA has its own way of presenting the figures to the NYA

Youth Matters will have an impact on all of this; clearly youth work will continue to evolve but without some clearer guidance and recognition of what it is, there will still be wide differences across the country. Youth Services as an identifiable group are likely to disappear as youth work is incorporated into more integrated support. However, depending on interpretation of Youth Matters, some authorities might use their youth services simply for the 'places to go and things to do' part of Youth Matters without paying any attention to the 'someone to talk to' element or the targeted youth support strand.

Building on the Youth Green Paper, is there more that could be done to improve and sustain the effectiveness in the delivery of existing services and activities?

If there was a better acceptance of what 'soft targets' can be achieved through youth work and clearer guidance about 'sufficiency' then youth services would be better placed to do two things:

- To act as facilitators and capacity builders in the community to help the community to take responsibility for its young people
- To use its professional staff to support integrated work with vulnerable young people and to build on their training and understanding of the work with other professionals.

It should be clear that these two strands will require different skill sets

One of the positive traits of youth work is that practitioners are flexible and creative -they tailor their work specifically to the needs of young people. This flexibility can cut across bureaucracy and this is what is needed in improving services to young people

What are the particular barriers faced by different groups of young people, including disabled young people, in accessing services, and what are the policy issues that arise?

In terms of youth work provision the barriers are the same as highlighted above. Providing specialist and focused work with different groups is not compatible with providing a universal service. One size does not fit all and youth work needs the resource to provide access to all kinds of young people. Different approaches are also required-many young people are not visible so for example the current move towards much more detached work is not going to be the answer for certain groups, such as the disabled, or lesbian and gay young people. However all

young people from whatever group need to feel safe and in a non threatening relationship with their peers and adults. Youth work has always provided this.

What is the national and international evidence on the effectiveness of different types of services and activities in terms of better life outcomes?

Empirical evidence is limited. How do you measure a negative? i.e. because of a youth work intervention this young person did not enter a life of crime. Youth work is better now at measuring outcomes with young people that are based on their own perception of their experience. So a young person might say she gained self esteem or discovered something she is good at as a result of her experience. But is this enough?

The police can show that where youth work has been developed in an area, the anti social-behaviour rate drops but conversely, where youth work provision is successful it can go up because more young people are attracted to the facility! If the facility cannot cope with the demand then problems start to occur outside and in surrounding areas.

Youth Matters focuses on early intervention and prevention but that can only work if there is a significant leap of faith from practitioners who believe that in the long term they will see a difference in the overall cost of specialist services. e.g. I believe that in Herts, if targeted youth support is fully developed and puts good resources into early intervention then the top of the triangle will start to flatten. But I believe that based on over 20 years experience of youth work and what it can do to support young people.

How can we best combine demand led provision for young people with provision that is planned and structured to have the best impact on outcomes for children and young people?

Combined demand is what youth work has always tried to deliver with its limited resources and often ends up doing neither effectively as a result. Good resources mean we can offer unstructured facilities with quality provision within which young people can engage in more focused curriculum based work leading to qualifications as well as other good outcomes. The open access is the 'hook' that attracts them, the skill of the youth worker in engaging with them and helping them to identify their own needs is what is most crucial

What more can we do to support and enable young people to exert a strong demand side influence on provision? What would we expect in return from young people – their rights and responsibilities?

Young people's involvement is the absolute cornerstone of the work. At a very local level youth project developments are strongly influenced by young people.

It is youth work that for many years has led the democracy process, developing forums, youth councils and conferences that put pressure on local politicians. Youth workers support local young people, provide lobby groups for new facilities such as skate parks or youth shelters etc and youth services support

participation structures such as the United Kingdom Youth Parliament. Whilst not perfect I think youth work has a lot to offer other services in listening to and involving young people.

Alongside this work, youth work provides young people with a non-judgemental framework in which it seeks to influence young people to consider their responsibilities within their communities. We do not allow young people to do exactly as they please, youth work sets boundaries but in a context that enables them to better understand why they need to live within those boundaries.

What principles and priorities should guide the allocation of current and future resources? And who do we need to target?

Clear expectations and a framework in which youth work operates instead of the current position will enable LA's to judge what the resource should consist of and it will then be possible to make a clearer link between resource and outcomes. A decision about whether youth work is universal or targeted or both will affect that resource and help us to decide who we target. It is possible to offer universal access with targeted work with vulnerable young people inside it providing the resource is there.

What measures and milestones need to be in place to ensure that performance can be assessed and delivery monitored at a local level.

Ofsted provides a very good framework for measurement and many youth services operate their own quality structures based on that framework. All services could be encouraged or directed to use the framework.

There are other models of good measurements around, e.g. some authorities use peer inspectors or young people inspectors. There is no need to develop a completely new way of measuring but some common agreement and practice would be beneficial

Supplementary questions

- **What are the barriers and enablers of effective Third Sector provision, including statutory commissioning capability?**

Some reluctance within the sector due to fears of becoming quasi public sector. Further reluctance exists because of the need to reach targets that may not be compatible with their own principles. In many areas the infra structure of voluntary and community sector is simply not there to enable it to take the work on.

The joy of this sector is its richness and diversity, providing for young people in so many ways resulting in more choice altogether. Do we want it to take on more and ask it to focus on those with most need when it so clearly serves a much greater group?

- **What can be done to improve the ability of universal provision to identify and provide a service to those with greater needs?**

Universal provision has to be attractive and accessible to young people. Better facilities and resources will do this. Youth services cannot compete with commercial provision on any level and really shouldn't try. It can provide the safe and cheap environment for those who can't access other provision though that by its nature means it will not be accessed by all.

- **Which projects and programmes in the last five years have had a proven and sustained impact and brought innovation to delivery of services for young people?**

I think this raises the question about when innovation stops? Certainly something begun 5 years ago would no longer be innovative. However I am sure there are many examples of innovative work, mainly because youth work seeks to create ways of meeting young people's needs at all times. Some examples in Herts might include the development of our 'virtual youth work' programme which includes chat rooms supervised by youth workers providing advice to young people. 'Rolling Zone' was innovative when we developed it, a mobile providing access to the internet via satellite, so that it can go anywhere. 'Healthy youth clubs' was something we ran for a while to encourage healthier living in our projects.

Even detached work could be regarded as innovative given there is still no other service that regularly meets young people on the streets and in their own territory. 'Box Clever' our arts programme designed to help staff facilitate drama work with young people is still quite innovative.

- **What encourages young people to try new and different kinds of activities from those they already do?**

Increased participation by young people, young people speaking out and advocating for each other, young people going on to become youth workers themselves (A lot of that). Increase in young people's self esteem and ability to fight their corner. A lot of this is largely anecdotal but the growing number of recorded outcomes will demonstrate it over time

- **What attracts people to the youth work workforce? What is less attractive about membership of this workforce?**

Youth work is seen as a way of working with young people in a less bureaucratic way, it attracts staff who like autonomy and independence. They may have experienced youth work themselves, they like the flexibility of hours, sometimes because it fits their own child care arrangements. They like young people-this cannot be said of all professionals! They get regular personal satisfaction in their work by seeing young people grow and develop.

Less attractive are the late hours, especially when increasingly, other jobs offer more day time work working in the same way. E.g. drugs and sexual health agencies. Something like 50% of people coming out of youth work training do not go into local authority youth work.

The decline in services and the uncertainty around budget reductions also plays its part coupled with relatively low pay in some cases. This is true in areas where the young people are hard to work with. In places like Herts where pay does not keep up with the cost of living there is also an issue.

Finally, the less the work is valued by anyone other than young people the more staff are likely to go into different roles- a bit like the teaching profession!