

Salford City Council Children's Services
 Response to Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 Consultation

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	Which area of the review are you responding to? (please mark X)
Prevention strand	X
Review of disabled children	X
Strategy for youth services	X
Review of high cost, high harm families	X

Summary

It is our view that greater integration of services at all levels of intervention is a key feature and strategies must support. Thus the current nationally driven changes within the NHS are not necessarily helpful to the development of supportive children's services.

Good universal services are the cornerstone of services for all children and we think policy and strategy should support services in maximising the number of children supporting in universal services. This means developing universal services in a way which allows for local prioritisation of groups likely to become excluded (eg Youth Service working with offenders, Children's Centres supporting families with children at risk of abuse).

Services should be as local as possible and with links to local communities. However, it is important for there to be clear over-arching strategies to help services set their own priorities from amongst many initiatives which, whilst having the same intentions, often give different emphasis (eg Every Child Matters, Respect).

Funding should be provided in a way which allows for long term strategic planning and moves away from initiative driven funding with often different timescales and priorities. Within this attention should be given to the need for capital investment in services for the older age range (eg Youth Centres).

Quality assurance and performance measurement should focus on ensuring good outcomes for children and young people and attention should be paid to indicators which measure process or which can have unintended (and unwanted) consequences.

Section B1 Prevention Services

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

- Knowledge of local community based services that offer ease of access.
- Knowledge of services providing services to children, young people and families.
- Ability to promote and act on, early identification of need
- Clearly understood and consistent application of CAF and it's interface with specialist assessments.
- Clearly understood and consistent application of Local Safeguarding Children's Board policies and procedures designed to protect children.
- Development and implementation of robust exit strategies that promote sustainability of improvements to outcomes.
- Establishment of good working relationships with locally based multi-disciplinary teams-referral, consultation and support.
- Knowledge of need for co-ordinated response to different levels of need.
- Consultation with and inclusion of children, young people, families and communities in service development and delivery.
- Developing skill base of workforce in relation to working with children, young people and families.

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

- Early identification and assessment of need
- Early multi-disciplinary response to meeting need
- Good co-ordination of activities to ensure needs are met
- Re-allocation of resources/increased resources to shift emphasis to prevention
- Good knowledge and skill base of workforce
- Application of effective 'tracking systems'
- Voluntary/consensual services
- Offering of choice and incentive based programmes.
- 'One stop shop' approach to accessing services.
- Continuum of provision that can be "tuned to different levels of need
- Provision of opportunities for family based learning within education settings.
- We think the child index and common assessment framework are essential tools for this.

Examples

- Establishment of locality based multi-disciplinary teams.
- Inclusion of midwifery and health visitors on Children's Centre teams

- SureStart family support services in children's centres
- Roll out of extended schools
- Consistent referral to appropriate services at early stages of concern e.g. referral to YISP in Salford helped to bring about 40% reduction in number of first time entrants to Criminal Justice System.
- Establishment of multi-disciplinary teams within education settings (BEST)
- Development and implementation of restorative justice processes within schools and communities.
- Collaborative approach to identifying and meeting needs of communities (Locality Partnership Boards, Community Committees).

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

- Accurate assessment, planning, intervention and review.
- Holistic approach to meeting needs.
- Provision of lead professional to reduce level of intrusion to family, reduce need for family to repeat their story, enable seamless access to services
- Agreed action with family
- Application of correct 'dosage' of intervention at appropriate time.
- Robust exit strategies
- Delivery of intensive services in locations such as Children's Centres with option of lower intensity support continuing
- Inclusion of families in service design and delivery
- Offering choice within menu of programmes/services, including voluntary and private sector.

Examples

- Introduction to family/community friendly methods of support (FGC)
- Provision of 'softer support' as part of exit strategy (mentoring as in YOS and various voluntary services)
- Development of community based/owned services (voluntary youth clubs)
- Local target setting that brings about a reduction of children, young people and families accessing statutory provision (child protection register, LAC, Statements of SEN, prosecutions in education court)

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

- Inclusion of children, young people and families on various community based 'boards'.
- Inclusion and participation of children, young people and families in service design and delivery.

Examples

- Children's and Young People's Partnership Board
- Youth Task Groups
- Locality Partnership Boards.

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?

- Increase in number of children and young people making sustainable progress against the ECM five outcomes=fewer high need/high cost families. Greater inclusion, less exclusion. Lower dependency on state benefits.
- Improved capacity and ability within families and communities to provide appropriate support for children and young people=improved aspirations and emotional wellbeing. Increase in numbers of children supported within own family/community or adopted. Increased ownership of rights and responsibilities. Reduction in ASB and crime.
- Less demand/need for acute services=increased financial capacity for continued development and growth of preventative services.

Barriers to developing a preventative system:

- Lack of adequate financial resources to develop/integrate services and systems.
- Balancing risk of shifting resources from acute to preventative.
- Cultural differences between professions/services.
- Limited capacity/understanding of some universal services of their role.
- Initiative driven development with different timescales and often different rules for inclusion.

Section B2 Disabled Children

The changing profile of disabled children, for example, due to increases in complex disability and rise in Autistic Spectrum Disorders, profound and multiple learning disabilities and low birth-weight babies and the challenges this poses to services.

- In Salford, in line with the national trend, there is an increase in numbers of children on the ASD continuum.
- A recent national study indicated that the commonest reported causes of disability were mental disorder, disease of the ear/mastoid processes, congenital abnormalities and diseases of the nervous system.
- Children are being identified earlier due to the availability of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO's) in early years settings.
- We do think it important that the development of services recognises that developments in medical science and technology has resulted in a significant increase in children with complex and profound disabilities surviving and needing support.

What progress has already been made in addressing the needs of disabled children and their families?

- Salford was a path finder for Early Support. The Introduction of Key workers through Early Support has enabled families to have improved access to services
- Bursary scheme and Access funds through the Sure Start General Grant have enabled more children with SEN to be supported in mainstream settings. This has enabled the Early Years setting to have the correct equipment to care for the child or promote the child's development and additional staffing has enabled the child to be included in activities with his/her peers.
- Evidence of both these areas of work can be provided through statements from parents and providers.
- Children under the age of 5 who are identified as having additional needs are referred to the Child Development Team and integrated packages of support from various health and social care colleagues are offered. This system does not appear to be as easy for older children to access.

What are the barriers currently restricting access to services and therefore effective intervention?

- Parents and local professionals report that the main barrier is the lack of an integrated disability service across PCT and LA, managed on a locality basis.

- Funding is not ring fenced and Early Support has not been given enough time to develop more robustly in order to argue for mainstreaming.

Are services sufficiently co-ordinated at local level to allow families to access sufficient support to meet their needs?

- Not yet, but there are plans in Salford to appoint a jointly funded Head of Service who will both design, shape and commission the service and manage a multi-agency integrated team.
- In early years services there is good co-ordination but the increase in identification of children with disabilities means more Key Workers are needed.

How does the system of support for disabled children and their families compare across the country and abroad? Are there lessons we can learn to improve outcomes?

No response on this section

What family support services i.e. Key workers, short breaks, sibling support, behavioural management are currently available and how do these relate to other services?

- Salford was an Early Support pilot and has adopted the key worker system as set out in that project, something which has been received enthusiastically by families. However, we are not currently able to resource it more widely.
- For children in the early years a Key Worker system, including Portage workers is offered.
- There is a wide range of services provided by statutory and voluntary organisations which currently have informal links work is underway to increase integration.
- Within the school sector an assessment facility for ASD at Springwood Primary School is being developed. It focuses on a multi disciplinary response to early years (2 -4 year olds) identification and assessment in order to intervene early.
- Salford is also looking to develop a designated primary school for children with social and communication difficulties including ASD. This specialist provision will add to the continuum of high quality specialist provision available within the City for children with SEN.
- The criteria for statutory assessment is firmly based on a graduated response to meeting SEN and focuses on what actions/interventions need to take place in order for the child to make progress. It is a provision based model and moves away from looking at deficits in a child's functioning as a basis for determining statutory assessment and the allocation of resources via a Statement.

What are the most effective interventions in delivering better outcomes?

No specific work has been undertaken in Salford on cost effectiveness.

Are there interventions which, if made earlier, could reduce more costly interventions later? How can we identify the need to intervene earlier?

- Better and earlier assessments can reduce costs. Children supported through pre-school where settings are delivering high quality integrated Education and Childcare with additional support are more likely to be able to cope with mainstream school – this is more cost effective, funding a child in special school is more expensive.
- Salford has also focussed on training as part of our SEN Inclusion Strategy to raise the capacity of our own specialist settings and mainstream settings to meet an increasingly diverse range of SEN.
- We also think early identification of and response to ASD can reduce the need for very intensive residential services as children grow older.

What lessons can we learn from the legal frameworks in other countries that might inform the review?

- Not Known.

Section B3 Strategy for Youth Services

Policy issues

One of the key policy issues that needs to be addressed in any review of the strategy for Youth Services is the issue of competing and conflicting priorities. This issue is exemplified in the tensions that exist between the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda, with its heavy emphasis on duty of care and the need to secure positive outcomes for all young people, including those within the most vulnerable groups, e.g. young offenders, and the Respect agenda, with its emphasis on punitive action and its focus on the negative aspects of some youth behaviour.

The Youth Service figures prominently within both agendas; in ECM the Youth Service is an agent that helps young people to engage in positive activities and to enjoy and achieve, while in the Respect agenda, the success of youth activities is measured in terms of how well it prevents anti social behaviour.

The newly developing emphasis on the issue of social exclusion seems, at this stage, to be focusing on negative rather than positive aspects of youth behaviour and this compounds the dilemma that is presented by conflicting emphases and priorities.

This situation creates the potential for confusion about what should be the real priority and focus for the statutory Youth Service and this confusion has not been clarified by Youth Matters which, on the one hand, propounds a vision of demand-led provision where young people will be able to choose and to purchase activities and, on the other hand, is promoting the importance of achievement and measures of achievement and is piloting integrated targeted support aimed at the most vulnerable young people. While these priorities are by no means mutually exclusive, the current situation is one of lack of clarity about where exactly the statutory Youth Service fits amongst these developing policy areas and where its own particular priorities should lie.

The lack of a clear policy steer from government on the overall priorities for the statutory Youth Service is reflected at local authority level where there are widely different expectations of what the Youth Service's role is. In some cases, pressure has been applied to develop an enforcement role for the Youth Service, with some services becoming closely involved in juvenile nuisance schemes that involve the service in working in settings where the normal youth work functions of engagement and structured discussion or activity are impossible and where the service focuses its work on short-term diversionary work which fails to address the longer term issues presented by the young people and their behaviour. In other areas the Youth Service focuses its work on more traditional, centre based

activity and engagement with schools to help increase attainment. The picture differs from one local authority area to another.

Some clarity therefore about the overall, primary, role and priorities for the statutory Youth Service and further clarification of the government's view of the function that the service should hold in relation to Respect and ECM would be welcome. This central statement of purpose could be complemented by devolving the responsibility for setting local priorities and targets that meet the prescribed purpose of the service to local partnerships, e.g. the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). This would be helpful in raising the profile of the Youth Service at LSP level and in creating an improved understanding of the various ways in which the Youth Service can contribute to local strategic priorities.

Resources

It is clear from the National Youth Agency's (NYA) annual audit of statutory Youth Services that there are very large variables in the levels of expenditure on the Youth Service between local authority areas. This is one area where government could assist to improve the range of services available to young people at no extra cost to the Treasury by becoming prescriptive on how the money allocated in the youth and community sub block of the Children's Services budget is spent. At present local authorities have discretion over the allocation of that budget area, with the result that, in some areas, significant amounts of the budget are diverted away from the Youth Service. An enforcement of the expectation that this funding will be passported to the Youth Service would be one way of extending services and would result in a significant increase in youth provision across most areas of the country very quickly. Since the DfES requires local authorities to record their youth and community budgets on the Section 52 table 1A return, a prescriptive requirement should not be hard to implement.

There is an over-reliance on short term funding; much of the innovative work done by both statutory and voluntary youth providers has been funded by short term funding streams such as NRF and NSF. The latter, for instance, has funded a number of schemes that have successfully working with very vulnerable groups of young people. The move to Local Area Agreements (LAA) will reduce the number of short term funding streams and may enable projects that have proved their worth to be mainstreamed. This is a welcome move but we will need to be vigilant to ensure that funding is not diverted away from such successful initiatives to meet other needs.

Under the new LAA arrangements much of the funding currently allocated to the Youth Service will go into the Children and Young People's Grant, though funding for work to address anti-social behaviour and drugs-related issues will go into the Safer Stronger Communities block. Since most, if not all, Youth Services deliver work that addresses anti-social behaviour and drug use, it seems reasonable to assume that some of their work will

be funded from the Safer Stronger Communities block and it would be helpful if this expectation were made explicit in any guidance relating to this funding, to ensure that the Youth Service is properly resourced to deliver this work.

The allocation of current and future resources should be guided by the over-arching priorities agreed for the Youth Service. If a view is taken that the Youth Service should deliver a universal provision then resources should be allocated per capita of the youth population; if the decision is taken that the Youth Service should be solely a targeted service, the allocation of resources could be guided by the number of young people in the target groups, with an appropriate weighting calculated to enable the service to address specific difficulties associated with the target group, e.g. issues of access.

Quality assurance

The introduction of the Joint Area Review (JAR) has dispensed with OFSTED's detailed inspections of Youth Services and, as a result, the scrutiny of the quality and effectiveness of existing services and activities appears to be becoming diluted. Under the JAR arrangements Youth Services will in future be examined only in so far as they relate to the 5 ECM outcomes. Therefore, the inspection regime will not focus on more specific issues of effectiveness and quality assurance in individual services. It would be helpful to ensure that there is an agency that has a clear remit from government to drive forward the quality of youth service provision, in the same way as the Quality Improvement Agency is charged with responsibility for leading on quality improvement in the FE sector. This is perhaps an area on which the NYA could take more of a lead.

In order to ensure that performance can be assessed and delivery monitored at local level it is necessary first of all to gain agreement about the purpose and scope of the service. Having done that, measures and milestones should be developed that relate to the agreed overall priorities of the service.

Access

The difficulties that young people face in accessing services include the following:

- Location of premises. In many areas youth centres are fairly old buildings and centres of population have shifted since they were built. This means that young people may rely on public or parental transport to access youth centres and access is limited by this reliance. The problem is particularly acute in rural areas.
- Condition of premises – many premises are no longer fit for purpose due to their age and poor state of repair. DDA funding has been made available to make buildings compliant but in a number of cases this has proved to be of limited success due to the age and original design of

the building and, in such cases, young disabled people may be unable to access the building at all.

- In some cases, existing provision - whether it be centre based, project work or detached, may become associated with a particular group of young people and this can act as an inhibiting factor that discourages a wider group of young people to get involved. The challenges here are less relevant to central government policy but have implications for local policies on ensuring equality of access and even distribution of resources.

The policy issues that arise from the above points are largely connected with policies on capital programmes. Just as there has been a LIFT programme for the Health Service, a Building Schools for the Future programme for secondary schools and a capital programme for primary schools, it would be appropriate to consider a Building Youth Centres for the Future programme to ensure that all young people have access to a newly built or refurbished, well appointed, safe, fit for purpose building that is identifiably prioritised for use by young people. To fail to do so in the face of the developments listed above that have benefited the health and education sectors sends a message that Youth Services are not considered as being as important and as deserving of capital investment as other areas of work and that it is acceptable for young people to spend their leisure time in buildings that are second rate, in poor repair and, in some cases, unfit for purpose; in short, it puts young people in the position of being second class citizens.

Demand-led provision

There is a possible tension between the drive to ensure that Youth Service provision is well structured and has a positive impact on raising the achievement and aspirations of young people (supported by the OFSTED inspection framework and the JAR methodology) and the drive to encourage young people to make demands and to direct funding to meet their perceived needs. The danger implicit in the latter trend is that young people may opt to spend the funding derived via Youth Opportunity Cards, Youth Opportunity Fund etc to purchase access to provision that is less structured and not linked to accreditation etc than is the case with youth provision delivered by the statutory sector. Anecdotally, some youth workers report that young people are not always keen to secure accreditation and some feel that the emphasis on this aspect, whilst being of particular benefit to those young people who do not achieve well in formal education settings, may act as a deterrent preventing some young people from getting involved.

In real terms effective youth work practice currently strives to maintain a balance between providing structured provision, geared towards the achievement of accreditation, and responding to demand. Quite often the youth work process is able to place the demand led activity within a context that is more structured.

However, the dilemma that exists is exemplified by the fact that the only BVPIs that relate to the Youth Service measure the number of recorded and accredited outcomes achieved by users of the service. There is no measure of participation or of satisfaction. It is a very real issue that the element of “Enjoy” in outcome 3 appears to be overlooked in the national measures of performance to which the Youth Service is subject. It would be helpful if the range of BVPIs against which the Youth Service is measured could be extended to include measures that relate to take-up and user satisfaction.

It is not enough simply to give young people spending power, as in the Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds and the Youth Opportunity Card, without setting this within a context of responsibilities. The lack of this context is one of the weaknesses in the way in which the policy of Youth Matters is being rolled out. It should also be recognised that giving young people real influence on provision might result in a dilution of other policies, as discussed above in relation to accreditation. In order to exert a strong and positive influence on provision young people need to be adequately prepared for entering into the decision making process. This entails providing training to ensure that young people can act responsibly in relation to issues such as:

- Ensuring that provision is accessible to all appropriate groups and is not discriminatory
- Ensuring that provision is safe and compliant with national legislation and standards
- Ensuring that provision meets criteria previously agreed
- Ensuring that there is a clear audit trail, both in terms of the decision making process and in terms of financial management.

Who should we target?

- The statutory Youth Service should be a universal provision that enables all young people everywhere to enjoy and achieve in an informal setting. To this end funding should be available to support youth work with young people in institutional settings e.g. prisons.
- Local authorities and their partners should be able to commission providers to deliver targeted work to groups identified as being a local priority.
- The range of possible providers would include the statutory Youth Service as well as agencies in the voluntary sector.
- Funding for these activities should be arrived at via a basic per capita allocation for the universal element of the provision plus a further allocation taken from the Children and Young People Grant and the Safer Stronger Communities Grant to support any targeted work.

Section B4 High Cost, High Harm Families

Who are these families? How can we define them and how many of them are there?

- Families living with multiple and inter-generational problems – housing, drugs, alcohol, mental health, culture of avoidance of help, isolation?
- Many of the families in the high cost high harm category come into contact with a range of agencies including criminal justice, social care and housing frequently on an inter generation basis. The focus on anti social behaviour has also widened the numbers likely to come into contact with these agencies.
- Lack of social support and loneliness amongst carers are key factors in neglectful families, particularly where there are also poor social skills and parental history of neglect (Guardin, Polansky, Kilpatrick and Shilton 1993)
- The role of parental mental health and substance misuse have been identified as significant in the neglect of children, and this exacerbates the likelihood that carers will not access the community support that may be available to them (Tunnard 2002).
- Distortions and limits in the mental processing of information, most frequently displayed as poor interpersonal relationships, often endure across generations (in spite of improved economic success), and accounts for many of the consequences of child neglect. This has enormous implications for the way in which interventions need to be shaped to be most effective (Crittendon 1985).
- There has been little research on the connection between neglect and delinquency, but neglect has been shown to be a predictor of delinquency in association with poverty and lack of social support (Starr et al., 1991).
- Neglected children are likely to require ongoing support throughout childhood and into adolescence.
- The numbers falling into this category in a particular area will to a large extent be determined by levels of poverty and social deprivation in the area.

What progress has already been made in addressing the needs of high cost, high harm families?

- In the field of Youth Justice the initial focus of government on the problem of anti social behaviour, emphasised the need for enforcement and punishment, and minimised the need for positive interventions and support. There has been some rebalancing of this approach with some time-limited increases in funding to offer support and interventions. However one of the presumably unintended consequences of this approach was to increase significantly the number of young people in custody despite the fact that youth crime has continued to fall. The proposition that custody should only be used for the most serious and dangerous offenders was distorted by the need to be seen to be

cracking down hard on anti social behaviour. The outcomes for young people who receive a custodial sentence continue to be very poor, so the unnecessary, incarceration of young people is an expensive way of making a difficult situation worse.

- The emphasis from the centre on the need for early intervention and the increase in resources to do this has been welcome. However because of the way in which the funding is distributed there is a sense that the services are not provided in a co-ordinated way with shared objectives and agreement as to how the objectives should be achieved.
- Within the category of high cost, high harm families there is a cluster of very difficult to engage families where the potential for changing the behaviour and the family dynamic is very limited. It has to be acknowledged that these families present significant challenges.
- A child's basic needs may not be met in a range of ways, and there may be multiple pathways that lead to this. The importance of accurate assessment of risk and resilience, and evaluation of evidence is therefore crucial in ensuring effective interventions. The interventions should be directed across the range of influencing factors (individual, family, community /social context), as required. The goal of helping carers within their community to meet the needs of their child requires a mix of models, length and intensity and targeted resources.

Can we better align local services to improve identification of these families earlier on and before they become high cost high harm?

- Locally we can align services better and work with the PCT and our own re-organisation indicates that we are prepared to do this, but we mustn't underestimate the complexity of the task. There is an acceptance that we need to identify and offer support at as early a stage as possible but again there is an issue as the extent to which families will engage on a voluntary basis.
- Community involvement (including resources and role models) is particularly important because it may enhance the sustainability of prevention programmes if the community views the programmes as worthwhile and develops a sense of ownership and responsibility (Dubowitz 1999).
- Family Support Services must work in partnership with parents and carers to enable them to care for their children and to maximise their children's potential
- Effective family support is likely to be delivered by pooled funding between organisations
- Families who are supported and/or have access to support are in a better position to cope with the stressful situations that all families face from time to time

Are current incentives and levers adequate to deliver co-ordinated responses for families across relevant services such as health, education, housing, social services and the police at local level?

- Even where there are good examples of partnership working with shared goals and agreement about desired outcomes, there are often tensions between agencies about how these are achieved. In the case of young people there is often disagreement between agencies about what is harmful to the community, and what is normal adolescent risk taking behaviour, which is part of the maturing process.
- There is also often an intolerance of parents who agencies are seeking to support.

What interventions here and abroad have been shown to work in reducing the harm caused by these families and supporting them to exit the cycle of low achievement?

- The Dundee project would seem to be a good example of an effective intervention, and there has to be confidence that the right families with the potential for change are being targeted.

What is the appropriate balance between support and sanctions for these families?

- This is a complex issue which requires skilled judgments at a local level