

PSA Delivery Agreement 14: Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success

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VISION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Government's aim is to make this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. Every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, should have the support they need to:

- be healthy;
- stay safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution; and
- achieve economic wellbeing.¹

1.2 As set out in the *Children's Plan*², in working towards this aim the Government is guided by five principles:

- government does not bring up children – parents do – so government needs to do more to back parents and families;
- all children have the potential to succeed and should go as far as their talents can take them;
- children and young people need to enjoy their childhood as well as grow up prepared for adult life;
- services need to be shaped by and responsive to children, young people and families, not designed around professional boundaries; and
- it is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later.

1.3 This document sets out the delivery strategy for increasing the number of children and young people on the path to success. Most young people are already on that path. They do well at school make a successful transition to adult life and go on to build successful careers and families. However, not all young people are on this path and many experience problems in their teenage years such as falling behind at school or getting involved with drugs, criminal and other unacceptable behaviour. Sometimes these problems are only temporary setbacks, which are rapidly overcome, but for some young people, problems can prove more severe and entrenched. This can have serious consequences for their health, wellbeing and development. It can also impose significant burdens and costs on society and their families.

1.4 Recognising that all of society has a common interest in helping young people make a successful transition to adult life, the Government has already worked with its partners to introduce wide-ranging reforms. Within the wider context provided by Every Child Matters and the *Children's Plan*, key changes include reforms to the curriculum to engage young people in learning for longer, and action to improve the availability and quality of positive activities. In addition, a number of initiatives have targeted specific problems that can arise in the teenage years, including teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and youth crime. There is also an

¹ *Every Child Matters*, DFES, 2003.

² *The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures*, TSO, 2007

emphasis on the provision of support for families as well as individuals; this is a consideration for the providers of both adult and youth services.

1.5 The establishment of the Department for Children, Schools and Families has secured better coherence and integration of the policies and delivery responsibilities for improving outcomes for young people. The ambitious goals set out in the *Children's Plan* set a further premium on government working closely with its partners to accelerate progress. A key objective of this delivery agreement is to ensure that action for teenagers across all government departments and local services achieves more than the sum of its parts; the agreement also recognises the strong links to a number of the Government's other Public Service Agreements (PSAs).

1.6 Delivery will also mean making best use of the new performance framework set out in *Strong and Prosperous Communities: the Local Government White Paper* to ensure Government Offices, local authorities and partners have the flexibility, capacity and incentives to deliver the best solutions for local areas. Local Strategic Partnerships will play a key role in delivering joined up local services through Local Area Agreements.

IMPROVED OUTCOMES

1.7 This delivery agreement provides the basis for realising the Government's vision for young people, that they should have access to the right opportunities and support so that they:

- succeed in education and learning;
- develop resilience and wider social and emotional skills;
- can make a real contribution to their communities and wider society;
- are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy; and
- grow up in a safe and supportive environment.

1.8 The agreement sets out the measurable indicators that will be used to assess progress in increasing the number of young people on the path to success. It commits government to reducing the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) increasing participation in positive activities, reducing substance misuse by young people, reducing the under-18 conception rate and reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time. The five indicators are outlined in chapter 2 and the specific policy commitments and their implementation milestones for improving the outcomes are set out in Annex B. To make the progress needed, it will be essential that providers of services for young people work closely together. This is because we know that the areas on which this delivery agreement focuses are closely related. For example young people who participate in positive activities and / or are in employment, education or training, are less likely to experience serious problems and engage in risky behaviour. Conversely, young people who experience one negative outcome (such as teenage pregnancy, drug or alcohol problems and involvement in crime) are at risk of experiencing others. It is this context that provides the unique opportunities and challenges for this PSA.

Key Priorities

1.9 The delivery agreement also identifies eight key priorities, each of which will improve performance in all five of the above indicators as they are addressed. The aim of these key priorities is to change the underpinning systems and ways of working in

order to improve outcomes for young people as measured by the five indicators. The approach for this PSA depends on effective action regarding the key priorities as well as the implementation of specific delivery plans for each of the five indicators. Following publication of the *Children's Plan*, delivery planning is well underway for both the key priorities and the specific policy commitments linked to the indicators. Significant progress has been made through publication of Government's new ten year drug strategy, *Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities*, in February 2008 (which has children, young people and families as a priority), the *Youth Taskforce Action Plan* and the Implementation Plan for *Aiming High* (both published in March 2008), the forthcoming *Youth Alcohol* and *Youth Crime Action Plans* (due for publication in spring and summer 2008 respectively), the green paper covering improving continuity of care and the resettlement of young offenders (due for publication in summer 2008) and the review of sex and relationships education (SRE) which is due to report in July 2008.

2.1 The PSA measures progress in increasing successful transitions to adulthood in terms of increased participation and resilience, and tackling negative outcomes. These two sets of indicators are mutually reinforcing and complementary, and it is particularly important that strategic and delivery partners work together to improve the experiences of young people. The indicators measure improvement in five areas set out below.¹ More detail is set out in the Measurement Annex (Annex A) and the Delivery Annex (Annex B).

Increased participation and resilience

Indicator 1: Reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- Being in education, employment or training at this age increases a young person's resilience and is essential to their future employability and economic wellbeing. The *NEET strategy*² published in November 2007 set out the Department's plans for reducing the proportion of young people NEET, and the contribution that local authorities (including Children's Trusts and 14-19 Partnerships), schools, colleges, the Learning and Skills Council and others are expected to make. This indicator shows how well local services – both universal and targeted – are working together to meet the needs of all young people. This indicator has a national target for 2010 – see Annex A for details.

Indicator 2: More Participation in Positive Activities

- Participating in high quality structured activities is a key element in improving the prospects of all young people, especially those from communities with a poor history of engagement and the 25 per cent of young people who do not currently engage in any positive activities outside learning. Through participation, young people develop socially and emotionally, building communication skills and improving self confidence and esteem. This in turn increases their resilience, helping them avoid risks such as experimenting with drugs, having unprotected sex, or being involved in crime, as well as contributing to better attendance and higher attainment at school. Positive activities also have an important role in building community cohesion, particularly in bridging the gaps between young people from different backgrounds and faith groups, as well as improving relationships across different generations. In addition, the extended schools initiative will see all schools offering children and young people access to a varied menu of activities from 8am to 6pm and more flexibility during the holidays, by 2010. This will give children and young people opportunities to participate in diversionary activities which are both developmental and fun. This indicator has no national target within the spending review period,

¹ These indicators are complemented by a range of other indicators within the local government National Indicator Set (e.g. persistent absence), and those underpinning some of the Government's other PSAs – most notably PSA (10) to Raise educational achievement; PSA (11) to Narrow the gap in educational achievement; and PSA (23) to Make communities safer.

² The NEET Strategy was published in November 2007. It is a web-based document and can be found on the DCSF website, within the 14-19 section.

although the *Children's Plan* established a new goal that by 2020 all young people will be participating in positive activities.

Tackling negative outcomes

Indicator 3: Reduce the proportion of young people frequently using illicit drugs, alcohol or volatile substances

- Drug and alcohol misuse amongst young people is linked with crime, disorder, truancy, school failure, physical and mental health problems and other poor outcomes, in addition to the risk of becoming a problem drug user in the future. This indicator supports, and is linked closely to, wider government priority outcomes on reducing the harm from drugs and alcohol, safer communities, cutting crime, narrowing the attainment gap, community cohesion, and improving children's health. The recently published drug strategy, *Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities* (February 2008) and the forthcoming Youth Alcohol Action Plan address these issues by outlining the key actions that areas need to take to have a long term impact on the misuse of substances by young people. No national target has yet been set for this reduction but one will be agreed once baseline data is available in late 2008.

Indicator 4: Reduce the under-18 conception rate

- Early pregnancy can have a huge impact on prospects for both mother and baby. There is significant variation across the country in the rate of under-18 conception and, despite overall national progress in many local areas, it is still high. Local authorities and their partners, such as health services and the third sector, must work together to ensure that young people can access high quality services – including sexual and reproductive health – and make positive choices. Where this happens already, rates are declining. Improving outcomes for teenage parents and their children is also part of the long-term effort to reduce future teenage pregnancies, narrow inequalities and tackle child poverty. This indicator has a national target for 2010 – see Annex A for details.

Indicator 5: Reduce the number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17

- Offending is linked to truancy, low attainment, mental health problems, employability and substance misuse. This indicator focuses efforts on preventing young people from starting to commit crime or anti-social behaviour in the first place. Prioritising the issue is consistent with the broader approach to prevention and early intervention set out in this delivery agreement and in the *Children's Plan*. No national target has yet been set for this indicator for the current spending review period, but the *Children's Plan* made a commitment to significant reductions by 2020 in the number of young people receiving for the first time a conviction, reprimand or final warning for a recordable offence, and indicated that a specific goal would be established through the Youth Crime Action Plan due to be published in summer 2008.

INTRODUCTION

3.1 Success in achieving the goals of this PSA will be strongly dependent on close collaboration between a range of local agencies including health services and the criminal justice system to deliver the model of integrated youth support services as set out in the Government's *Youth Matters* Green Paper.¹ Schools, colleges, and other learning providers are the key universal service and need to sit at the centre of an effective preventative system, with other services for young people providing effective and timely support. This preventative system is dependent on the early identification and intervention for young people who need additional help; in order for this approach to become a reality, all local authorities are expected to have reformed integrated targeted youth support services in place by December 2008. This ambition is at the heart of the action to deliver the PSAs concerned with children and young people.²

3.2 Implementing the *Children's Plan* commitments and improving the prospects for young people, particularly those most at risk, depends on a wide range of public services giving high priority to their needs and to the aims of this PSA. Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are a key lever in engaging all these providers of services to young people because they will become the key delivery contract between central and local government and its partners. LAAs are also the vehicle through which the devolved responsibility for the provision of children's services to local authorities (via Children's Trusts) will be agreed.

3.3 This section of the delivery agreement describes how Government will work with its partners to take eight priority actions that will improve outcomes for young people in all the areas measured by the five indicators. The priority actions are:

1. integrating and simplifying governance, accountability and performance management for the PSA at every level – central, regional and local;
2. tackling problems associated with individual service thresholds by, where appropriate, re-allocating available resources across service boundaries and pooling budgets which target similar groups of young people;
3. incentivising effective programmes and interventions – including those in the third sector – where there is strong evidence of impact, and supporting commissioners and the frontline to apply them more widely;
4. ensuring there is a strategy in place to invest in the development of the workforce to support young people and to deliver the ambitions of this PSA;
5. embedding and building on strategies to empower and secure the active participation of young people and their families in the commissioning, design and delivery of services – actively seeking the engagement of all groups, including the most vulnerable;

¹ *Youth Matters*, DfES, July 2005.

² This includes the Government's PSA (9) to Halve the number of children in poverty by 2010-11, on the way to eradicating child poverty by 2020; PSA (10) to Raise educational achievement; PSA (11) to Narrow the gap in educational achievement; PSA (12) to Improve the wellbeing and health of children and young people; and PSA (13) to Improve children and young people's safety.

6. ensuring that the role of schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and youth support services in delivering this PSA is widely understood and acted upon;
7. ensuring that the contribution that other key public services should make to this PSA is widely understood and acted upon; and
8. ensuring there are robust systems in place for the identification of, and interventions for, young people who do not attend school.

PRIORITY ACTION 1: GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

3.4 Extensive consultation, especially with those at the front line, has shown that there are artificial barriers created by governance structures and by programmes, often originating from different government departments, which are focused on individual risk factors and problems. These can prevent young people who need help from receiving an integrated service.

3.5 More coherent working is needed between central government departments and more integration across central, regional and local government, and in the third sector, at both a strategic level and in the delivery of local services. In order to do this, the Government will work with partners to:

- clarify accountabilities for young people's outcomes across departments;
- signal clear priorities for each organisation in the delivery system;
- build an effective performance management system which drives delivery throughout the chain;
- reduce barriers to sharing resources both centrally and locally; and
- establish an effective feedback loop where frontline and user feedback is integrated in decision making at all levels.

What this means for government departments

Accountability across central government

3.6 The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families is the lead Minister for this PSA. The Cabinet Sub-Committee on families, children and young people will drive performance across the relevant PSAs, supported by a PSA Officials Group chaired by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Permanent Secretary. There are also groups at ministerial level to support the work, especially where there are dual-accountability arrangements in place.

3.7 A PSA Board is chaired by the Director General for Young People (DCSF) and includes senior officials from across government; this Board is responsible for ensuring progress against the delivery of the PSA. It is supported by the new Youth Inclusion Unit which, whilst being based in the DCSF, works with officials from different departments to drive progress on the PSA and to undertake projects on specific issues where additional focus is required. Where issues cut across the remit of different departments, the Youth Inclusion Unit will work with the relevant departments to ensure that action is taken in a joined-up manner.

3.8 Cross-cutting work on youth justice has been brought together with the creation of the DCSF/MoJ-led Joint Youth Justice Unit which has provided a unique opportunity to join up policy development and delivery on youth justice. The unit has two main aims: to contribute to the protection of the public by developing policy and law in relation to children and young people who offend and are at risk of offending; and to ensure that children and young people in contact with the criminal justice system achieve all five outcomes of Every Child Matters. The Joint Youth Justice Unit also sponsors the Youth Justice Board and oversees early intervention and prevention programmes delivered via the Youth Justice Board through Youth Offending Teams. It also has responsibility for policy in relation to children and young people in the out-of-court system, those on community sentences and in custody and oversees policy on resettlement and reducing youth re-offending as well as being responsible for the education of young offenders in custody. The Joint Youth Justice Unit works closely with the Home Office, which leads on the co-ordination of youth crime policy across government and with DCSF on youth crime prevention. The Unit will make a key contribution to the Government's Youth Crime Action Plan (as outlined in the *Children's Plan*) which will be published in summer 2008.

What this means for Local Authorities and local partners

The role of Children's Trusts

3.9 Whilst effective monitoring in central government is important, it is at the local level that a real difference will be made. At local level, the key leadership role and responsibility for delivery of improvements in services in order to meet the aims of the PSA rests with the Children's Trust. The *Children's Plan* emphasised this role, setting out the decisive responsibility Children's Trusts have in driving improved identification and early intervention for children and young people who need additional help. The Children's Trust is a partnership within the wider Local Strategic Partnership. It is led by the local authority in partnership with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), the Strategic Health Authority, the Youth Offending Teams, the Learning and Skills Council, the police authority and other partners determined locally. Those partners should include third sector organisations, schools and colleges and other agencies with responsibility for delivering front-line statutory services to children and young people. Government Offices (GOs) and new Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) will also have an important role to play at regional level.

3.10 The importance of local responsibility for delivering and improving services is emphasised in the recently published DCSF White Paper *Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver* which proposes to make local authorities responsible for funding and commissioning all 16-18 provision. It is in line with their responsibility for commissioning services for children and young people, and enables them to take decisions locally about how services can best be delivered for young people.

3.11 To help support the work of local agencies, the Government has also established a new Youth Task Force. It published an action plan in March 2008 setting out how it will improve delivery on young people's issues (consistent with local priorities), working with local areas and regional partners to provide support and build improvement capacity.

3.12 Acting within the new local performance framework the Youth Taskforce will provide co-ordinated proportionate and risk-based support to local authorities and other local partners to deliver better outcomes for the most deprived young people, some of whom may also be among the most challenging. This will include working

closely with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships and other local government improvement bodies, as well as doing more to bring together the work of field forces on these issues at a local level. In particular, it will support the *Aiming High* strategy and the Government's goals for the delivery of Targeted Youth Support services, as well as taking forward the local response to anti-social behaviour and its causes (as outlined in the *Children's Plan*), building on the work of the Respect Taskforce. As part of the local performance framework it will be important for Government Offices and the Youth Taskforce to work with local leaders and partnerships as well as with the front line, to reflect the increasing responsibility that local areas will have for their performance.

Co-ordinated performance management

3.13 The delivery of this PSA at the local level will be managed through the local performance framework, i.e. through Local Area Agreements (LAAs), inspectorates' Comprehensive Area Assessment, and arrangements for supporting improvement and responding to poor performance as set out in the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy. Through the LAA process, central government and local partners will agree and manage a limited number of jointly agreed improvement targets for each area. The reconfiguration of youth services is a priority and the negotiation of LAAs is an important lever to ensure that it is given an appropriate focus in areas where it is a priority for improvement. Priorities will also be set out in each area's Children and Young People's Plan. Many Children and Young People's Plans are currently weak in the way that they address youth issues, and reshaping them effectively will be an important step in delivering this PSA. Input for these local priorities and standards will come from a range of national, local and regional bodies but also, importantly, from young people themselves.

3.14 NHS priorities will be managed through the NHS Operating Framework and planning guidance Operational Plans 2008/09 to 2010/11. Central to this is the 'vital signs' indicator set, which will be used to underpin PCT plans, measure progress against national priorities and help PCTs to set local priorities; the under-18 conception rate is included in this indicator set. Nationally, information on all of the indicators will be published each year, and PCTs will be performance managed on their under-18 conception rate where performance is weak.

3.15 Performance frameworks will also operate for other local delivery partners, such as Youth Offending Teams, and these arrangements will be aligned with the local performance management framework. The Government is committed to ensuring alignment between this framework and other arrangements, such as the Department of Health's Health and Social Care outcomes and accountability framework.

PRIORITY ACTION 2: POOLING BUDGETS TO PROMOTE INTEGRATED WORKING

3.16 Reforming performance management structures in central government and strengthening local systems of accountability will only go so far. More must be done to incentivise and enable work across traditional service boundaries. A key driver of this is funding, and barriers to sharing resources must be broken down so that young people can access better and more coordinated support. Pooling budgets should result in greater efficiencies so that local authorities and their partners can invest in more preventative programmes and therefore reach more at-risk young people.

What this means for government departments

Greater use of pooled budgets **3.17** *Youth Matters* set out the expectation that the Government would merge a range of existing funding programmes which currently focus on specific issues, to enable greater flexibility and a more holistic approach to young people's services, so that they have improved education, health and social interactions. *Aiming High* set out the Government's intention to increase the use of pooled budgets, making commitments in relation to the pooling of PCT and youth justice budgets as a first step:

- *Aiming High* set out the Government's expectation that PCTs pool their budgets for preventing poor adolescent health outcomes with local authorities. A Child Health Strategy, to be developed over the summer of 2008 will consider how the Department of Health can further support PCTs to pool their resources for promoting good adolescent health with Local Authorities; and be supported in this by their Strategic Health Authority; and
- the Government has made clear that it expects the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to pool with local youth support services, 10 per cent of funding they would expect to devote to young people's prevention initiatives. Since 10 per cent of the prevention budget in any one Youth Offending Team (YOT) is unlikely to amount to a significant enough level of investment to inspire the level of change required for true service integration, it was decided that a three year pilot will take place in which a smaller number of YOTs will pool with the local authority, their entire YJB prevention grant during 2008-11. The impact of the pooling process on outcomes for young people in those areas will be monitored, and good practice gathered to inform wider roll-out if the approach is successful.

3.18 The PSA Programme Board has a key role in identifying budgets where greater pooling of resources can maximise the impact of the Government's investment in services for young people and improve outcomes for teenagers further.

What this means for Local Authorities and their partners

3.19 The 2006 Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* set out reforms to local government funding which mean that from April 2008 many more central government grants will be paid on an un-hypothecated basis, either through Formula Grant or the new Area Based Grant. This means that, at the local level, areas will have much greater freedom to determine how best to use available resources to address their priorities. In addition, partners, including PCTs, will be encouraged to pool their funding to meet the common objectives agreed through LAAs.

The role of Youth Offending Teams **3.20** YOTs are already a good example of breaking down traditional barriers between services in order to offer a more coherent approach to dealing with the specific problems experienced by young people. They are an important partner in ensuring children and young people are on the path to success and stay on that path. Many YOTs have already established very close and effective working links with other local agencies, notably children's services and the police. All will need to do so if the goals of this delivery agreement are to be achieved.

3.21 In order to deliver this PSA, YOTs must continue to ensure they are engaging with all relevant agencies that influence the risk factors associated with social exclusion – and those that help young people increase their resilience to those risks – especially with regard to the cohort of young people at high risk of entering the criminal justice system. This multi-agency approach to youth crime prevention depends on addressing all the risk factors in this delivery agreement and contributes to meeting all of its key objectives. YOTs and their partners must build on this preventive infrastructure and maximise its potential to ensure the most socially excluded are reached. In turn, other services should ensure that they make appropriate referrals to YOTs and make the necessary contribution to service delivery to ensure better outcomes for young offenders and those at risk of offending.

What this means for local health services

3.22 PCTs that do not pool relevant budgets with their local partners will want to demonstrate that they are continuing to deliver improved health for young people, for example on substance misuse and teenage pregnancy. This message is further reinforced by the NHS Operating Framework and ‘vital signs’ framework which include progress on reducing under-18 conception rates as a national priority for local delivery by PCTs. PCTs fund sexual and reproductive health services, which provide the full range of contraception, pregnancy testing, unbiased information and advice on pregnancy options, and swift access to NHS abortion or maternity services. PCTs and local authorities should work together to identify services where improvement is an appropriate priority locally and agree plans for these services, for sign off by the Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), in the context of the Department of Health young people-friendly ‘You’re Welcome’ quality standards. The services should be located in settings which are easily accessible to the local population, including teenage parents, paying particular attention to reach young people most at risk of early pregnancy. The availability and appropriateness of mental health services for 16 and 17 year olds will be an important factor for PCTs to consider when deciding which services to prioritise for improvement, as many young people involved in substance misuse or crime have mental health issues.

3.23 To support this, the Government is introducing a statutory duty on PCTs and local authorities to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.³ This assessment will provide a key basis for agreeing the longer-term priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy. These priorities will then flow through to inform the joint objectives and targets agreed in the LAA and Children and Young People’s Plan and PCT local delivery plans.

3.24 The Department of Health, through local services commissioned by PCTs with other local partners is responsible for leading on the overall provision of drug treatment as set out in the Government’s PSA (25), *Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs*. Further improvements in the provision of treatment for under-18s misusing drugs, alcohol or volatile substances will have an additional focus from DCSF through a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse (NTA). In addition, the Government will work to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the system, both for those referred to treatment via the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and for those who self-refer, to ensure intervention is early and appropriate with priority groups such as young people and adult drug users who are

³ As set out in the Commissioning Framework for Health and Well-being.

parents. Treatment provision includes harm reduction, medical and psycho-social drug interventions.

3.25 This will be supported by the following main delivery levers:

- the effective treatment indicator underpinning the Government’s PSA (25), *Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs*, which also applies to those aged under 18;
- performance management of Local Strategic Partnerships by GOs against indicators embedded within LAAs;
- performance management of PCTs by Strategic Health Authorities against indicators in local PCT delivery plans;
- assurance of local drug partnership plans via process of annual agreements and quarterly reviews by the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse (NTA);
- the publication of monthly performance management information through the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS);
- the provision of dedicated resource via a joint Department of Health and Ministry of Justice pooled treatment budget; and,
- independent assessment and review by the Healthcare Commission, Commission for Social Care Inspection, and the Audit Commission.

PRIORITY ACTION 3: INCENTIVISING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE, AND SUPPORTING ITS DELIVERY

3.26 Prevention is clearly at the heart of any system of effective support for young people. This requires all providers working in young people’s education and support services to have a good understanding of the most effective interventions and programmes that both increase participation and lead to greater resilience. Performance against the indicators from the National Indicator Set (particularly those indicators included as designated targets in local authorities’ LAAs) will provide an incentive for developing good practice and provide a measure for the success of it.

3.27 There is much high quality work being done by professionals who interact with young people. Improving outcomes for all requires this approach to be universal, focusing on prevention, with effective early intervention when required. Where there is strong evidence of successful practice, as evidenced through Comprehensive Area Assessments, the Government will promote its use by sharing intelligence across local areas through GOs and through the joint approach to ensuring excellent performance that the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy introduces. The Youth Task Force will bring additional resources and expertise to this area. Teenage pregnancy is an example where joint working is essential. In cases where local areas have agreed actions from all key agencies, rates have declined. The key success factors in areas with declining rates have been shared within GO regions and nationally, to support all areas to perform as well as the best.

3.28 As outlined in *Aiming high for young people*, the Government believes there is a strong case for rationalisation of youth sector support arrangements to establish within the framework of the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy for local government a clear sector lead for the delivery of shared priorities which will support effective practice across public, private and third sectors. As a first step, the Government has launched a public consultation to explore how support arrangements could be better organised and delivered. Responses to the consultation will inform the Government's approach to supporting the delivery of the PSA and how new developments (including the planned Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services, the Youth Sector Development Fund and the creation of the Youth Taskforce) complement existing activity to improve the quality of young people's services.

What this means for government departments

Investing in the third sector

3.29 The Government has committed to provide further investment to support third sector organisations that have developed effective and innovative approaches to improving the outcomes of vulnerable young people. Up to £100 million will be available over the next three years through a Youth Sector Development Fund, which will support effective third sector organisations to sustain and expand their provision through a combination of grant funding and business support. From April 2008, a small number of pathfinder organisations will trial this approach.

What this means for Local Authorities

Effective local commissioning

3.30 Local authorities will play an important role in promoting the most effective practice and in challenging ineffective provision. This includes implementing more effective commissioning strategies that draw on the relative strengths of a wider range of providers from across the statutory, third and private sectors. The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy, which sets out a new joint approach to supporting excellent performances puts Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships at the heart of the arrangements for supporting local delivery and it is here that local authorities will be able to access the support they need for their commissioning role.

PRIORITY ACTION 4: DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF THE WORKFORCE

3.31 Developing effective frontline practice is dependent on the skills and confidence of the youth workforce. As integrated services develop, it is essential that they are well led and managed, have clear roles and responsibilities, incorporate a balance of skills and experience, and can attract and retain adults committed to working with young people.

3.32 In part, progress will be dependent on the ongoing reform of the children's workforce and close cooperation among the sector skills councils that support the different occupational groups within the youth workforce. But *Aiming high for young people* also set out key strategic actions to support and develop the workforce at all levels, including:

- a new leadership and management initiative to support the development of skills, knowledge and behaviour for leaders and managers across all those

working with young people, particularly those leading the integration of youth support services;

- testing ways of attracting more people into the workforce who can provide young people with good role models and who can inspire them to have high aspirations. This will include a new post-graduate recruitment programme and developing existing youth apprenticeships and undergraduate courses;
- exploration of ways to support the training needs of volunteers and paid staff working in the third sector; and
- the introduction of a common platform of skills and training for those across all sectors who work with young people – including developing new qualifications as appropriate for support staff – ensuring that every member of the workforce has a strong understanding of young people’s development, including issues affecting their health.

3.33 The actions above will be taken within the wider framework of the Workforce Action Plan promised in the *Children’s Plan*.

What this means for Local Authorities and their partners

3.34 These proposals will provide significant support to local authorities and third sector providers in raising the overall quality both of the leadership of integrated youth support services and of frontline practice.

What this means for government departments

3.35 As outlined in the *Children’s Plan*, the Government will work with sector skills councils (SSCs) and national representative bodies in ensuring that the new investment is targeted at the areas where significant change is needed and in further developing a clear strategic direction for the workforce. The management and delivery of the programme of reform is being taken forward on behalf of the Government by the Children’s Workforce Network (CWN) and the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC). A programme board will oversee delivery, involving all relevant SSCs and other relevant organisations from the statutory and the third sectors.

PRIORITY ACTION 5: SUPPORTING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE COMMISSIONING, DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES

3.36 Evidence, including the impact of the Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds, shows that young people are more likely to engage in activities and services when they are actively involved in their design and delivery. They also gain new skills from being involved and can forge new relationships with others from different backgrounds.

3.37 Young people need to be empowered and supported to get involved and make choices - and these need to be informed by dialogue, useful and accessible information, recognition and structured support. Methods will vary, but successful engagement of young people and other stakeholders will assist frontline professionals to deliver flexible, responsive and improved services that meet young people’s needs and expectations, to inform local, regional and central decisions.

What this means for government departments

Ensuring the voices of under-represented groups are heard

3.38 Aiming high for young people set out the Government's intention to embed and build upon existing arrangements which involve young people in the design and delivery of local services. Across all local authorities particular emphasis should be given to ensure disadvantaged young people and those who are marginalised from, or under represented by, services are supported to get involved. This includes young people from different ethnic minority and faith backgrounds who may face cultural barriers to engagement. Positive activities have an important role in building community cohesion, particularly in bridging the gaps between young people from different socio-economic groups, backgrounds and faith groups, as well as improving relationships across different generations; and community empowerment (feeling able to influence local decisions) is an important predictor of cohesion in adults. Increasing the involvement of all young people in the design and delivery of local services should contribute directly to reducing the numbers who do not participate in positive activities.

3.39 Further investment has been made available over the spending review period to support this priority, including the continuation of, and additional investment in, the Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds and further investment in third sector providers who can support more marginalised young people to become involved. The Government has also set out an expectation that local authorities will devolve spending decisions to young people, for an increasing proportion of mainstream positive activities funding.

What this means for Local Authorities and local partners

3.40 Every local authority should have systems that enable the views of young people, their families and carers to shape local services at every level – in the strategic planning, commissioning and decommissioning of services, as well as in the design and delivery of particular services, and in the one-to-one support they receive.

3.41 One size does not fit all, and flexibility at the local level is essential to ensure that provision meets local needs. The Government expects local authorities working with all local partners through Children's Trusts and local strategic partnerships to agree and coordinate, through Children and Young People's Plans, a coherent range of services which are driven by the needs of users, including young people, their families, schools and colleges, and the community.

3.42 Across all local authorities particular emphasis should be given to disadvantaged young people and those who do not currently access services. Some examples of engagement include, but are not limited to:

- mapping young people's experience of the services they access, and having a constructive dialogue about what is important to them, what is currently working and not working, and how services can be improved;
- taking a specific service and engaging front line staff, young people and parents to define together what makes a 'good service'. This can be used to establish expectations, evaluate current services, and develop and deliver an action plan to improve the service based on the gaps identified;

- expanding existing arrangements that give young people power over the way some funds for them are spent, and the responsibility to run some provision;
- working more closely with groups with particular needs, such as young people in care, and ethnic or religious minority groups, drawing on the expertise of local third sector organisations where appropriate;
- facilitating increased meaningful interaction between young people from different backgrounds and faith groups; and
- working more closely with third sector organisations – both at a strategic and delivery level – to engage the most disadvantaged and disaffected young people to facilitate their engagement in the design and delivery of services.

What this means for health services

3.43 When commissioning health services for children and young people, commissioners should use the joint planning and commissioning framework for children, young people and maternity services to help provide a clear and comprehensive picture of what they need, and then join up services so they provide better support and services than they could on their own. For young people, for example, options could include, co-locating services such as sexual health and substance misuse in locations that young people already use such as schools, colleges, community youth settings and leisure centres. PCTs should be commissioning services against the Department of Health’s ‘You’re Welcome’ quality standards, which includes active involvement of young people in service development and evaluation.

PRIORITY ACTION 6: SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND OTHER PROVIDERS AT THE HEART OF THE SYSTEM

3.44 A good education is key if young people are to make a success of their lives. Although good progress is being made, there are still too many young people who disengage from education and training. This places these young people at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes, such as involvement in offending. There is therefore more to be done to ensure that all young people can find a learning route that suits their needs and enables them to progress. Schools, colleges and work-based learning providers make up the main universal service for young people and need to sit at the heart of an effective preventative system. They have a critical role to play in delivering this PSA, both through their primary mission to provide teaching and learning and through the wide range of other support they provide to young people, especially the most disadvantaged, those facing barriers to learning, or at risk of disengaging. For schools, this role is encapsulated in the duty on school governors, in the Education and Inspections Act (2006), to promote the wellbeing of pupils.

What this means for government departments

3.45 The Government is already reforming education for 14 to 19 year olds, as set out in the 14-19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan. Legislation to introduce compulsory participation in education or training of some kind for all 16 and 17 year olds is currently before Parliament. Whilst this will not come into effect until beyond the life of this PSA, the *Children’s Plan* made it clear that the Government is committed to encouraging young people to stay in learning to achieve the skills they need to succeed in the changing economy.

Enabling informed choices about learning

3.46 A key part of this work is to ensure that young people have appropriate forms of learning available to them, and that they can access the support they need in order to make informed choices about what form of learning is best for them. In order to achieve this, the Government will take action in the following three areas as outlined in the *Children's Plan*:

- **increasing support** for those already in the system to stay in learning, by getting them onto the right programmes, providing them with financial support, and helping them to achieve;
- **reforming curriculum and qualifications** to give young people more choice and flexibility and to make sure that what young people learn is relevant and engaging. Central to this is the introduction of Diplomas, the introduction of the Foundation Learning Tier, more Apprenticeships and the development of functional skills, which will be at the heart of all qualification routes; and
- **delivering on the ground** by ensuring that everyone involved in working with 14-to 19 year olds works together to take a strategic view of young people's needs, to provide them with their full entitlement and to offer a personalised approach to their learning.

3.47 Clearly issues that impact on the role of schools and colleges beyond the curriculum-related areas above are also being addressed. For example, targeted youth support reforms are putting in place partnership working between schools, colleges and other services for young people, to ensure that other factors in young people's lives that may present a barrier to learning are identified early and receive integrated support, co-ordinated by a lead professional.

What this means for Local Authorities and their partners

3.48 Local authorities have a responsibility to all young people, regardless of their learning status. The Government expects local authorities to have robust tracking systems in place to monitor young people's progress and to identify those at risk. They should work with all local partners through Children's Trusts, 14-19 Partnerships and Local Strategic Partnerships to be clear about how schools and colleges can access additional support, including early informal advice in relation to their pupils and students, whilst also ensuring arrangements are in place to support young people not on the school roll, for example those being home educated, in custody, in transition between educational providers, or missing.

3.49 Local authorities must also fully discharge their responsibilities for information, advice and guidance (IAG) having regard to statutory guidance as set out in quality standards for IAG published in October 2007, and delivering their statutory duty to secure access to sufficient positive activities. They also have the lead strategic role to play in delivering the 'September Guarantee', working with partners to ensure that all 16 and 17 year olds have an offer to continue in learning.

What this means for schools

3.50 A school's distinctive contribution is in excellent teaching and learning and ensuring children and young people achieve, but schools are key to the achievement of all Every Child Matters outcomes. In particular, they play a vital role in promoting the physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

This role is underpinned by the duties on school governors, in the Education and Inspections Act (2006), to promote the wellbeing of pupils and to promote community cohesion.

3.51 To do this most effectively, the Government expects schools to sit at the heart of a system of prevention and early intervention, integrating with more specialist services (for example, health, early years and childcare, behaviour, youth and crime prevention services) and working in partnership with parents and families. By 2010, all schools should be Healthy Schools. They should also by that date be providing pupils and their families access to the extended schools core offer of services. The extended schools core offer of services includes access to a varied menu of activities, combined with childcare in primary schools from 8am to 6pm and during holidays (where there is demand); swift and easy access to specialist services for children and young people who have additional needs or who are at risk of poor outcomes; parenting support, and community access to school facilities. In support of this and as part of their framework for inspecting schools, Ofsted consider the contribution of extended schools activities on improving child outcomes and raising attainment.

3.52 In the context of this PSA, it is part of schools' role to:

- work with parents and support services to help children and young people develop social, emotional and basic financial capability skills; confidence, self-respect and respect for others; teamwork and leadership skills, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to make good career and lifestyle choices;
- provide good quality, impartial careers education that helps children and young people to understand the different education and learning options open to them, and how those options might help them meet their personal needs;
- provide opportunities for all, raise the aspirations and achievements of their pupils and challenge stereotypes, delivering education, support services and activities which are faith and culturally sensitive;
- ensure that all young people are aware of how external information, advice and guidance services can help them, and that they know how to access those services;
- support young people as they make choices at the end of compulsory education;
- help children and young people learn how to be healthy, developing their capacity to make healthy choices in partnership with the local PCT, through a well-planned Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum with easy access to on-site confidential health advice;
- help children and young people understand risks (for example of substance misuse, teenage pregnancy and teenage parenthood) and develop their capacity to keep themselves healthy and safe;
- create a safe learning environment, working with local police to establish a Safer Schools Partnership⁴ where appropriate, as well as tackling

⁴ As outlined in the Government's PSA (13) to Improve children and young people's safety.

misbehaviour and promoting respect (including restorative approaches where relevant); and

- engage and support vulnerable children and young people and their families through the extended schools core offer of services, in particular to provide opportunities for children and young people to participate in before and after-school activities that are fun and delivered in an environment that is safe.

Support for those with additional needs

3.53 Schools are expected to offer particular support for children and young people with additional needs, by:

- identifying young people with additional needs early, understanding when and how to use the Common Assessment Framework, and enabling swift and easy access to expert advice and specialist support through the co-location of specialist services – support involving more than one service will be co-ordinated by a lead professional, who may work in the school or elsewhere. Ninety Seven per cent of secondary schools are reported to be working together in partnerships to improve behaviour and tackle persistent absence. The design principles for these partnerships include the early identification of pupils' educational, personal development and welfare needs, using the Common Assessment Framework, arranging additional support and monitoring progress (DCSF guidance on school partnerships is available on line only at www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/collaboration);
- only permanently excluding pupils as a last resort after a range of measures to improve the pupil's behaviour have been tried, and in particular avoid (other than in the most exceptional circumstances) permanently excluding young people in care or pupils with statements of special educational needs, or who are being supported on School Action or School Action Plus. This is made clear in the DCSF *guidance Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusions from Schools and Pupil Referral Units* (September 2007);
- increasing cooperation with targeted services such as youth crime and the substance misuse prevention programmes; and
- notifying Connexions providers when a young person leaves learning or indicates that they intend to do so.

What this means for colleges

3.54 Increasing numbers of young people from age 14 upwards will choose to study at colleges, for part or all of their learning, and colleges have a responsibility to:

- promote high-quality learning with high success rates, that gives young people the functional skills essential to making progress in life, education and work;
- provide a healthy and safe environment;
- fulfil safeguarding responsibilities for under-18s;
- liaise with schools about the care of 14 to 16 year olds;

- provide young people with opportunities to make a positive contribution in shaping both the life of the college and the offer available to them;
- identify and assess young people with problems and help them access student support and other services including specialist services provided outside the college as appropriate;
- provide good quality, impartial careers education that helps young people to understand the different education and learning options open to them and how those options might help them meet their personal needs;
- provide opportunities for all, raise the aspirations and achievements of their pupils and challenge stereotypes, delivering education, support services and activities which are faith and culturally sensitive;
- ensure that all young people are aware of how information, advice and guidance services, including health advice, can help them and that they know how to access those services either on-site or through community services;
- work in partnership with other colleges and schools; and
- notify Connexions when a young person leaves learning, or indicates that they intend to do so.

3.55 Colleges are increasingly focused on the needs of individual learners, which includes personalised learning and pastoral support, targeting and tackling gaps between the achievement rates of different groups of learners, offering separate 14-19 and 16-18 centres with intensive tutorial support, and providing expanded support services for students, including swift and easy access to health services in conjunction with PCTs. Colleges also play an important role, including opening facilities for use by local communities groups. All colleges should continue to explore, with their partners, how they can build the capacity of communities by opening their premises and facilities.

What this means for work-based learning providers

3.56 In addition to providing high-quality training for young people, linked closely to the needs of local employers, work-based learning providers will need to play a full role as part of an effective preventative system, including by helping to raise aspirations and by challenging stereotypes. Their responsibilities include identifying, planning and delivering additional support for learners with additional learning or social needs, and are required to document these arrangements. They should also ensure that they have systems in place so that trainees have swift and easy access to additional services when they need them.

PRIORITY ACTION 7: ENSURING THAT OTHER KEY PUBLIC SERVICES SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

3.57 Local authorities, through their Children's Trusts have primary responsibility for all youth outcomes in their area working with a range of partners such as those in health, the police and other community safety organisations.

Early intervention and support for at-risk teenagers

3.58 In particular, and as indicated in the *Children's Plan*, local authorities will need to ensure they have systematic and joined-up prevention, early intervention and support arrangements for at-risk teenagers in their area. Targeted youth support reforms are central to this and are intended to improve the range and coherence of services that support vulnerable young people. They require the coordinated delivery of action to help young people who have additional needs that cannot be met by universal services alone and are of high or growing concern. This will require a step change in the extent to which professionals who support young people, engage with them and with parents, and will need clearer and simpler routes for schools to use when they have pupils with severe problems.

What this means for government departments

Reform of targeted youth support

3.59 Through its Youth Taskforce, the Department for Children, Schools and Families is leading the programme of reform of targeted youth support, working closely with other government departments, Government Offices (GOs), local authorities and PCTs. These targeted youth support reforms are critical to achieving this PSA – and to making progress against each of its indicators. The reforms also underpin other government priorities for young people including increasing attendance at school, successful delivery of the 14-19 education reforms and narrowing attainment gaps.

3.60 One of the key ways that central government can assist young people to access services is to support their parents, carers and families. It is parents who bring up children, not the Government and they have a key role to play in advising young people on their education and training options, and how to access other specialist services. The term “parents” is used as shorthand to include mothers, fathers, carers and other adults with parental responsibility or care for a child, including looked after children. The Government, working with local authorities, needs to build on existing information sources for parents and carers to ensure that they are fully informed about those options and are better placed to give objective advice, based on the young person’s own preferences and aspirations. The Government, through the Department for Transport, will also work with local authorities and other partners to provide transport networks that enable young people to access public services and to improve their safety.

What this means for Government Offices

3.61 These changes in the focus of frontline services will require support for local authorities and their partners from GOs. GOs have a key role to play in supporting the necessary transformation into all areas within the context of the full package of education and service reforms. GOs should work closely with health partners through the Regional Public Health Group and the Strategic Health Authorities. GOs also have a major part to play in local authority priority setting through Local Areas Agreements (LAAs) and also in agreeing Joint Improvement Support Plans (JISPs) with local authorities to set out what support the authority will get to help meet their priorities in the year ahead. This support will focus on issues which are agreed LAA priorities and should be developed in liaison with the Strategic Health Authority to ensure coordinated support for the local authority and PCT around the LAA priorities. By April 2008, the Targeted Youth Support Guide and Delivery Framework will be used systematically by GOs and local authorities to drive reform. This will include putting in place arrangements for local authorities to access intensive support and challenge from GOs and from the Training and Development Agency for Schools in order to accelerate delivery.

What this means for Local Authorities

3.62 Reforms to targeted youth support are complex and challenging for local authorities. The expectation is that all local areas will (with support from the Youth Taskforce) be delivering reformed targeted youth support services by the end of March 2008 in at least part of their local area and everywhere in the country by December 2008.

Supporting young people in care

3.63 As indicated in the *Children's Plan* there is a particular need for local authorities to ensure that support services assist young people in care, or leaving care. PSAs and a range of other indicators for young people in care that are included in the Local Government National Indicator Set underline the importance the Government attaches to ensuring that young people in care receive the best possible service and support. It is critical that the needs of young people in care are taken into account in the design of local targeted youth support programmes and that professionals supporting these young people are clearly connected into the framework, so that there is continuity for the vulnerable young people entering and leaving the care system.

Supporting parents

3.64 Local adult, parenting and family services need to work closely with children's services to ensure that the full impact of good parenting on future prospects is realised. A key gap is support for parents of teenagers. Effective evidence-based parenting and adult/couple relationship support, delivered by well-trained parenting practitioners, can facilitate positive parenting and thus contribute to all aspects of this PSA. In addition, adult services and children's services need to work more closely together on the transition for young people. Local services should 'Think Family'⁵ and join up around the needs of the whole family - services should have no 'wrong door', they should look at the whole family, build on family strengths and tailor their support according to the need. This approach enhances families' capacities to deal with present and future problems and supports them to take responsibility for their own lives – and strong families improve the life chances of individual family members. Teenage parents (both teenage mothers and fathers) need particular attention to support them to develop positive and confident parenting skills while making a successful transition to adulthood through continuing to be engaged in learning. In addition, many young fathers are still not identified as parents, making the delivery of joined-up intervention and support for this group more difficult. A more pro-active approach to identifying young fathers through the Common Assessment Framework should be taken. Young men who are not in education, employment or training should be routinely asked if they are a parent to inform a tailored package of support that takes into account their parenting responsibilities. Those that are effectively the main carer for the child either permanently or temporarily (for example because of the mother's poor mental health) need to be identified urgently to ensure that they get the support they need.

3.65 This emphasis on the role of parents and families was reinforced in the *Children's Plan* – and parents along with other carers also have a key role to play in advising young people on their education and training options. There is a need to build on existing information sources for parents to ensure that they are fully informed about those options and are better placed to give objective advice, based on the young person's own preferences and aspirations. This is particularly important bearing in mind the evidence that shows parents from lower socio-economic groups or who have lower levels of skills and qualifications can have lower aspirations or expectations for

⁵ For further information on 'Think Family' refer to the Social Exclusion Task Force Report entitled *Think Family: Improving the Life Chances of Families at Risk* published in January 2008. You can find this report on the Cabinet Office website.

their children's education and training, which can perpetuate intergenerational cycles of underachievement.

3.66 The Government expects local authorities working with all local partners through Children's Trusts and Local Strategic Partnerships to:

- focus on early intervention and prevention, by providing systematic and targeted support for young people and their carers, including those who may not meet traditional thresholds for statutory or specialist services;
- use ContactPoint to allow services to be clear who is working with a vulnerable young person;
- work creatively to ensure effective outreach to the most disadvantaged communities and young people, and to build the capacity of communities and parents to support young people and to provide effective role models and opportunities; and
- implement parenting strategies in their areas, and deliver their duty to provide comprehensive information on local services for parents of children and young people up to the age of 20.

What this means for health services

3.67 Health services have a key role in supporting all young people, and especially those who are particularly vulnerable. Children and young people are identified in the 2008/09 Operating Framework in the 5 national priority areas for action by PCTs in 2008/09. Within the Operating Framework, there are 64 vital signs that make up the PCT indicator set. The under-18 conception rate is included as one of the Tier 2 vital signs, which requires all PCTs to include it in their local plans. Other tier 2 vital signs relevant to PSA 14 are the prevalence of Chlamydia and the number of drug users recorded as being in effective treatment.

3.68 Through Children's Trust arrangements and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, PCTs should be working with local authorities to commission health services to improve young people's health. As part of this, PCTs should supply support to schools to enable them to be healthy schools and establish close links with health services. Another key aspect will be joint working to ensure that young people's health services meet the Department of Health's 'You're Welcome' quality criteria. These services should include specialist advice on contraception / reproductive and sexual health – paying particular attention to Long Acting Reversible Contraception, access to abortion before 10 weeks gestation, Chlamydia screening for under-25s and 48 hour access to genito-urinary medicine services, substance misuse and other health issues of concern to young people. Maternity and postnatal health services for teenage mothers and their partners should also be tailored to their specific needs, including dedicated services, working closely with preventative services to support young parents in the avoidance of repeat conceptions.

Health services for young offenders

3.69 The Government's Children and Young People Programme (Offender Health) is working to improve the health and wellbeing of the under-18s in contact with the Youth Justice System and to ensure that their needs are met appropriately and effectively. Health services should identify young people with additional needs early, understand when and how to use the Common Assessment Framework, and ensure appropriate action is agreed. They should also involve relevant services - support involving more than one service will be co-ordinated by a lead professional, who may work in a health

setting or elsewhere. The Programme involves collaboration between the Department of Health, Ministry of Justice, Department for Children, Schools and Families, HM Prison Service and the Youth Justice Board. It will include a project looking at developing the role of the Youth Offending Team health workers and it is anticipated that best practice guidance for PCTs on this role will be published. The scope of the project is being developed and any guidance that is produced will be published via the Department of Health. This is in direct response to criticisms raised in the Healthcare Commission's Review of healthcare in the community for young people who offend⁶, which showed that despite PCTs having a statutory duty to provide healthcare workers to Youth Offending Teams, many YOTs still do not have healthcare workers, and many no mental health worker. Mental health difficulties are known to correlate strongly with youth offending, and access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is therefore key to supporting young people back onto the pathway to success. It is for PCTs to work together with local authorities to ensure that the needs of young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or mental health issues can be addressed swiftly through access to appropriate services.

What this means for criminal justice agencies

3.70 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are a key part of reformed targeted youth services. They work with their statutory partners, other agencies, and the third sector to prevent offending and re-offending among young people. As such, YOTs, along with wider services, are key partners in delivering on the indicator to reduce the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system. Services delivered or commissioned by YOTs include supporting vulnerable young people back into mainstream services from which they have become disengaged, and services specifically related to offending or the risk of offending. From 2008, YOTs will be supported by the Youth Justice Board to profile first-time entrants in greater detail and to use this information to work with partners to help achieve the objective of reducing their number. All relevant agencies will need to co-operate with YOTs in this process. Closer working relationships between YOTs and other local delivery partners are an essential part of realising the vision of this PSA.

3.71 It is crucial that youth offending services are integrated within youth support services more generally, and that the targeted prevention activities they offer can be complemented by a range of other universal and specialist services that contribute to improving outcomes for young people. The youth crime agenda can no longer be viewed as separate from the other Every Child Matters outcomes, and must be integrated within a wider preventive strategy at local authority level. Every agency or service – from schools and health services to youth services and the police – must recognise and embrace their role in identifying potential difficulties early, assessing needs swiftly and holistically, and deploying tailored interventions suited to the individual and their circumstances. Youth offending services should identify young people with additional needs early and understand when and how to use the Common Assessment Framework, which should build on assessments using the Asset and Onset tool, as appropriate. They should ensure appropriate action is agreed, involving relevant services. Support involving more than one service will be co-ordinated by a lead professional, who may work in youth offending or other services.

⁶ Lets talk about it: A review of healthcare in the community for young people who offend, the Healthcare Commission and HM Inspectorate of Probation, November 2006.

Working with young people at risk of offending

3.72 The police also have a role in supporting young people, again in particular with respect to the indicator on reducing the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system. The police can contribute most to this PSA through the continuation and enhancement of the preventative activity they take forward locally with children and young people at risk of offending. The creation of Neighbourhood Policing teams across England and Wales, and in particular, the introduction of Police Community Support Officers, is evidence of the Government's commitment to delivering key services at the local level, using a partnership approach. Neighbourhood policing teams are engaging with their local communities, identifying and agreeing local priorities and then working with the community and other local partners to tackle them. Safer Schools Partnerships are an excellent example of this and have been very successful, focusing on early intervention and prevention, encouraging the police, children and young people to build good relationships, trust and mutual respect. Working together, schools and police forces can identify, support and work with children and young people at risk of victimisation, offending or social exclusion. This can help to improve behaviour and attendance, help pupils feel safer and at the same time reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. In addition, Neighbourhood policing teams are also engaging with young people informally, out of school hours, using a variety of methods, for example running sports teams, dance and drama groups. As with staff from other public services, in order to fulfil their role, police should also be able to use the Common Assessment Framework and understand the role of the lead professional.

3.73 The police also contribute to this PSA through the operational decisions they take about dealing with low-level misbehaviour. The police and other criminal justice agents will continue to respond proportionately and effectively to local concerns. In the case of low-level offending by juveniles, this does not always entail giving the young person a formal criminal justice disposal. While it would be entirely inappropriate for this PSA to be met by the police not giving a formal disposal to a young person where this is clearly needed, the police must continue to ensure that decisions they take in responding to young people are proportionate and are based on the best interests of the young person, the victim and the community. This sometimes includes an informal or restorative intervention rather than a formal disposal.

3.74 As pointed out in the *Children's Plan*, the Youth Taskforce will work with a number of local authorities around the country to establish the most effective way to ensure that enforcement activity comes with greater support for young people, especially those who are clearly at risk of developing further problems where our ambition is to intervene early to prevent problems spiralling. In doing so, the Taskforce will work with the Youth Justice Board and other national and local partners already working with children and young people most at risk of getting involved in anti-social behaviour or low level crime and disorder, building on recognised tiered approaches of identification, assessment, preventive activity and intervention.

What this means for other local partners

3.75 There is also an important role for responsive community-based services and third sector organisations to reach out to young people in all communities, especially the most disadvantaged. Services need to engage not just individuals but networks of young people who may be involved in low level crime, substance misuse and gang culture, and who may lack positive role models. Local priorities will also be influenced where appropriate by communities increasingly informing the strategic direction and design of local services.

PRIORITY ACTION 8: ENSURING THAT THERE ARE ROBUST SYSTEMS IN PLACE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF AND INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL

3.76 Although schools have one of the major roles in providing the universal service for young people, services for young people also need to take account of the fact that some children and young people don't attend school. There are many reasons why this might happen. For example, the young person may be a persistent absentee, be educated at home, be permanently excluded, or be permanently absent for other reasons. No matter how effective prevention or early intervention is, some young people will experience serious problems, including becoming not being in employment, education or training (NEET), becoming pregnant, taking drugs or committing crime.

3.77 In each case the local authority and PCT has a crucial role to play in supporting both the individual concerned and the school or other education provider (which may be parents or carers). Statutory guidance emphasises the importance of the local authority in brokering services, and securing the support of other agencies, such as health or welfare services, where it is needed.

What this means for schools

Reducing the number of persistent absentees

3.78 All schools should make efforts to reduce the number of their pupils who are persistent absentees. The importance of doing so cannot be over estimated, as young people who are persistently absent from school are more likely to engage in substance misuse, become pregnant, commit offences, and are likely to have lower attainment. The link between truancy, risk taking behaviour (such as early sex and substance misuse) and not participating in employment, education or training later on is also strong. Schools are asked to:

- identify persistent absentees, and the likely reason for absenteeism, taking action as appropriate;
- establish a focused case-management process along the lines of the fast-track model for each of these pupils; and
- work with their school improvement partner to establish a whole-school action plan for tackling persistent absence including an escalation of school interventions which act as preventative measures – including swift and easy access to specialist health advice on-site or in a community setting – in collaboration with PCTs.

What this means for local authorities and local partners

3.79 The *Children's Plan* set for all local authorities the goal of reducing the proportion of pupils in their secondary schools who are persistent absentees to 5 per cent or below by 2011. Local authorities also have statutory annual targets on secondary persistent absence. Authorities can best achieve these goals by integrating attendance work into their wider programme of work on improving children's services. An important aspect of that work will be to ensure young people understand and have access to the full range of education and training opportunities in their area. The specific actions that the Government is encouraging them to take are as outlined in Annex B, paragraph B4.

3.80 Some of the most vulnerable children and young people do not attend school at all – such as young offenders, children affected by substance misuse, and those that have been permanently excluded. Guidance on the education of school-age mothers and the Department’s exclusions guidance makes clear that pregnancy is not a valid reason for exclusion.

**Supporting
the most
vulnerable to
access services**

3.81 Local authorities already have a duty to provide suitable provision for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth day of exclusion. Provision should also support these individuals and their families, helping them access the services they need to address the causes of exclusion, and bringing the person back onto the path to success.

3.82 The *Children’s Plan* set out an ambitious programme of work to drive up the quality of provision for excluded pupils, both in Pupil Referral Units and in wider alternative provision as outlined in Annex B, paragraph B5.

3.83 Local authorities must identify children or young people not receiving suitable education. Statutory guidance sets out the action that needs to be taken, and the partner organisations that should be involved, including the youth service and Connexions, in offering support to these young people and their families. Very often, the young people will need very specialist support, examples of which include:

- a reintegration officer or nominated officer to support school-age expectant mothers to ensure they receive the education they need to achieve their potential up to school leaving age and are well placed to continue in learning post-16;
- a dedicated adviser for teenage mothers and teenage fathers post-16 to assess their needs and coordinate a package of support to ensure continuation in learning;
- Youth Offending Teams using Asset and Onset assessment tools to identify the needs and risks of young offenders or those at high likelihood of entering the youth justice system and designing a multi-agency package of interventions to reduce risk factors and build up protective factors;
- Children’s Trusts working with Drug Action Teams and Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships to ensure that all young people experiencing substance misuse related harm have prompt access to appropriate and effective specialist treatment when they need it; and
- housing services and children’s services cooperating to address the accommodation and wider needs of 16 to 17 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, on which good practice guidance is being developed.

CONSULTATION

3.84 Consultation on this delivery agreement took place across government departments from January to June 2007. Local authorities were consulted as part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families’ overall consultation on the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

3.85 In particular, around 100 senior representatives from across central government, regional Government Offices, local government, frontline services, third sector providers, and academics attended a two-day event run by the DCSF (then Department for Education and skills) and HM Treasury. This event was designed to gather input to the PSA Delivery Agreement from all those key stakeholders. The event enabled people throughout the delivery chain to reach agreement on how they would work together and resolve key issues and barriers to delivery. The Government will continue to engage partners on the implications of this delivery agreement as it is implemented and developed. The original draft of this PSA delivery agreement was published in autumn 2007.

3.86 The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families led a national consultation to develop the *Children's Plan* during the autumn of 2007 - this delivery agreement has drawn on the *Children's Plan* and the consultation that took place in developing it. As well as drawing on the *Children's Plan*, the spring 2008 revision of this delivery agreement involved further cross government consultation.

DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS

3.87 This PSA primarily affects England only, as most of the areas it covers are devolved matters in Wales and Scotland. However, responsibility for youth justice is not devolved in Wales and, therefore, the indicator to 'reduce the number of first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System age 10 to 17 will also measure progress towards prevention in Wales. With respect to this indicator, the Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for delivering many of the activities which will drive progress on this PSA, for example, education, health and social services. The Assembly Government set out its vision for children and young people in *Children and Young People: Rights to Action and Extending Entitlement: supporting young people in Wales*.⁷ This vision is encapsulated by the Seven Core Aims for Children in Wales. The Assembly Government and the Youth Justice Board published the *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy*⁸ which prioritises the prevention of youth crime and anti-social behaviour and the treatment of those within the youth justice system as children first and offenders second.

3.88 In order to drive a reduction in first-time entrants, the Welsh Assembly Government has adopted the indicator as an outcome measure and the promotion of Youth Offending Team (YOT) prevention programmes as objectives of the *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy*. The first-time entrants indicator has also been set as one of the range of priority outcomes required by the *Children and Young People's Plans* in Wales. Other aspects of prevention are delivered by agencies common to England and Wales, including YOT prevention programmes, Community Safety Partnerships (known in England as CDRPs) and of course the activity of the police. The role of these programmes in Wales is as in England, as set out earlier in the Delivery Agreement.

⁷ *Children and Young People: Rights to action and extending entitlement: supporting young people in Wales*, Welsh Assembly Government, 2000.

⁸ *All Wales youth offending strategy*, Welsh Assembly Government 2000.

A

MEASUREMENT ANNEX

Increased participation and resilience

Indicator I	Proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
National target	Reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training by 2 percentage points by 2010.
Data provider	Department for Children, Schools and Families.
Data set used	<p>Statistical First Release – participation in education, training and employment by 16-18 year olds in England. This combines data from the following sources to estimate the proportion of young people NEET:</p> <p>Population estimates for 16 to 18 year olds, collected through the Office for National Statistics (ONS) population estimates.¹</p> <p>Administrative data to estimate the numbers participating in education and training in: schools (collected through the annual Schools Census); further education and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded work-based learning (collected through the Individualised Learner Record); higher education (collected through the Higher Education Statistics Agency). Allowance is made for young people in more than one form of provision.</p> <p>Labour Force Survey (LFS) to identify the activity of young people not in education or training (NET).</p> <p>The number not in education or training (NET) is calculated by subtracting the number of young people known to be in education and training from the 16-18 year old population. The Labour Force Survey is used to estimate what proportion of the NET group is NEET.</p>
Baseline	9.7 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds were not in education, employment or training in 2004.
Frequency of reporting	Annual. Data is published in June, containing provisional rates for the previous academic year and revised figures for the year before.
95 per cent confidence interval at last outturn	Not applicable. The combination of administrative and survey data means that a robust 95 per cent confidence interval cannot be calculated. Historical data suggests an error margin of around +/- 0.6 percentage points.
Data Quality Officer	Youth Targets and Models, Young People Analysis; Department for Children, Schools and Families.
Minimum movement required for performance assessment	A movement of greater than 0.6 percentage points is sufficient to make a performance assessment.

¹ The estimates are a result of subtractions of those in education etc from a base population estimate and therefore estimates are subject to the weaknesses of those systems. Methodology is documented. It is not possible to disaggregate such an estimate by characteristics such as ethnicity. Furthermore figures calculated on this basis cannot be supplied at a local level, due to insufficient LFS sample sizes. The Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) will be used for LAAs/ local monitoring.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- *Education or training:*
A 16 to 18 year-old is defined as being in education or training if they are in full-time education, work based learning (WBL), employer funded training, or other education and training. Other education and training covers young people who are studying, but are not included in other categories, for example: those attending independent colleges or training centres; at any college in part-time study not reported as released from a job; or receiving training or in part-time education but not currently employed.
- *Employment:*
A 16 to 18 year-old is defined as being in employment if they are an employee, self-employed, on a WBL programme or an unpaid family worker. This is the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition and includes young people in full-time education who also have part-time jobs.

National target

A.1 The national target will be assessed in June each year. Provisional data will be available in June 2011 and will be revised the following year, and a final assessment of the target will be made in June 2012.

Indicator 2	Participation in positive activities
Data provider	Department for Children, Schools and Families.
Data set used	<p>Participation will be measured using the Tellus survey. Tellus is a local area survey measuring the behaviour and attitudes of children and young people. Tellus 3 data will be collected during late Spring 2008 and will be published in late 2008. The number of young people in school year 10 will be calculated using the NPD.</p> <p>In addition, data will also be available from the Tellus survey to cover the gender, age and ethnicity of respondents along with any disability and or free school meal entitlement. This will mean that data can be analysed against these variables in order to show relationships such as levels of participation in positive activities among deprived young people (as measured by free school meal entitlement.)</p> <p>The Government is exploring the potential of using the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) to gather data in future years. This may also enable a further breakdown of participation data against demographic variables such as ethnicity, gender or an indication of deprivation.</p>
Baseline	<p>The Tellus 3 data to be published in late 2008 will be used as a baseline.</p> <p>Additional sources of data including one-off surveys such as the 2004 study 'Young People in Britain: the attitudes and experiences of 12-19 year olds' will help inform baselines and progress in this area.</p>
Frequency of reporting	Annual - in late Autumn.
95 per cent confidence interval at last outturn	Not applicable – data has not yet been collected, and will be available in late 2008.
Data Quality Officer	Youth Research Team, Young People Analysis, DCSF
Minimum movement required for performance assessment	First year will establish baselines on which to base the final calculation.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- *Positive activities:*

The question that would be asked is currently under development, but will likely be similar to the following:

In the last 4 weeks have you participated in any group activity led by an adult outside school (such as a sports, arts, or a youth group)?

Respondents will be asked being asked to indicate relevant activities from the following list:

- An organised sporting activity, for example, sports club or class (where I've done sport not just watched it).
- A youth forum, focus group or a meeting outside school about making things better in my local area.
- Volunteering (i.e. giving your time to help) a charity or local group.
- A youth club or youth group with organised activities, for example, youth café, scouts, guides, cadets.
- Art, craft, dance, drama, film/video-making group or class (not in school lessons).
- Music group or lesson (not in school lessons).
- A residential course, for example, Do it 4Real, Outward Bound.

The participation would be recorded under categories, which are still in development but may include culture, sport, young people's empowerment etc.

Tackling negative outcomes

Indicator 3	Substance misuse by young people
Data provider	Department for Children, Schools and Families.
Data set used	<p>Substance Misuse will be measured using the Tellus survey. Tellus is a local area survey measuring the behaviour and attitudes of children and young people. Tellus 3 data will be collected during late Spring 2008 and will be published in late 2008. The total number of respondents reporting either frequent use of drugs or alcohol or both is compared to the total number of respondents.²</p> <p>In addition, data will also be available from the Tellus survey to cover the gender, age and ethnicity of respondents along with any disability and or free school meal entitlement. This will mean that data can be analysed against these variables in order to show relationships such as the frequent use of drugs or alcohol among deprived young people (as measured by free school meal entitlement).</p> <p>Further sources of data including the annual Department of Health Schools survey (<i>Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use by young people in England</i>) will help inform baselines and progress in this area.</p>
Baseline	A partial baseline (frequent use of alcohol and recent use of drugs only) is available for 2007 in the majority of areas; the first full baseline (frequent use of alcohol, drugs and volatile substances) will be available in late 2008, when the Tellus 3 survey results are published.
Frequency of reporting	Annual – in late autumn.
95 per cent confidence interval at last outturn	Expected confidence interval of around 0.5 per cent at national level. Headline local authority data reliable to within three to five percentage points for a 50 per cent survey measure at the 95 per cent confidence level.
Data Quality Officer	Substance Misuse Team, Young People at Risk Division, Supporting Children and Young People Group, Department for Children, Schools and Families
Minimum movement required for performance assessment	A 0.5 percentage point movement is sufficient to make a performance assessment at the national level.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- Young people:*
For the purposes of this PSA indicator, young people are defined as aged from 10 up to and including 15 years old.

² The indicator is quantitative, but the assessment itself is subjective. Quality assessments including the representative nature of the sample will have to be undertaken once the survey is established. In particular, the biases in self reporting will need to be explored.

- *Frequently:*
Frequent use is described as either use of a drug twice or more within the last four weeks, and/or getting drunk twice or more in the last four weeks, which is taken as a proxy for misuse.
- *Misuse:*
This is defined as the use of any substance which could result in harm, such as poor outcomes, school exclusion, criminal involvement, health problems etc.
- *Substances:*
This refers to illicit drugs, alcohol and volatile substances such as solvents, glue or gas.

Indicator 4	Under-18 conception rate
National target	Reduce the under-18 conception rate by 50 per cent by 2010 as part of a broader strategy to improve sexual health.
Data provider	Office for National Statistics (ONS).
Data set used	Conception statistics in ONS' 'Health Statistics Quarterly'.
Baseline	England's 1998 under-18 conception rate of 46.6 per 1000 females aged 15-17.
Frequency of reporting	Annual data are used to measure progress towards target. Quarterly data are used for within-year monitoring. ³
95 per cent confidence interval at last outturn	The current percentage reduction in rate between 1998 and 2006 is 13.3 per cent (95 per cent confidence interval of 12.1 per cent and 14.5 per cent). England's under-18 conception rate for 2006 was 40.4 (95 per cent confidence interval 40.1 – 40.8).
Data Quality Officer	Young People at Risk Division, Supporting Children and Young People Group; Department for Children, Schools and Families
Minimum movement required for performance assessment	Conception rates, and the percentage change in rates since baseline, are reported to one decimal place. (Note: percentage change in rate is calculated from un-rounded under-18 conception rates.)

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- Under 18:**
 The rate includes all conceptions under-18 but uses the female population aged 15-17 as a denominator to calculate the rate (as 95 per cent of under-18 conceptions occur within this age group).
- Conception rate:**
 This is defined as the number of conceptions under-18 per 1000 females aged 15-17.

National target

A.2 The national target will be assessed following the release by ONS of annual conception data in February each year. A final assessment of the target will be made in February 2012 (reflecting data for 2010).

³ There is a 14 month time-lag in the release of conception statistics, as they are partly compiled from birth registration data (which may not be available up to 11 months after the date of conception).

Indicator 5	Number of first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System aged 10-17
Data provider	Ministry of Justice.
Data set used	Police Force data on first-time entrants in each local authority area, provided through the Police National Computer (PNC). ⁴
Baseline	The number of offenders in England and Wales who received either a conviction, reprimand or final warning for a recordable offence for the first time during 2007/8 and who were aged 10-17 at the time.
Frequency of reporting	Quarterly.
95 per cent confidence interval at last outturn	Not applicable: in principle the PNC provides a census of all juvenile offenders prosecuted by the police for recordable offences where the outcome is a conviction, reprimand or final warning.
Data Quality Officer	RDS-NOMS; Ministry of Justice.
Minimum movement required for performance assessment	This indicator is measured by a census, rather than a survey; any change at all should therefore enable an assessment. However, a reduction of around 2 per cent would demonstrate progress.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- Entry into the Criminal Justice System:*
For the purposes of this measure entry to the Criminal Justice System is considered to be through either a reprimand or a final warning given by a police force in England and Wales or through a conviction at a court in England and Wales. One other pre-court disposal (penalty notice for disorder – essentially a small fine) does not count.
- Juvenile first-time entrant:*
This is defined as a young person who receives their first reprimand, final warning or conviction at the age of 10-17.
- Recordable offences:*
Those offences which the police are required to record on the Police National Computer (PNC). These are criminal offences that may be punishable by a term of imprisonment or are declared as recordable by statute. They generally cover indictable and triable either way offences plus many more of the more serious summary offences.

⁴ Measure is derived from an administrative system, which, whilst generally considered to be sound, is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system. Some convictions resulting from prosecutions by authorities other than the police may not be captured.

B.1 This annex sets out what will be done to deliver the indicators underpinning the Public Service Agreement. Achieving the PSA will mean delivering against each of the eight priority actions outlined above, as well as focusing on the specific policy areas around the indicators as below.

Increased participation and resilience

B.2 Much of the work across government will make a contribution to **reducing the number of 16 to 18 year-olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)**. The following actions, which will be taken forward through the *Children's Plan*, the *14–19 Implementation Plan* and the *NEET strategy*, are particularly important:

- introducing diplomas which give young people the opportunity to combine academic and applied learning, preparing them for working life. Diplomas will be available everywhere at all levels from 2013, with the first five being available for teaching from 2008;
- developing a foundation learning tier, to bring together a range of qualifications below level 2 and to provide clearer progression routes to enable young people to progress;
- placing a greater emphasis on the achievement of functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT that young people need to be successful in work and life;
- further strengthening the client tracking system, by requiring all learning providers to notify Connexions as soon as any young person leaves learning from September 2007;
- making course enrolment dates more flexible, so that young people can engage in learning throughout the year;
- trialling an extension to Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA), so that from November 2007 young people on a wider range of courses can receive support;
- extending EMA so that all young people on Entry to Employment courses (which are particularly important for those at risk of being NEET) receive the full rate of EMA from July 2008, regardless of household income;
- extending Activity Agreement Pilots, to trial the effectiveness of engaging young people in an activity agreement shortly after they leave learning, rather than after an extended period of being NEET, during 2008-09;
- extending the September Guarantee to 17 year olds in 2008 so that all 16 and 17 year olds are guaranteed an offer of a place in learning that meets their needs;
- giving young people who have been NEET for at least 26 weeks by the time they reach their 18th birthday immediate access to New Deal from April 2008;
- developing a new Entry to Learning Programme by autumn 2008 to reengage young people who are not currently in learning;

- giving local authorities guidance and best practice examples that they can use to develop their local plans for reducing NEET;
- introducing a progression measure in the school profile from 2009 that will recognise a school's role in supporting their students to progress post-16;
- transferring funding for 16 to 19 learning from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities to reflect the role government has set out for local authorities in leading improvement for all aspects of children's and young people's lives; and
- expanding the number of post-16 apprenticeships from 250,000 in 2007 to 400,000 in 2020, responding to the challenges set out in the Leitch Review of Skills.¹

B.3 The provision of **Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) and Careers Education** also has an important role to play in reducing the number of young people who become NEET and / or experience negative outcomes – as such government will work with schools, colleges, local authorities and other key partners to:

- help local authorities deliver high quality IAG services that meet the expectations set out in the recently issued Quality Standards for IAG;
- raise the profile of IAG/Careers Education and ensure that its contribution to the achievement of participation and attainment targets is widely understood;
- improve the quality of Careers Education in schools and colleges, including through the implementation of commitments set out in the *Children's Plan*; and
- ensure that the information, advice and guidance that young people receive about learning and careers options is impartial.

B.4 In order to ensure that young people engage in education (and therefore are less likely to become NEET or experience **negative outcomes**) robust systems need to be in place to identify and intervene with young people who do not attend school. DCSF is looking to local authorities to achieve their goals to reduce the proportion of pupils in secondary schools who are persistent absentees and encouraging them to:

- ensure young people understand and have access to the full range of education and training opportunities in their area (either being at school or receiving education through another channel such as at a Pupil Referral Unit, alternative provision or educated by parents at home) - and focusing on identifying those who are not even captured as 'missing' and those under Youth Offending Team supervision;
- include a robust attendance strategy that is well communicated, informed by half-termly data returns and evaluated to reflect effective practice in their Children and Young People's Plan;
- establish robust monitoring arrangements and ensure attendance data is available to Education Welfare Officers, School Improvement Advisors,

¹ Outlined in the Government's PSA (2) – to Improve the skills of the population, on the way to ensuring a world class skills base by 2020.

Behaviour and Attendance consultants and shared amongst children's services; and

- ensure that they take a multi-agency approach across a range of services to support schools in reducing both their number of persistent absentee pupils and each pupil's own level of absence.

B.5 The *Children's Plan* set out an ambitious programme of work to drive up the **quality of provision for excluded pupils**, both in Pupil Referral Units and in wider alternative provision. Many, but not all of these pupils, have challenging behaviour; some are pregnant or already young mothers or young fathers, pupils with medical needs or educated outside mainstream school because they do not otherwise have a school place. This is a key area in tackling the number of young people who become NEET or experience **negative outcomes**. The plan includes:

- publication for each local authority of the examination results of pupils not on the roll of mainstream schools (and who are not being educated at home), from 2009;
- an expectation from September 2008 that for every pupil not on a school roll, objectives will be set for educational outcomes, and for the timing of their reintegration into mainstream education where appropriate, and that arrangements are in place for monitoring and reviewing progress with the pupil and their parents;
- new arrangements to replace failing Pupil Referral Units with better provision, to be informed by the results of pilots of a range of different types of provision (these will start in autumn 2008). This will be backed by new legislation to be introduced in 2009 which will require local authorities to replace failing Pupil Referral Units with a specified alternative, and will introduce a power to require local authorities to hold a competition to select a provider in such cases; and
- a new national database of providers of alternative provision, so that schools and local authorities have better information on what is available, supplemented by new guidance for commissioners of alternative provision (both in early summer 2008).

B.6 The effective implementation of *Aiming High for Young People* is critical to **increase participation in positive activities**, particularly among the most disadvantaged young people and including those from poorer backgrounds. In support of this, DCSF published its Implementation Plan for *Aiming High* in March 2008, setting out the roles and responsibilities of key partners and the actions which need to be taken. As outlined in the Implementation Plan DCSF, along with a range of other government departments will:

- support local authorities to fulfil their duty to secure access to positive activities by publishing statutory guidance and providing baseline funding to publicise local opportunities to young people;
- continue to provide baseline funding over the period 2008-2011 for the Youth Opportunity & Capital Funds, with additional funding in the 50 most deprived areas, and publish revised guidance to support the local delivery of the funds;

- via the Big Lottery Fund, provide new investment to improve youth facilities, paving the way for unclaimed assets funding in the future;
- invest in the expansion of targeted activity programmes to ensure provision is available year-round, with funding focused on 15 priority areas in 2008-09;
- provide new investment to support and build the capacity of third sector providers that have developed effective services reaching out to the most marginalised young people; a small number of pathfinder organisations will test the approach from April 2008;
- examine how youth sector support arrangements could be better organised, including a public Call for Evidence; and
- work with the Sector Skills Councils to begin a programme of youth workforce reform.

B.7 In addition, as set out in the *Children's Plan*:

- an entitlement will be developed for all young people to participate in positive activities which develop their talents, including piloting a new offer to take part in cultural activities in and out of school, to match the existing offer on sport;
- an additional £160 million will be invested to improve the quality and range of places to go for young people;
- we will explore opportunities for further investment in supporting local authorities to improve the information available to young people and their families; and
- DCSF will be looking to local authorities to plan and co-ordinate initiatives including the extended schools programme, positive activities and targeted youth support, so that more integrated services develop that provide effective support to vulnerable children and young people.

Tackling negative outcomes

B.8 Reducing young people's substance misuse can best be achieved through effective implementation of this PSA in conjunction with the Government's new ten year drug strategy, *Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities* (February 2008), the updated National Alcohol Strategy² and the forthcoming Youth Alcohol Action Plan (to be published in spring 2008). These plans will:

- deliver a longer term and more sustainable focus on reducing and preventing harm through a package for families that includes better treatment for drug-misusing parents and support for the kin carers who may look after their children; a range of family interventions for those at risk; and increasing the protection and support for the children of problem drug users;
- strengthen approaches to prevention by ensuring that it is mainstreamed within services, helping schools, colleges and other children's services to

² "Safe. Sensible. Social" (June 2007).

identify young people affected by their own or someone else's substance misuse through:

- workforce development;
 - ensuring the focus of prevention activity is on the most vulnerable young people; and
 - implementing recommendations from the review of drug and alcohol education to improve both quality and effectiveness.
- make improvements to the treatment system for young people, improving both accessibility and outcomes, and ensuring consistency with the youth justice system;
 - reduce drinking levels by young people and address excessive drinking by under-18s through a range of measures including reducing demand by influencing the price and promotion of alcohol to young people; influencing young people's behaviour through earlier and more effective prevention; communicating clearer information to young people and parents about the harms associated with alcohol; and strengthening enforcement activities; and
 - include national and local public health campaigns to provide information about the harms associated with drug, alcohol and volatile substance misuse, such as the successful FRANK campaign.

B.9 With regard to **reducing the under-18 conception rate**, guidance has been issued to all local authorities and PCTs, setting out the key ingredients of successful local strategies. All areas need to review and revise their local strategies against these key ingredients – which were evident in high-performing areas but either absent or being delivered less intensively in poor-performing areas. Areas are expected to have measurable actions in place, drawing on local data in the Local Monitoring Data Set, which are regularly monitored with an annual review of progress. The Government has also issued additional guidance to local authorities and PCTs setting out what should be in place locally to improve outcomes for teenage parents and their children. This includes action to prevent repeat conceptions. A self assessment tool has been provided to local areas to help identify gaps in provision and incorporate actions into their Children and Young People Plans.

B.10 Differentiated support and challenge is being provided to all areas through GOs. In addition, the Government is applying stronger performance management arrangements to the local areas with high and increasing rates and those with progress significantly off trajectory for their 2010 target, through:

- requiring the 21 identified areas with high and increasing rates to submit 6-monthly progress reports to the Minister for Children, Young People and Families and the Minister for Public Health;
- continuing to roll-out visits to each area by the Department of Health's National Support Team with follow up support;
- addressing concerns about teenage pregnancy rates within the Youth Priority Area interventions and Youth Task Force; and

- using the Healthcare Commission annual health check for both 2006/07 and 2007/08 which will assess the performance of all PCTs in relation to their progress on reducing the under-18 conception rate and access to contraceptive services. The indicator includes assessing whether PCTs have in place strategies to target specific population groups, including young people.

B.11 To support local delivery, the Government is driving forward action at a national level across all aspects of the strategy, including:

- taking forward the review of sex and relationships education (SRE) announced in the *Children's Plan*. The review will be chaired by the Minister of State for Schools and Learners and is due to report in July 2008. The review will cover both primary and secondary schools and will aim to ensure that all young people receive high quality, age-appropriate SRE beginning in Primary school;
- publishing an audit toolkit to help schools consult young people on whether the SRE they are delivering is meeting young people's needs;
- running a series of regional conferences to support the implementation of guidance that was issued to further education (FE) colleges and PCTs in 2007, on setting up contraceptive/sexual health advice services in FE settings;
- the provision to PCTs of Best Practice Guidance on Reproductive Healthcare to inform specialist commissioning following the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;
- rolling out implementation of the Department of Health (DH) 'You're Welcome' quality standards, which help ensure that contraceptive and sexual health services are young people friendly;
- agreeing, across government, how best to use the additional £26.8 million that DH has identified for improving young people's access to contraception – announced in February 2008. This will be prioritised for high and increasing rate areas and include a focus on addressing second and subsequent pregnancies among teenage mothers and improving access to long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods;
- developing new creatives for the 'RU Thinking' and 'Want Respect: Use A Condom' media campaigns and increasing the reach to young people through a wide range of young people's media channels and through partnerships with commercial youth brands;
- agreeing with Local Government a Local Monitoring Data Set for local areas to collect, to help them target their strategies in high-rate neighbourhoods and on young people most at risk, and to provide more timely monitoring of conception numbers;
- holding a Ministerial meeting in May 2008, with local authority and PCT chief executives and Directors of Children's Services from 21 areas with high and increasing rates. In addition there will be further three regional events in June for all areas to ensure a continued focus on implementing effective strategies to accelerate progress; and

- providing support for parents to talk to their children openly and honestly about sex and relationships, including through the Transition Information Sessions offered to parents when their children start secondary school.

B.12 On **youth crime**, the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and DCSF are working together to publish a Youth Crime Action Plan in the summer of 2008 - this will include detailed action on:

- a more effective approach to youth crime prevention;
- the options available for dealing with children and young people who commit crimes; and
- how the Government will reduce re offending.

B.13 The **youth crime prevention** element of the Youth Crime Action Plan will:

- include a national target for reducing the number of young people receiving a conviction, reprimand or final warning for a recordable offence for the first time (as outlined in Annex A);
- complement Safer Schools Partnerships (which help reduce youth crime through supporting a police presence in schools) and the work of the Youth Task Force (which will establish the most effective way to ensure that enforcement activity comes with greater support for young people); and
- require close working across Government and with local partners on both restorative justice and crime prevention.

B.14 This PSA Delivery Agreement is particularly concerned with the prevention of youth crime and reducing the number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system but it will be complemented by the related work on **reducing re-offending and resettlement** (which forms part of the Home Office PSA 23, *Safer Communities*). To this end, as indicated in the *Children's Plan*, a Green Paper will be published in the summer covering improving continuity of care and the resettlement of young offenders. Also highlighted in the *Children's Plan* is the intention to pilot a restorative approach to youth offenders from April 2008. The Youth Restoration Disposal aims to prevent re-offending through a more rehabilitative approach and the involvement of victims so offenders have to face up to the consequences of even low-level offending, and the pilots will look at whether this is a more appropriate way to deal with particularly low-level, first offences.

B.15 Growing up in poverty increases the risk that children and young people will experience negative outcomes including teenage pregnancy, crime, and becoming NEET. The recent publication *Ending Child Poverty: Everybody's Business* reaffirmed the Government's commitment to ending child poverty by 2020, and sets out the range of action that will be taken to achieve this goal. This action will improve the experiences and life chances of young people in low income families, and reduce the risks of negative outcomes associated with growing up in poverty. The Government sees work as the best way out of poverty; as more parents move into work this will not only raise families' incomes, but also increase their aspirations and outcomes, and generate more positive role models for young people.

B.16 More broadly, working through GOs, DCSF and other departments / agencies provide **some specialised support to local authorities and their partners** to help them implement the reforms set out in this document:

- **the Youth Taskforce**, which published its action plan in March 2008, will be a critical part of delivering this PSA. The Taskforce will concentrate on the most challenging young people and those who get into serious trouble, with an approach based on: tough enforcement where young people's behaviour is unacceptable; support to help them overcome problems and prevention to ensure we are dealing with emerging problems before they have become serious and entrenched. It will work within the new local performance framework to provide support to local authorities and other local partners to deliver on their priorities. In particular it will:
 - fund new projects from April 2008 onwards with local authorities – aimed at ensuring that enforcement activity comes with greater support for young people and turning around the lives of the most challenging young people;
 - support the roll-out of targeted youth support, which is a national programme aimed at ensuring early identification and joined up support, through multi-agency working. The **Training and Development Agency for Schools** has been contracted to support the roll-out this programme, to meet the Government's target of having this in place everywhere in the country by December 2008. It offers events and good practice, as well as tailored advice to individual authorities, working with GOs; and
 - oversee targeted support to local areas, combined with national and regional events to support good practice on improving youth outcomes and tackling anti-social behaviour by young people – April 2008 onwards;
- part of the Taskforce's role will be to develop proposals for integrating delivery challenge and support to local areas on youth issues more effectively. It will also consider how some of the current resources for support might be devolved to Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships in the future, and which should continue to stand alone, albeit working with these regional and local bodies;
- to help local Partnerships meet their teenage pregnancy targets, there is a Regional Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator in each GO providing support to all areas with more intensive help for areas significantly off trajectory for their 2010 target. This is supplemented by the **Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team** (funded by DH), which offers areas an intensive 4-day 'diagnostic' visit by an expert team, and a package of follow up support. Areas visited by the TP NST are chosen in liaison with the GO;
- Local authorities can receive help with preventing and tackling youth crime from the **Youth Justice Board**, which receives funding from DCSF, HO and MoJ;
- to support the target of reducing substance abuse by young people, local areas can access support from the **National Treatment Agency** who can provide advice on drug and alcohol treatment services for under 18s;

- the Government is establishing a **Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (CfEO) in Children and Young People's Services**, which will be launched in July 2008. The core purpose of the CfEO will be to identify, co-ordinate and disseminate national, regional and local knowledge and evidence about systems and practice - where outcomes and services for children and young people are improving; and
- the DCSF provides funding to the **National Youth Agency**, which in 2008-09 will focus on supporting the delivery of some specific priorities of *Aiming High for Young People*.

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