

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

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VISION

1.1 The Government's vision is that all young people should be on the path to success and achieve the five outcomes set out in *Every Child Matters*:¹

- to be healthy;
- stay safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution; and
- achieve economic well-being.

1.2 Most young people are already on the path to success. They do well at school, make a successful transition to adult life and go on to build successful careers and families. But not all young people are on this path and many experience problems in their teenage years. Examples include falling behind at school, experiencing health problems or getting involved with drugs, criminal and other unacceptable behaviour. Sometimes, these problems are only temporary setbacks, which are rapidly overcome, often with help from parents, teachers and other professionals. But for some young people, problems can prove more severe and entrenched. This can have serious consequences for young people, for their health, well-being and future development. It can also impose significant burdens and costs on their families and wider society.

1.3 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 to help improve outcomes for teenagers. Within the wider context provided by *Every Child Matters*, 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.

1.4 Despite significant progress on some issues – for example in reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy – the Government now needs to work more closely with its key partners to accelerate progress. A renewed focus on helping improve outcomes for teenagers specifically is needed, along with an approach which ensures that action for teenagers across all Government departments is more than the sum of its parts. The approach needs to recognise in particular that young people who experience one problem often experience several others at the same time – and an integrated response from all government departments and all local services is therefore required.

1.5 This Delivery Agreement sets out the actions that the Government will take with its partners to achieve this integrated response. Success will be strongly dependent on close collaboration between a wide range of local agencies, including health services and the Criminal Justice System, as well as services more explicitly focused on children and young people. 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. Children's Trusts also have an important strategic role to play in this preventative system, as the leader with

¹ *Every Child Matters*, DfES, 2003.

responsibility for commissioning and delivery of improvements in services for children and young people at the local level.

1.6 As set out in *Aiming high for young people: A ten year strategy for positive activities*,² the Government will ensure that all young people:

- have opportunities to take part in activities that develop their resilience and the social and emotional skills they need for life;
- have access to learning that motivates participation and encourages achievement in education, employment training and positive activities;
- have opportunities to gain new life skills and be empowered to take part in decisions which affect them;
- are encouraged to mix with others from different faith and ethnic backgrounds; and
- can better cope with the problems life throws at them and make the right choices – both within school and college and outside it.

1.7 The views of young people and their parents and carers will be taken into account much more widely in the planning and commissioning of services, so that services reflect their needs and their influence. The Government will also bring together governance and performance management arrangements between departments, and clarify roles and responsibilities for all partners to ensure successful delivery.

1.8 The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families is leading a national consultation to develop a Children's Plan. This Delivery Agreement will be reviewed and updated following publication of the plan.

² *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*, HMT/DCSF, 2007.

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MEASUREMENT

2.1 This PSA will measure progress in increasing successful transitions to adulthood in terms of increased participation and increased resilience, alongside tackling negative outcomes. These indicators are mutually reinforcing and complementary, and it is particularly important that strategic and delivery partners recognise the need to 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.

Increased participation and resilience

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

- Being in education, employment and training at this age often increases a young person's resilience and is essential to their future employability and economic well-being. This indicator has a national target for 2010.

Indicator 2: More Participation in Positive Activities

- Participating in high quality 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. This indicator will give Local Authorities information about take-up of positive activities by disadvantaged and targeted groups. It will enable the Government and Local Authorities to assess whether they are making progress in reducing the number of young people who do not currently participate 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 abuse are closely linked with crime, truancy, and other negative experiences. This indicator supports and is linked closely to wider government objectives on safer communities, cutting crime and improving health.

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

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 other PSAs – most notably PSAs 10 and 11.

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. This indicator has a national target for 2010. 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.

Indicator 5: Reduce the number of first-time entrants to the Criminal Justice System aged 10-17

- Offending is linked to truancy, low attainment, employability and substance misuse. This indicator will focus efforts on preventing young people from starting to commit crime or anti-social behaviour in the first place. It is consistent with wider government strategies on safer communities and cutting crime.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

3.1 *Aiming high for young people: A ten year strategy for positive activities* set out the Government's long-term vision for young people and services for them. Implementing the commitments in *Aiming High* and improving the prospects for young people, particularly those most at risk, depends on a wide range of public services giving high priority to the needs of young people and to the aims of this PSA, collaborating with each other more effectively than they do now. The Government will work with its partners to take the following priority actions:

- integrating and simplifying governance, accountability and performance management for the PSA at every level – central, regional and local;
- 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;
- incentivising effective programmes and interventions where there is strong evidence of impact, and supporting commissioners and the frontline to apply them more widely;
- 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;
- 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 – in particular, actively seeking the engagement of the hardest-to-reach groups;
- ensuring that the role of schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and Connexions services in delivering this PSA is widely understood and acted upon;
- ensuring that the contribution that other key public services should make to this PSA is widely understood and acted upon; and
- ensuring there are robust systems in place for the identification of, and interventions for, young people who do not attend school.

3.2 In taking these actions forward, the focus must be on improving services for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.¹

¹ This Delivery Agreement has strong links with a number of other PSAs, particularly PSAs 10, 11, 12, 16, 21, 23 & 25.

PRIORITY ACTION 1: GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

3.3 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.

3.4 To address this, there is a need for more coherent working 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 chain;
- 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

3.5 The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families is the lead minister for this PSA. The relevant Cabinet Committee/s will drive performance by regularly monitoring progress, holding departments and programmes to account and resolving inter-departmental disputes where they arise. There will also be groups at ministerial level to support the work, especially where there are dual-accountability arrangements in place.

3.6 A parallel group will be made up of the Permanent Secretaries of key departments – and will replace the current Every Child Matters Programme Board. It will be tightly focused on monitoring the delivery of the Government’s objectives for children, young people and families, as well as ensuring effective use of resources.

3.7 There will also be a board, specifically focused on youth, chaired by the Director General for Young People in the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and including senior officials from across government which will be responsible for ensuring progress against the delivery of this PSA. It will be supported by the new Youth Inclusion Unit which, whilst being based in the DCSF, will bring officials from several departments together to drive progress on the PSA and to undertake projects on specific issues where additional focus is required.

What this means for Local Authorities and local partners

The role of Children’s Trusts

3.8 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. This is a partnership within the wider Local

Strategic Partnership and is led by the Local Authority in partnership with schools and colleges, Primary Care Trusts, the Youth Offending Teams, the Learning and Skills Council and other partners determined locally.

Co-ordinated performance management

3.9 The PSA will be within the scope of Local Area Agreements, inspectorates' Comprehensive Area Assessment, and coordinated arrangements for supporting improvement and responding robustly to poor performance. The reconfiguration of youth services is a priority and the negotiation of Local Area Agreements is an important lever to ensure that it is seen as such in many areas. Priorities will also be set out in each area's Children and Young People's Plan, of which the Youth Justice Plan is an integral part. Many Children and Young People's Plans are 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.

3.10 Separate performance frameworks will also operate for other local delivery partners, such as Youth Offending Teams, and these arrangements will be aligned with the local government 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

3.11 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 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

3.12 *Youth Matters*² 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 for young people* set out the Government's intention to increase the use of pooled budgets, making commitments in relation to the pooling of Primary Care Trust and youth justice budgets as a first step. In particular:

- in preparation for 2008-09, the Department of Health will make clear to Strategic Health Authorities that Primary Care Trusts are expected to pool their budgets for preventing poor adolescent health with Local Authorities; and

² *Youth Matters*, DfES, July 2005.

- as set out in *Aiming high for young people*, the Government has made clear that it expects Youth Offending Teams to pool with local youth support services 10 per cent of the Youth Justice Board funding they would expect to devote to young people's prevention initiatives. The Department for Children, Schools and Families will work closely across government to monitor the impact of this change on delivery.

3.13 The Paths to Success PSA Board will have 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

3.14 At local level, partners will be encouraged to pool funding through Local Area Agreements to meet common objectives. It will be for local partners, as part of the Local Area Agreement process, to agree how to utilise their resources to best deliver improved outcomes for all and how this funding is to be accounted for.

The role of Youth Offending Teams

3.15 Youth Offending Teams are already an 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. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each Local Authority with education or social services responsibility to establish a Youth Offending Team. These are multi-agency bodies, and are resourced by five statutory partners – defined by the Act as education, social services, health, police and probation – who are required to commit resources to each Youth Offending Team and participate in governance through its Management Board arrangements.

3.16 In order to deliver this PSA, Youth Offending Teams 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. Youth Offending Teams and their partners must build on this preventive infrastructure and maximise its potential to ensure the most socially excluded are reached.

What this means for local health services

3.17 Primary Care Trusts that do not pool relevant budgets with their local partners will need to demonstrate that they are continuing to deliver improved health for young people, for example on teenage pregnancy and substance misuse. The availability and appropriateness of mental health services for 16 and 17 year olds is also crucial in ensuring the delivery of this PSA, especially as many young people involved in substance misuse or crime have mental health issues.

3.18 To support this the Government is introducing a statutory duty on Primary Care Trusts 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 the joint objectives in the Local Area Agreement and Children and Young People’s Plan.

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

3.19 Prevention and, where appropriate, early intervention is clearly at the heart of any system of effective support for young people. This requires all providers working in young people’s services to have a good understanding of the most effective interventions and programmes that both increase participation and lead to greater resilience.

3.20 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, the Government will incentivise its use, through the effective use of Local Area Agreements, the role of Government Offices in sharing intelligence across local areas and Comprehensive Area Assessments.

3.21 As outlined in *Aiming high for young people*, the Government believes there is a strong case for having a clear lead to support effective practice right across public, private and third sectors. The Government will examine how these functions could be better organised and delivered. In particular, this will involve looking closely at the development of the proposed Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s Services and its potential role in supporting better practice in young people’s services.

What this means for government departments

Investing in the third sector

3.22 The Government will also provide further investment to support third sector organisations that have developed effective and innovative approaches to improving the outcomes of vulnerable young people. This will be focused on enabling such providers to sustain and expand their provision, including strategic growth funding for organisations seeking to expand cutting edge services, and funding to support small local organisations to sustain their provision.

What this means for Local Authorities

Effective local commissioning

3.23 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.

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

PRIORITY ACTION 4: DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF THE WORKFORCE

3.24 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.

3.25 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.

What this means for Local Authorities and their partners

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

What this means for government departments

3.27 The Government will work with sector skills councils and national representative bodies in ensuring that the new investment is targeted on gap areas and in further developing a clear strategic direction for the workforce.

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

3.28 Evidence, and the experience of existing initiatives such as 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.

3.29 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, and allow feedback to travel up the delivery chain to inform local, regional and central decisions.

What this means for government departments

Ensuring the voices of under-represented groups are heard

3.30 *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 not engage with services, for example because they are not sensitive enough to their cultures. These new measures should contribute directly to reducing the numbers of young people who do not currently participate in positive activities.

3.31 Further investment will be made available over the spending review period to support this priority, including the continued funding of 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 an increasing proportion of mainstream Local Authority funding for positive activities to young people's influence.

What this means for Local Authorities and local partners

3.32 Every Local Authority should have systems that enable the views of young people and 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.

3.33 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.

3.34 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; 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

3.35 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. Options could include, for example, co-locating services, health visitors etc. on sites that children and young people already use, such as schools and leisure centres.

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

3.36 A good education is key to improving social mobility and giving particularly disadvantaged young people the opportunity to succeed. Schools, colleges and work-based learning providers make up the main universal service for most 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.

What this means for government departments

3.37 The Government plans to introduce compulsory participation in education or training of some kind for all 16 and 17 year olds. Whilst these measures will not come into effect until beyond the life of this Public Service Agreement, the Government is clear that it must do more to encourage young people to stay in education in the meantime.

