

Written Ministerial Statement

Children and Young People's Review

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr Ed Balls): In July 2005, the Government announced that a second Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) would be undertaken, reporting in 2007. Ten years after the first CSR, the Government has shown that a strong economy and sound public finances can be delivered at the same time as sustained and substantial growth in investment in public services. Looking forward, there are new challenges Britain will need to address in order to lock in these benefits for the decade to come, including:

- the intensification of cross-border economic competition as the balance of international economic activity shifts towards rapidly growing emerging markets such as China and India;
- demographic and socio-economic change, such as the rapid increase in the old age dependency ratio as the 'baby boom' generation reaches retirement age;
- the acceleration in the pace of innovation and technological diffusion and a continued increase in the knowledge-intensity of goods and services;
- continued global uncertainty and poverty, with ongoing threats of international terrorism and global conflict; and
- increasing pressures on our natural resources and global climate from rapid economic and population growth in the developing world and sustained demand for fossil fuels in the advanced economies.

These changes will have fundamental and far-reaching implications for public services and will require innovative policy responses, co-ordination of activity across Departmental boundaries and sustained investment in key areas. Budget 2006 therefore announced that the CSR would be informed by a series of policy reviews. One of the reviews announced at the Budget was a joint HM Treasury and Department for Education and Skills policy review of children and young people.

The Government's approach since 1997 has improved the lives of children:

- the risk of a child living in poverty has declined, and 500,000 fewer children live in relative low income poverty than in 1998;
- there are nearly 400,000 fewer children living in workless households;
- educational attainment has increased at all key stages over this period;

- in 1997 there were only 83 comprehensive secondary schools where 70 per cent or more of pupils achieved five or more good GCSEs – by 2004 this had risen to 413; and
- in 1997 a third of children left primary schools without the literacy and numeracy skills necessary to succeed at secondary school and beyond – now 79 per cent achieve these basic standards in English and 75 per cent in maths.

These successes have transformed the life chances of children since 1997. However, in *Support for parents: the best start for children*, published at the Pre-Budget Report, HM Treasury and the Department for Education and Skills identified further steps to be taken to improve the outcomes for children and young people. To take forward these conclusions and inform the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, the policy review of children and young people will consider:

- how services for children and young people and their families can build on the three principles identified in *Support for parents, the best start for children* – rights and responsibilities, progressive universalism and prevention – to improve outcomes for children and young people;

Under the umbrella of the children and young people review, sub-reviews will focus on:

- how services can provide greater support to families with disabled children to improve their life chances;
- what strategy should be adopted over the next ten years to deliver a step change in youth services and support for young people;
- how services for families and children at risk of becoming locked in a cycle of low achievement, high harm and high cost can be reformed to deliver better outcomes.

Submissions from interested organisations and members of the public to inform the review can be sent to: cypreview@hm-treasury.gov.uk.

The Terms of Reference covering each component of the children and young people's review are available in the libraries of both Houses.

The Government will report on the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007.

HM Treasury
5 July 2006

Review of Children and Young People: Terms of Reference

**(Deposited in the Libraries of both Houses as indicated in
Written Statements by Mr Ed Balls and Lord McKenzie of
Luton on 5 July 2006)**

Objective:

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

The scope of the review:

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

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

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

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

The key questions the Review will address are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Review of Disabled Children

Objective:

To improve outcomes and life chances of disabled children through the development of effective and accessible services for disabled children and their families.

The scope of the review will cover:

- services specifically for disabled children, including how specialist services for disabled children support access to universal services, specialist services provided in a universal setting and how universal services refer children to specialist services;
- childcare services, which are of particular importance in the early years for children's development and to support their parents;
- appropriate support for disabled children during the school years and in making the transition into adulthood;
- how expenditure by one service/department can avoid or reduce concurrent or later expenditure by another department.

The Government recognises that financial support and benefits have played an important role in reducing the risks of poverty and delivering economic wellbeing. This provides the foundation on which families, communities and government can work together to secure better outcomes for disabled children and their families. Although financial support and benefits will not be a focus, the review will consider the interrelationship between poverty and service delivery needs.

The review will consider the actions that can lead to better outcomes for those children already with a disability, including family support e.g. respite provision, rather than prevention and risk factors, which will be considered as part of the wider Children and Young People's Review.

The key questions the review will address include:

The changing profile of disabled children, for example, due to increases in complex disability and rise in Autistic Spectrum

Disorders, profound and multiple learning disabilities and low birth-weight babies and the challenges this poses to services.

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

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

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

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

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

What are the most cost effective interventions in delivering better outcomes?

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

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

Strategy for Youth Services

Objective:

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

The scope of the review will cover:

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

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

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

The key questions the review will address includes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Review of High Cost, High Harm Families

Objective:

To:

- **improve services' effectiveness in preventing families from getting caught in a cycle of low attainment, high cost and high harm;**
- **For those families already in this category, to reduce the costs and harm they impose on others including their negative impact on children and young people; and**
- **to support families to emerge from being high cost, high harm on a *sustainable* basis.**

The scope of the review will cover:

the 'stock' of families already regarded as high cost, high harm, those at high risk of moving into this situation and those cycling in and out of this category. Early intervention aiming to prevent families moving towards such poor outcomes in the first instance will be considered as part of the prevention element of the Children and Young people's Review.

The key questions the review will address include:

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

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

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

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

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

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