

Quality Assurance Report



Thurrock's Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) 2006-2007

13th June 2007

Title	Evaluation of Thurrock's Children & Young People's Plan 2006-07
Purpose	To evaluate the current Children's Plan against criteria developed from guidance published by Her Majesty's Government's "Guidance on Children and Young People's Plan"
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1. Summary Recommendations

- 1.1. Thurrock's Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2010 to be reviewed against newly published criteria, as well as taking into account the results of the evaluation of the current CYPP, particularly:
- Clearer links to all relevant criteria issued in the guidance. For example, it should be evident how:
 - School Improvement Plans show how schools contribute to positive outcomes for children and young people and School Improvement Partners are able to help with planning, drawing on the CYPP (and other sources of data) made available to them
 - The Healthy Schools Programme Plan is linked to the CYPP
 - Focus on measurable outcomes with more concise and clearer explanation of what is to be done, when, how and by whom
 - Clearer understanding of the difference to outcomes for children and young people that will be made through the plan's implementation
 - More detailed needs analysis, to include:
 - Demographics, (ward level where possible)
 - External inspections e.g. Joint Area Review, S.5
 - Partners' plans
 - Local specific analysis
 - Improved monitoring and evaluation, with a programme to be developed by Quality Assurance and approved by CYPSP Exec
- 1.2. It is recommended that the structure of the plan be revised to improve clarity of delivery and the following focus is suggested:
- Introduction
 - The Thurrock Children and Young People Strategic Partnership Members
 - Thurrock CYPSP Vision for Improved Outcomes/Future Life for Children and Young People
 - Context
 - Needs Analysis
 - Priorities and Actions and Responsibility for Delivery
 - Resources
 - Monitoring and Evaluating Performance
 - Key Partnerships
 - Links to Strategies and Plans

2. Summary of Evaluation

Although Thurrock's CYPP appears to outline a good strategy in terms of vision and framework, improvements could be made as follows:

- 2.1. It is inconsistent in quality and relevance and whilst it does measure well against approximately 60% of the evaluation criteria, it does not appear to clearly and specifically address all aspects as requested within HMG's "Guidance on Children and Young People's Plan".
- 2.2. It is verbose and accordingly the basis of what is to be achieved, why and how is at best diluted and at times lost
- 2.3. It is fragmented – there does not appear to be a clear link between how aspirations will be met and actions to be taken
- 2.4. It is variable in provision of information on the starting position supported by baseline data
- 2.5. It is difficult to gauge the actual difference every objective was expected to make
- 2.6. It is not always focused on measurable outcomes
- 2.7. It is lacking in a defined process of monitoring and evaluation to understand the effectiveness of the CYPP in achieving its aims

3. Introduction

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is a key element of the Every Child Matters transformation programme. It drives forward improved local integration of children's services and the development of local partnership arrangements.

The 2005 regulations required all authorities to conduct an annual review of their CYPP. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has recently published guidance to undertake this exercise, which is designed to supplement rather than replace existing guidance on the Children and Young People's Plan.

This statutory annual review of each CYPP should include a detailed assessment of progress and improvement; which will be used for both the Annual Performance Assessment and the joint area review in place of the previous self-assessment.

4. Context

Thurrock's CYPP provides the strategic framework for how statutory agencies will work with the voluntary and community sectors to meet the requirements of the Children Act.

On review of the initial published guidance for evaluation of CYPP's, various aspects have been identified and these, in turn, will be evaluated through the investigation of supplementary questions.

Thurrock's initial CYPP was published for 2006-2007 and a subsequent plan is currently being finalised for the period 2007-2010.

5. Aspects of CYPP for Evaluation

- 5.1. Scope of Plan
- 5.2. Links to Other Plans
- 5.3. Timing and Duration
- 5.4. Publication
- 5.5. Consultation and Discussion with Partners and Service Users
- 5.6. Needs Assessment
- 5.7. Key Priorities and Planned Improvements
- 5.8. Use of Resources
- 5.9. Performance Management
- 5.10. Arrangements for Co-operation
- 5.11. Other Issues with CYPP Content

6. Evaluation of Aspects of CYPP

Scope of Plan

- 6.1. Overall, it appears to cover the breadth of age ranges for children and young people, although this could be improved by clarifying specific age ranges:
 - Only one reference to age range of plan, i.e. 0-25, (above 19 still entitled to services), is cited on page 33 of 39 of the plan, with further detail in Appendix 1
 - One reference to children/young people leaving care, with no specific reference to age 20+
 - One reference to children/young people with learning difficulties, with no specific reference to age up to 25
- 6.2. The plan may cover all local authority services affecting children and young people and for example refers to, amongst others, Early Years, Education, Youth Services and Transport. However, it is not clear whether the following are incorporated within the plan, as the following are not specifically referred to:
 - Extended schools
 - Out of school child care
 - Lifelong learning
- 6.3. The plan does cover a full range of partner organisation services, including mental and

public health services and services to tackle drug and alcohol abuse. However, responsibility and onus on delivery is not explicit. There is limited substance in how integrated front-line services will improve outcomes for children and young people

Links to Other Plans

6.4 Reference is made to the Crime and Disorder Strategy,

It is not clear whether key elements of other strategies have been incorporated into the CYPP, as the following are not referred to, (if they are incorporated in the Community Strategy then it is recommend this should be stated):

- Police Authority 3 Year Strategic Plan
- Youth Offending Team Youth Justice Plan
- Probation Service Area Annual Plan
- Drug and Alcohol Misuse Strategies – although targets are anticipated 2006-07 in relation to Thurrock Young People's Substance Misuse Plan (06/07)

6.5 Reference is made to Thurrock's Community Strategy being revised in autumn 2006. Links to relevant changes need to be highlighted in the CYPP for 2007-2010.

It is not clear whether key elements of the following plans have been embedded in the current CYPP:

- Corporate Performance Plan
- Unitary Development Plans, (although reference is made to the Thurrock and Thames Gateway Development Corporation)

6.6 It is not clear whether the CYPP reflects the priorities of the following plans/schemes, although these may be incorporated in the Capital Programme:

- Building Schools for the Future
- Primary School capital programme
- NHS Lift and other PFI schemes

6.7 There is evidence of the capture of key elements of strategic plans across the partnership, such as:

- Connexions LMC plan
- The priorities of the Domestic Abuse Delivery Group

The CYPP needs to more clearly capture key elements from the following:

- LSC strategic plan for 14-19

- CAMHS strategy
 - Early Years and Play Strategy – although reference is made to the development of a Play Strategy with a launch date of February 2007
 - Accessibility strategy
 - Disability Equality scheme – published December 2006
 - Special Education Needs policy
 - Children's Fund Plan
- 6.8 It is not as yet evident that the PCT's Local Development plan has a specific focus on children and young people. However, this needs to be demonstrated in the CYPP 2007-2010, as reference is made in the current CYPP to the current creation of such a plan, which will radically change the nature of local health provision for children and young people

Timing and Duration

- 6.9 Whilst it is clear that the current plan is for one year 2006-2007, with the development of a full three year plan thereafter, the following is not as evident:
- Whether all actions are time-bound
 - Established timeline
 - A clear timetable for establishing formal trust arrangement

Publication

- 6.10 Reference should be made to the availability of child and parent friendly versions of the CYPP, with details of how the contents of the CYPP will be communicated to children, young people, families and carers

It is understood that a children's leaflet is available, although not referred to in the CYPP

Consultation and Discussion with Partners and Service Users

- 6.11 In response to whether the CYPP actively sought the views of children, young people, vulnerable groups and minority groups, it is clear there has been a number of consultation events or processes.

It is not as clear to what extent:

- Children, young people, families and carers have been involved in the needs assessment process
- Children, young people and families have been involved in the planning,

preparation and drafting of the CYPP

- Children and young people with disabilities have been consulted with
- Consultation has taken place with a variety of groups including:
 - Gypsy/travellers
 - Minority ethnic groups
 - Refugees/asylum seekers
 - Lesbian, gay and bisexual young people
 - Learners aged 19-25

6.12 As above, consultation processes have taken place and it is recommended that the extent to which a wide range of partners have been actively involved is more clearly outlined

6.13 The voluntary sector's involvement in the preparation of the CYPP appears to be limited to its representation within the CYPSP structure, although there is a commitment to ensuring the views and expertise of the voluntary sector are taken into account when developing strategies, although it is not clear how this will happen

It is recommended that the effectiveness of the voluntary sector's involvement in the preparation of the CYPP and whether it was in line with the Compact Code of Good Practice is included in the revised CYPP

6.14 Although plans to feedback to those partners and service users who participated in the development of the CYPP are not evident, there is a commitment to develop a communication and consultation strategy in conjunction with the Youth Cabinet

Needs Assessment

6.15 The CYPP does not yet provide a strategic needs assessment against outcomes for young people, although reference is made to the needs analysis, (Annual Performance Assessment report December 2005)

6.16 Where relevant baseline and trend data is provided, it is generally clearly presented, although it is not evident whether a robust analysis of strengths and weaknesses has been undertaken

6.17 Reference is made to having completed a significant amount of work on understanding the local context, however it would be useful to include:

- Whether educational targets included have been agreed with DfES
- Which key issues can be attributed to external inspections, such as the 2005 APA
- Whether self-evaluation has worked and why

6.18 To what extent partners and other agencies have contributed to the needs assessment

is recommended to be clearer

Key Priorities and Planned Improvements

- 6.19 It is difficult to judge whether the local priorities for action have been informed by a needs assessment and be clear that:
- Targets for improved outcome are ambitious but realistic
 - Targets reflect local and national priorities
 - Priorities for action closely reflect the outcomes most in need of improvement
 - Priorities reflect those for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and young people
- 6.20 The range of mechanisms used for determining key priorities include consultation with children, young people and their families, however it is recommended that it be clear:
- How these views have been used to determine priorities
 - Whether priorities have been determined by all strategies available
 - If any of the priorities have been determined by need to find out more about what is effective or build up capacity to deliver
 - Whether a prioritisation exercise has been undertaken to ensure those included are those with the greatest leverage for improving the overall outcome
 - If cost-effectiveness of different approaches has been taken into account
- 6.21 The plan includes clear timescales and milestones in achieving actions for 2006/07, and the same clarity should be evident in how these actions strike a balance between maintaining high levels of service whilst moving to new models of delivery

Use of Resources

- 6.22 It would appear some work needs to be done in how use of resources will contribute to improving outcomes, particularly:
- Pooling of budgets
 - How partners' budgets will be used
 - The best use of assets, resources and technology
 - Evidence in the shift in resourcing to universal prevention and early intervention
- 6.23 There does not appear to be a statement of resources attached to the CYPP, which would help determine:

- Whether the statement provides actions which are affordable
- Whether this was made available to members and local partners as part of endorsing the CYPP
- How resources will contribute to improving outcomes

Performance Management

6.24 The CYPP does not appear to provide a clear outline of performance management arrangements and improvements are suggested in the following areas:

- Robust structure facilitating effective accountability
- Local performance measures and key performance indicators
- How partners identify how their performance management systems will be aligned to monitor the delivery and impact of the CYPP
- Clearer lines of accountability in the CYPP

6.25 Joint working is referred to in the CYPP and whilst arrangements for co-operation with local partners is not clear, it would be helpful for the following to be included:

- How and over what period the authority will establish arrangements for joint working at strategic level
- More detail of how and over what period the authority will establish joint working arrangements at other levels such as frontline services and regional/sub regional, (and what these arrangements will look like)

6.26 There is evidence within the CYPP of arrangements for lead professional and multi-agency working and this could be developed to explain how:

- Children, young people and families will benefit from integrated services
- Packages of support will be tailored
- Integrated working will operate early on in the process

6.27 There does not appear to be a time scaled effective strategy for establishing a Children's Trust, although arrangements for a Children's Trust are referred to in the CYPP

Other Issues with CYPP Content

6.28 In relation to links with health, although there is a commitment to the development of Children's Centres, work to address teenage pregnancy and links to the Healthy School plan, there is a lack of evidence within the CYPP explaining how:

- It is planned to engage with midwives for early support and onward referral of

families

- The CYPP links to practice-based commissioning
- NSF for Children, Young People and Maternity services are addressed within the CYPP framework (this is referred to in the introduction of the plan but not thereafter)

6.29 The need for schools to draw on the CYPP in relation to school improvement planning needs to be more explicit

There appears to be established working arrangements with schools, such as through the School Organisation Plan/Shaping Thurrock Education and Skill and the Capital Programme, however it is not clear who will review school improvement plans to assess how schools can contribute to the outcomes for children and young people

6.30 In relation to links with partners:

- Work is being done to ensure that workforce strategies are an integral part of the CYPP
- It is not clear how unhelpful competition will be avoided
- There does not appear to be proposals for developing HR capacity, (although this may be addressed in the recruitment and retention strategy referred to)
- It is not evident how partners will make use of the labour market in designing/commissioning/delivery of services to children young people and families
- More work needs to be done in improving the skill mix within services (this may be being addressed within the Workforce Strategy)
- There appears to be a number of projects underway in relation to local approaches to, for example, Common Assessment Framework
- There appears to have been progress made in the integrated training of staff, however it is not clear whether this is explicitly in the area of information sharing
- It cannot be determined whether information sharing protocols are in place

7 Conclusion

Overall, the current CYPP meets a satisfactory percentage of the criteria, as provided by the guidance issued by HMG.

However, whilst there are elements of good focus and clear explanation of what is to be achieved, how and why, revisions need to be made, as detailed in this report and summary recommendations, to improve the CYPP from 2007-2010