

Consultation on New Statutory Children's Trust Guidance and New Children and Young People's Plan Regulations

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is:

29 January 2010

Your comments must reach us by that date.

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact David Aickin in the Local Area Policy Unit on:

Telephone: 020 7340 7376

e-mail: NewChildrensTrustsGuidance.CONULTATION@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DCSF e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Consultation Unit by e-mail: consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0870 000 2288.

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 0870 000 2288 e-mail: consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Please select the category which best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Local authority Chief Executive	<input type="checkbox"/> Director of Children's Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Director of Adult Social Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Local authority senior management	<input type="checkbox"/> Elected Member (Lead Member for Children's Services)	<input type="checkbox"/> Elected Member (other)
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Health Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary Care Trust	<input type="checkbox"/> Health sector (other)
<input type="checkbox"/> School sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Further Education sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Police
<input type="checkbox"/> Probation board	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Offending Team	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer
<input type="checkbox"/> Young person aged 19 or under	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional working with young people	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary/Community sector
<input type="checkbox"/> Early years sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)

Please Specify: This is response is on behalf of Nottinghamshire Children's Trust.

1 Overall, do you agree that the guidance will help to strengthen the engagement of Children's Trust partners (statutory or otherwise)? If not, what else is needed?

Yes

Comments:

The Guidance is helpful in this respect as it clarifies the roles and responsibilities of various partnerships and partners. The addition of the statutory governance role of the Board is welcome as it is something that has been missing in the past.

The inclusion of schools, further education providers and Jobcentre Plus as statutory partners is welcomed.

More clarity needs to be provided on how statutory and non-statutory bodies will link together. Examples of effective working relationships (case studies) from other Children's Trusts would help illuminate this.

Specialist providers e.g. Specialist CAMHS (tier 3 and 4) only have a brief mention. This is a critical element of children and young people's partnerships and could helpfully be strengthened throughout the document.

The role of the Children's Trust Board may be strengthened by being designated the 'Responsible Commissioner' for the Children and Young People's Plan.

Where guidance mentions existing initiatives and statutory guidance within the DCSF and other departments, it would be helpful to make more explicit reference to these and provide relevant web-links and other sources of further information. For example, all initiatives in Chapter 3, Working Together to Safeguard Children and those relating to health and community safety.

2 Does the guidance provide a clear explanation (in chapter one) of what the Children's Trust and the Children's Trust Board are and do, and how they are different? If not, how else should this be covered?

Yes

Comments: This section provides a clear explanation of roles. However, it may help to communicate the concepts via a diagram showing the various partnerships and partners, their inter-relationship and lines of accountability.

3 Does the guidance provide sufficient clarity (in chapters two and seven) on how the partners should be represented on the Children's Trust Board? If not, how else should this be covered?

Not Sure

Comments:

Generally, the guidance is clear.

However, it would be useful to have more guidance on how non-PCT providers fit - children's services within PCTs cover a vast range of services – there may be a lack of technical expertise across the Board to adequately represent and identify need.

Having said this, it is often difficult to secure appropriate and effective representation from independent contractors, including GPs. It may be more appropriate to designate a specific role for involvement, for example a Professional Executive Committee Chair or equivalent. The same is true of schools – it is difficult for any one school to speak on the behalf of hundreds of others. It is important that these issues are given due consideration, with more detailed guidance included.

It would also be helpful to have more detailed guidance on how to manage the large numbers of partners and decision making structures within two-tier local authorities (for example, multiple district level Local Strategic Partnerships). Some examples of how this is managed in other areas would be useful.

The role of Fire and Rescue Services is not covered, despite the extensive work they do with vulnerable children.

4 Does this guidance make clear (in chapter three) the integrated tools and processes to be used in Children's Trust co-operation arrangements? If not, how else should this be covered?

Not Sure

Comments:

The section emphasises the need for Children's Trust partners to develop an information governance framework setting out common principles for effective information sharing, but then only has limited guidance on how this is to be achieved and measured. It would be useful to have more detailed guidance on this.

These integrated processes extend beyond IT systems. Therefore, it would be useful to include a section on the core processes that all Children's Trust Boards will be expected to meet supported by case studies of local processes developed across the country.

5 Does the guidance make clear (in chapter four) what the responsibilities of the Children's Trust partners and the Children's Trust Board are around commissioning? If no, how else should this be covered?

Yes

Comments:

It is pleasing to see the expected involvement of health clinicians and providers in aspects of commissioning. However, please refer to the response to Question 1.

It would be helpful if the definition of commissioning is the one used by the Commissioning Support Programme as most other documentation does.

Guidance relating to pooled budgets should be more directive to ensure the consistent adoption of this approach. Clarity will help to ensure a greater move towards the use of pooled budgets.

6 Does the guidance make clear (in chapter six) the role of the Children's Trust Board in developing the local workforce strategy? If not, how else should this be covered?

No

Comments:

This section lacks detail and cohesion. This is a weak link in the paper and requires a lot more substance. Development of an integrated workforce is the most dynamic way to move towards collaborative working and improving outcomes. The document does not currently provide sufficient guidance on, nor does it emphasise, the importance on how we can learn together so we can work better together.

It would be useful to make explicit the importance of the role of the Children's Trust Board in identifying a workforce champion, and for member organisations to identify individuals from their own organisations to champion partnership workforce development. In addition, the distinction between internal workforce planning and strategies and an over-arching Children's Trust workforce strategy that establishes the values and principles for the whole Children and Young People's workforce needs to be emphasised. It would be helpful if the guidance could be more directive in this respect.

7 Does the guidance make clear (in chapter seven) how to set up the Children's Trust Board? If not, how else should this be covered?

Yes

Comments:

However, the guidance is heavily focussed on schools, which raises concerns around the lack of involvement of major health providers. For example, there is a distinct lack of focus on the roles of specialist CAMH services, with the only mentions being around Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Transition.

It would be helpful if the guidance could provide more guidance on how health partners, particularly providers, should be involved, especially in the context of the expectation of the Trust being a commissioning body. It is a complex landscape and this is not always recognised or reflected in the guidance. Perhaps work with the Department of Health may help to build on this aspect of the guidance.

8 Should the guidance provide (in chapter seven) additional information about the support and challenge role of the Government Office, and how they will work with the Children's Trust partners and the Board on areas where they may need improvement support?

Yes

Comments:

More guidance and clarity on how this will be delivered in practice would be welcomed.

9 Does the guidance make clear (in chapter eight) what the responsibilities of the Children's Trust Board are around representing children and young people's interests [and ensuring that the CYPP is properly reflected] in wider strategic planning overseen by the Local Strategic Partnership? If not, how else should this be covered?

Not Sure

Comments:

This section would benefit from more emphasis on the importance of establishing an ongoing dialogue between children, young people and parents/carers and the Trust, not only within the framework of the CYP Plan, but also in terms of mechanisms for children, young people and parents/carers to raise their own issues within the Trust. Good practice examples of innovative ways of doing this in a child/young person-led way would be very valuable.

The guidance should emphasise that coordination of this activity across the Trust is essential in order to prevent duplication of effort, "consultation fatigue" and tokenism in achieving this. It should also emphasise that activity should be meaningful and not about who shouts the loudest. Examples of what this might mean in practice, or resources that provide them, should be included. Clear thought needs to be given to the views of all young people and their families and all levels of service provision and service planning.

The document as a whole does not seem to link with Department of Health guidance for providing children's services in general, and to their approach and guidance on involving service users, in particular. For example, a reference to the You're Welcome standards should be included here. This will help to facilitate and support joined up working and services in localities.

10 Does the guidance make clear (in chapter eight) what steps the Board should take in preparing, publishing and reviewing the CYPP? If not, how else should this be covered?

Yes

Comments:

However, there are some concerns regarding priority setting and how agreement is reached – how will the varying and often conflicting priority and target setting processes and guidance for each partner be resolved? Policy guidance and drivers from departments at national level can often cause conflict and issues for priority and target setting in partnership at local level, pulling agencies in divergent, rather than convergent directions.

11 Do you agree it would be helpful if the guidance were linked to "good practice" examples hosted on existing websites? Do you have any examples of web-sites to suggest? What would be the most helpful way of spreading good practice and through which websites?

Yes

Comments:

Definitely. Sharing good practice is extremely useful.

Some suggestions for where to go for good practice:

National CAMHS Support Service website – contact Dawn Rees at the CAMHS Support Service.

Nottinghamshire Children's Trust is currently refining its governance structures, how it develops and produces the children's chapter of the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis, its relationship with the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board and the involvement of children, young people and parents/carers. We are happy to share our learning and experiences, although it is still relatively "early days".

Hear By Right <http://hbr.nya.org.uk/> and

Participation Works www.participationworks.org.uk

provide good practice and standards frameworks for the involvement of children and young people in decision making. The Hear By Right website now has particular resources on Children's Trusts.

In terms of hosting such information/links, the following suggestions are made:

A national hub with resources and networking for Children's Trusts

Nottinghamshire Children's Trust is currently developing its website and would be interested in developing a good practice section for local partners.

NHS Nottinghamshire County also offer the use of their website to host information.

This question relates to the draft new Children and Young People's Plan regulations.

12 Do you agree that the matters to be dealt with in the Plan as set out in Section 4 of the Regulations are appropriate?

Yes

Comments:

However, they should include how links will be made with the other statutory duties of partners. There are often conflicting and inconsistent policy drivers and targets which may make it difficult to implement these regulations (see question 10): for example, Standard 9 – Emotional health and psychological well-being of children, young people and their families - of the National Service Framework and the forthcoming government review of this.

This question relates to the draft new Children and Young People's Plan regulations.

13 Are there additional requirements that you would like to see set out in the Regulations? If so, what are they?

Yes

Comments:

Evidence of meaningful consultation with relevant partners and use of an evidence base for decision making should be required.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply Yes

Here at the Department for Children, Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

All DCSF public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DCSF consultations are conducted, please contact Donna Harrison, DCSF Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 794304 / email: donna.harrison@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 29 January 2010

Send by post to: David Aickin (consultation response), Local Area Policy Unit, Ground Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

Send by e-mail to:

NewChildrensTrustsGuidance.CONULTATION@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk