

REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORT

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	Schools' Forum
DATE OF MEETING:	21 April 2010
SUBJECT:	Children's Trust Arrangements
REPORT BY:	Clive Yates Business Manager Children and Young People Strategic Partnership
NAME OF CONTACT OFFICER:	Clive Yates
CONTACT OFFICER TEL NO:	01522 553204
CONTACT OFFICER EMAIL ADDRESS:	Clive.yates@lincolnshire.gov.uk
IS REPORT EXEMPT?	No
IS THE REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

SUMMARY

To update the Schools' Forum about the new *Statutory guidance on cooperation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan* which comes into effect in April 2010 and which confirms schools including Academies to be statutory partners of Children's Trusts and the associated duty to cooperate

DISCUSSION

Children's Trust

The Children's Trusts are the sum total of cooperation arrangements and partnerships between local organisations with a role in improving outcomes for children and young people.

Children's Trusts have developed in different ways reflecting variation in local circumstances. This local variation should continue because what works well in one place will not necessarily work so well in another. It is more important that every local area is able to meet the challenge set by the national Children's Plan of creating a consistently excellent system that will do more for the most vulnerable and continuously improve the quality of our services for all parents and children.

The introduction of the new statutory guidance (laid April 2010) places additional challenges on the relevant statutory partners of the Trust. Schools (including Academies, and non maintained special schools), FE and sixth-form colleges and Jobcentre Plus are new statutory 'relevant partners' in the Children's Trust co-operation arrangements from 12 January 2010. This means that like other statutory 'relevant partners' they are required to co-operate with the local authority and its other partners to improve children's well-being through the Children's Trust co-operation arrangements;

Note - Management committees of pupil referral units (which will be known as short stay schools from 1 September 2010) will also be included as 'relevant partners' under regulations

Children's Trust Board

The Children's Trust Board will oversee the Children's Trust cooperation agreements; provide the interagency governance to bring partners together in a common strategy through the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

The Children's Trust Board prepares and monitors the implementation of the Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) – but does not deliver it. Delivering the strategy remains the responsibility of the partners, both individually and together. Each partner within the Children's Trust retains its own functions and responsibilities within the wider partnership framework.

Cooperation Arrangements

Children's Trust cooperation arrangements take a number of different shapes, from formal agreements, with pooled funds and delegated functions, to the sharing of staff, buildings, equipment, new technologies, information, specialist knowledge, skills and administrative support.

The cooperation arrangements operate at every organisational level, from developing the overall strategy to delivering front-line services. This means that, for example the Children's Trust Board is part of the cooperation arrangements (the part that provides the interagency governance of the arrangements), each Sure Start Children's Centre is another and processes, such as the Common Assessment Framework and joint staff training programmes, are also part of these same arrangements.

Legislation and Guidance

Legislation in The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009 builds on the Children Act 2004 and strengthens Children's Trusts by:

- extending the number of statutory 'relevant partners' to include maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, Academies, sixth-form and further education colleges, Jobcentre Plus and Pupil Referral Units/Short Stay Schools – from 12 January 2010;
- placing the Children's Trust Board on a statutory footing – from 1 April 2010;
- making the CYPP a joint strategy which sets out how the Children's Trust partners will cooperate to improve children's well-being in the local area – every local area must publish a joint CYPP on or before 1 April 2011; Immediate requirement to consider the following in preparing the CYPP re-write will include:-
 1. Bringing more consistency/transparency to the CYPP.
 2. Providing a stronger focus on safeguarding.

3. Agreeing representation (and structure) of partners on the Children's Trust Board
 4. Strengthening references to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.
 5. Having specific reference on commissioning revised to reflect improved and different approaches to commissioning.
 6. Strengthening references to workforce and early intervention in preparation of the new CYPP
- transferring responsibility for preparing, publishing and revising the CYPP from the local authority (LA) alone to the Children's Trust Board (individual Children's Trust partners are responsible for delivering the CYPP within the delivery of their normal functions);
 - giving the Board responsibility for monitoring the extent to which each Children's Trust partner acts in accordance with their commitments in the CYPP, and for producing and publishing an annual report on the results.

Perhaps the biggest challenge within the CYPP will be the alignment/pooling and sharing of budgets and resources. The CYPP should be clear and set out how priorities have been costed, the resources identified and where accountabilities lie for resources (pooled or otherwise).

The CYPSP is currently reviewing its governance structure and the School Forum is asked to be an active consultee on this review. Representatives from Schools, is essential and the Local Authority is responsible for developing – in agreement with schools – a system for representation. As the remit of the School Forum has a statutory role in finance matters the guidance suggests that it may be too limited to represent the full range of interests needed for the Board – An alternative system for representation is required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report be note and the Schools' Forum consider how it can best support schools to deliver this new duty and how schools can be fairly represented on the Trust Board.

The Schools' Forum engages with and completes the 'consultation response form' on receipt.

APPENDICES - these are listed below and attached at the back of the report.	
APPENDIX 1	<i>Statutory guidance on cooperation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan</i>

BACKGROUND PAPERS
No background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.