

A new Children and Young People's Plan for Solihull, 2010 – 2013

Consultation

January 2010



1. INTRODUCTION

Children and Young People's Plans

- 1.1. Every local area has to produce an improvement plan, called the Children & Young People's Plan, which covers all services that affect the lives of children, young people and their families.
 - 1.2. The purpose of the plan is to improve life outcomes for all children and young people.
 - 1.3. The Plan should be 'strategic', which means that it is about the big picture rather than the tiny details – how everything fits together to make children and young people's lives better.
 - 1.4. Children and Young People's Plans usually last for three years, but are reviewed every year and updated if needed.
- 1.9. The consultation on the new Plan starts on the 5th January 2010 and ends on the 31st March 2010 – three months.
 - 1.10. We've got a lot of people to listen to:
 - Children and young people: we have produced a questionnaire for children and young people and will be consulting them through schools and youth councils and other groups. Children and young people have helped us to design the consultation.
 - Parents: We have produced a survey for parents, supported by Solihull's new Parents Forum. We'll use this with parents and carers across Solihull through schools, children's centres and other groups.
 - Wider community: we are launching a campaign in the local media to identify what makes families strong in Solihull. Children, young people and parents are being asked to identify the three best things about family life, and to enter a photo competition. Images of family life in Solihull will be used in the new Plan.
 - Partner organisations: Each partner to the Children and Young People's Trust will use this document to involve their volunteers, staff, managers and leaders.

This consultation process

- 1.5. Solihull's current Plan runs out in 2010 so we need a new one.
- 1.6. The new Plan will be formally approved and published in July 2010. Between now and then we need you to help us develop the plan, especially choosing the things which are most important to work on – we call these our priorities.
- 1.7. The consultation is about three things:
 - **Vision:** what we want.
 - **Priorities:** what's most important for us to tackle.
 - **Partnership:** how we're going to work together to make a difference.
- 1.8. You don't have to respond to every part of the consultation – choose the parts that you are most interested in.
- 1.11. Feedback forms are available to collect your views. After the consultation we will publish a report on what you told us, and what we're going to do about it.
- 1.12. This consultation document has been directly informed by the Children and Young People's Trust Assembly (15th October, 178 staff and volunteers took part) and consultation with school children in autumn 2008 (4500 children and young people, across 20 schools).

2. VISION: WHAT WE WANT

Our vision in 2007

- 2.1. In 2007 we set out to make Solihull a place where all children and young people have an equal chance and achieve their full potential.
- 2.2. Our vision had three main parts. Firstly, it was about all children and young people, from conception to the age of 19, and up to the age of 25 for the most vulnerable young people such as those with learning difficulties and care leavers.
- 2.3. Secondly, it was about an equal chance, also often called 'closing the gap', for those that suffer the poorest outcomes in our society.
- 2.4. And thirdly, our vision was about full potential, also often called 'raising the bar'. We want all our children and young people to be the best they can be.

Progress since 2007

- 2.5. Have we 'closed the gap and raised the bar' in Solihull? Yes, but not as much as we want to. For example:
 - Assessment results for 5 year old children in Solihull are amongst the best in England (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile). However although the gap between the lowest achieving 5 year old children and the rest in Solihull is getting smaller we are a long way off our target.
 - Solihull performs well above the England average in most indicators of education and has consistently been ranked in the top 10 authorities for children up to the age of 11. More young people in Solihull are achieving 5 A* - C grade GCSEs, but for good GCSE passes with English and Maths the gap doesn't seem to be closing as fast, and Solihull has not met a tough local target for improvement.

- Solihull is below the national average for initiating & sustaining breastfeeding. In 2008/9 half of new mums in south Solihull were still breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks, compared with a fifth of new mums in north Solihull.
- The rate of teenage pregnancy in Solihull is low but rates in north Solihull are above national averages. Teenage conceptions can have long-term social, health and economic consequences for both mother and baby.

- 2.6. The Children and Young People's Trust Assembly in October suggested that our new Plan should say more about the role of parents and carers in securing the best outcomes for children and young people, and have more emphasis on the family.

Our vision for 2010 – 2013

- 2.7. Our proposed new vision is:

"Solihull in 2013: where all children, young people and families are valued, have an equal chance and achieve their full potential within their communities."

- 2.8. 'Valued'

- Children, young people and families help make **Solihull a fun, happy, caring, enterprising and diverse place**. We will celebrate their achievements and their contribution to community life in Solihull.
- Strong communities are built on good communication and mutual respect. We want **children and young people to be cared about and respected** within our communities. Their views and ideas can make a difference. We will bring communities together and build understanding and trust.
- Children, young people and families have the right to be listened to and to **make informed choices for themselves**. We will make information accessible for children, young people

and families, and develop more opportunities for them to be involved in making decisions.

- Children, young people and families want **services that are designed around what they need**, and that changes as their needs change. We will develop services that are joined up and local so that children, young people and families can get the services they need in Solihull, or local to them.

2.9. 'Equal chance'

- We want every child and young person to succeed in life. We want them to aspire to be the best they can be, and to be happy and well-rounded individuals. We will **tackle the inequalities** that hold some families back and **build their aspirations**.
- An equal chance means giving **different support to different families**, depending on what they need. We will provide early support for children and young people who are more vulnerable that is designed around what they need and want.

2.10. 'Full potential'

- Child and young people thrive when they are healthy, safe, enjoy & achieve, make a positive contribution and benefit from economic well-being. Families come in all different shapes and sizes, but we believe that children and young people achieve the **best outcomes when growing within a loving family**. We will support and challenge families to provide a caring, stable, safe and learning environment for their children.
- **Good health is about the whole family**. We will help families make healthy choices, and build a whole community approach to good health. We will make sure that children and young people with poor health or who are disabled get the support they need.

- **Keeping children and young people safe depends on whole communities**: the neighbour reporting the bruises; the school tackling bullying; the parent teaching road safety; the foster carer never giving up; the police officer searching for the young runaway; the young volunteer running the youth club. We will work together to protect children and young people and make Solihull a safe place to be.
- National standards in school and college have a huge impact on life chances. But **every child and young person achieves success in different ways**. We will nurture and celebrate personal achievements in and out of school, and help children, young people and parents to keep learning.
- Having time to **play is a vital part of physical, emotional, social and educational development**. We will invest in things to do & places to go for children and young people of all ages.
- Children and young people are a force for good in our communities, as volunteers, entrepreneurs, carers, community leaders and much more. We will support them to **grow in confidence and independence** and to cope with life's challenges. We will give clear boundaries to help them be responsible citizens.
- For children and young people to thrive their families need decent housing; access to learning and jobs; flexible childcare; safe and effective transport; and good community facilities. We will 'think family' when we invest in the development of local communities, and **tackle the causes of poverty** and disadvantage.

Do you agree with our vision for Solihull in 2013? How could we improve it?

3. PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT 2010-2013

Introduction

- 3.1. Most children and young people in Solihull thrive and succeed. However for some children and young people the 'borough average' doesn't reflect their experience of life and they do not achieve their full potential.
- 3.2. Each year the Children and Young People's Trust carries out an Outcomes Review (also known as a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for children) to find out how well children and young people are doing against the 5 Outcomes (be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; benefit from economic well-being).
- 3.3. In 2007 we chose 6 priorities for improvement, based on the evidence from the Outcomes Review and local views on what was most important:
 - Healthy lifestyles.
 - Anti-bullying and personal safety.
 - Things to do and places to go.
 - Raising achievement for all.
 - An equal chance for children and young people who are carers, unaccompanied asylum seekers, disabled or Looked After.
 - Integrated Services.
- 3.4. Priorities can have a significant impact on change by attracting attention, money and support. An outcome or issue is chosen as a priority because outcomes are poor or getting worse; or because making an improvement here would significantly improve children and young people's lives.
- 3.5. This section summarises local evidence against the 5 Outcomes and asks you to give a view on what our priorities should be for the new Plan.
- 3.6. The local evidence comes from the annual Outcomes Review, children and young people's views, views expressed at the Trust Assembly on the 15th of October.
- 3.7. The Trust Assembly brought together staff and volunteers from across the children and young people's workforce in Solihull, including the Council, Voluntary and Community Sector, NHS Care Trust, schools and colleges, Police, and Fire and Rescue Service. Ten workshops identified key issues and explained why these were seen as important. The comments reflect both collective and individual views.

Healthy: the Outcomes Review

- 3.8. Children and young people are healthier today than they have ever been, due to medical, technological, social and economic advances. But some children do less well than others.
- 3.9. In Solihull fewer babies are born with low birth weight than the West Midlands average, but most of these are in north Solihull. Rates of smoking in pregnancy however are comparatively high.
- 3.10. The number of Solihull mums who choose to breastfeed their babies is low compared with the rest of England, although this has been increasing over the last four years. Solihull is well behind local targets for both initiating & sustaining breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks.
- 3.11. The proportion of children who are overweight or obese in Solihull appears to be reducing. This may be due to rising levels of breastfeeding, more children and young people eating '5 a day', and relatively high numbers of children and young people taking part in sport and physical exercise every week.
- 3.12. Solihull has a low rate of teenage conceptions, but is struggling to reduce this further and meet national targets. Teenage conceptions are higher in north Solihull, above the national average. Rates of chlamydia, the most common UK sexually transmitted infection, are low, but again higher in north Solihull.
- 3.13. Drug misuse is considered to be less prevalent in Solihull than in the rest of the West Midlands Police force area. But surveys of children and young people suggest that frequent use of drugs or alcohol is higher in Solihull than elsewhere.
- 3.14. Health outcomes for Looked After Children are good and better than statistical neighbours.

Healthy: what children and young people said

- 3.15. Keeping healthy was rated the most important priority by children and young people. They were asked for their ideas on how to improve physical health.
- 3.16. They suggested making more fruit and vegetables available in school free of charge, and the opportunity to grow your own.
- 3.17. They wanted more opportunities to exercise, and different choices to appeal to different interests. They suggested more 'walking buses' and a morning club where everyone cycles to school together.
- 3.18. They also thought that if physical exercise is so important then playtime should be longer and there should be more clubs outside of school run by people who know about healthy lifestyles and exercise.
- 3.19. When it came to drugs and alcohol children and young people wanted to know the facts so that they could make their own decisions.

Healthy: Ideas from the Assembly

- 3.20. Health outcomes are significantly worse for some, particularly in north Solihull. Closing the inequality gap depends on inclusive, stigma-free support. "It's one thing to put on services, it's another to get people to use them".
- 3.21. The earlier the better: healthy behaviours with babies and very young children are habit forming. It's much harder to start with teenagers.
- 3.22. Emotional well-being and positive self esteem have a significant impact on all outcomes. Positive parenting makes the biggest difference.

- 3.23. Good health involves the whole family. We need to educate and support parents as well as children and young people.
- 3.24. We need a whole community approach to good health, looking at buildings, transport and public space, especially when we regenerate communities.
- 3.25. Tackling misuse of drugs, alcohol and smoking (particularly in north Solihull) would have a knock on effect on a range of issues, including anti-social behaviour, teenage pregnancy, bullying, and road safety.
- 3.26. Children need opportunities for play and exercise at all ages.
- 3.27. Teenage pregnancy is a particular issue in north Solihull – we need to tackle the view that getting pregnant is a ticket to free housing.

What should our 'healthy' priorities be for the new Children and Young People's Plan, and why?

Safe: The Outcomes Review

- 3.28. The number of children in Solihull with a child protection plan is rising and this reflects the national concern about child protection since Baby Peter. Solihull is still below the national average and in line with statistical neighbours.
- 3.29. Repeat child protection plans have been rising over the last few years, although there has been a significant improvement in the first half of 2009/10. Repeat plans can mean that children were deregistered too quickly, or didn't receive the right support services, and this is a good indicator of how successful local services are at keeping the most at risk children safe.
- 3.30. Children and young people in Solihull are more likely than elsewhere to say that they have never been bullied. Survey results vary significantly which makes it hard to be definitive, but the majority of children report that schools take bullying seriously.
- 3.31. Solihull has a relatively low crime rate. However young men aged 14 – 19 are most at risk from violent crime and the vast majority of robbery victims are under 19. Fear of crime is greatest amongst young women aged 16-24, despite young men of the same age being twice as likely to be victims.
- 3.32. The number of Looked After children is rising, mainly due to increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Stability of placements for Looked After children is very good, although increasing numbers locally and nationally are starting to put pressure on placement costs and availability of foster parents.
- 3.33. Ten children and young people were killed on Solihull roads in 2007/8, eleven in 2008/9. These numbers are very low compared to other parts of the country.

Safe: Children & young people's ideas

- 3.34. Children and young people were asked for their ideas on how to stop bullying and stay safe.
- 3.35. They suggested anti-bullying campaigns and "showing people through role play how horrible bullying can be". They thought class activities to build confidence and encourage people to stand up for themselves would help. They wanted "harder punishments for the bullies".
- 3.36. They gave lots of ideas about a safer community, such as more police, lunchtime supervisors, leaflets and reminder posters on how to keep safe, street lighting and CCTV. They wanted "more kind people to talk to".
- 3.37. They also wanted more help for families: "telling parents what to do because they may not know", having parents' evenings.
- 3.42. Domestic abuse has a hidden impact on children and young people, and models bullying behaviour. Need to support schools to talk to children and young people about difficult issues like this.
- 3.43. Need to tackle bullying in the community, not just in schools; looking at safe routes, walking, safe public transport and risk 'hot spots'. Important to support people to report outside of formal settings, building trust and confidence.
- 3.44. Join up partnership working better and share data and local intelligence between partners.
- 3.45. Analysis should consider electronic bullying and preventing violent extremism.

What should our 'safe' priorities be for the new Children and Young People's Plan, and why?**Safe: Ideas from the Assembly**

- 3.38. We need to improve how we enable children and young people to 'move down the Windscreen' – from child protection, to multi-agency targeted support, to independent families supported by universal services.
- 3.39. Diversionary activities need to be in place for younger ages – not enough for 5 – 13 year olds. More activities also needed in rural parts of the Borough.
- 3.40. Growth of Birmingham Airport could mean more unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- 3.41. Community cohesion depends on tolerance and understanding between generations – we all need to value and stand up for children, and give them space in our communities.

Enjoy & Achieve: The Outcomes Review

- 3.46. Solihull 5 year olds exceed national expectations in all six areas of learning. Children in north Solihull do less well but this is still above national levels.
- 3.47. Attainment at primary school is very good, and the inequality gap between pupils in north and south Solihull at Key Stage 2 for Level 4 in English and Maths has closed from 20% to 13% in the last 4 years.
- 3.48. GCSE performance (5 A*-C) is improving, and is well above national averages. The gap between north and south Solihull is closing. However for GCSE passes including English and Maths, considered a key indicator of pupil achievement, results have not improved to meet targets and the gap between north and south has increased.
- 3.49. Some groups of young people consistently achieve poorer results at Key Stage 4, including children of mixed heritage, and Looked After children.
- 3.50. A new annual survey (Aiming High for Disabled Children) of the views of Solihull parents of disabled children scored education and health services relatively highly for how assessment was used to make decisions, but there were lower scores in relation to families 'feeling that decisions were made at the right time and that professionals worked together'.
- 3.51. Two thirds of young people report that they have taken part in 'positive activities' – adult-led, sporting, cultural, recreational and volunteering activities outside of school. This is similar to the regional and national average.
- 3.52. More young people are gaining accredited outcomes through Youth Service projects year on year.
- 3.53. According to an annual survey (TellUs) pupils enjoyed school less in 2008/9 than they did the previous year, with only a half saying that they always or most of the time enjoy school. Solihull mirrored the national results. According to UNICEF research English school children enjoy school the least compared with other European countries.

Enjoy & Achieve: Children & young people's ideas

- 3.54. Children and young people were asked for their ideas on we could help them do better at school or enjoy things more; and how we can help them have more things to do and places to go.
- 3.55. They wanted the right amount of work for their abilities – not too easy. They wanted extra help for those that need it, more helpers in class and smaller groups for literacy and maths.
- 3.56. They wanted to involve parents more in their work, and to learn together in pairs. They talked about team working and group work as well, and letting them choose who they work with.
- 3.57. They wanted adults in school to help them when they needed it. They thought children and young people who care for members of their family should have a support club and home help, and extra time for homework.
- 3.58. They wanted more information about what's on, and suggested more advertising, a website to catch up on new clubs, and a form for children to give their ideas.
- 3.59. They wanted more equipment so that disabled children could join in.
- 3.60. They wanted more choice of clubs, with staff to teach them, available free. They wanted parks and playgrounds where they felt safe to play.

Enjoy & Achieve: Ideas from the Assembly

- 3.61. Institutional measurement of success is too focused on academic achievement. What about ENJOYMENT and other Every Child Matters measures? What about formal and informal curriculum?
- 3.62. Lack of information to manage and support the transition into adulthood. Everything drops off the cliff at 18/19.
- 3.63. Parental engagement: families are key to the delivery of enjoyment and achievement. Incentivise training for parents, and deliver from school age. Give lots of positive opportunities for parents to be involved in schools.
- 3.64. Need to commission 0-25 disability services across agencies. Make sure money is available to all partners and sectors to support all children and young people with disabilities to be included in mainstream settings.
- 3.65. Closing the gap is about more than north and south Solihull. We need a co-ordinated approach to provide support to children and young people and their families, especially at transitions.
- 3.66. Better support for emotionally fragile or vulnerable teenagers, for example: due to lack of specialist local provision children with aspergers are being sent out of the borough; Looked After children and teenage mums under-achieve through generations; children who don't have a known disability struggle to get the right support.
- 3.67. Better information and support for parents – help them to manage difficult behaviours. Identify a champion in schools to publicise access to services for all families.
- 3.68. Need to be better at cultural diversity. Valuing diversity, understanding the uniqueness of each child and their learning path.
- 3.69. Fabulous new school buildings, but do they reflect the needs of all children?
- 3.70. Schools are too separate from other partners – need all services working together for children, sharing resources, targets and outcomes.
- 3.71. Make the equal chance a reality for all children - give schools the confidence and information they need to achieve true inclusion.

What should our 'enjoy & achieve' priorities be for the new Children and Young People's Plan, and why?

Positive Contribution: The Outcomes Review

- 3.72. Annual surveys in 2007 and 2008 show that young people feel that they are less likely to be asked for their views about the local area or about how their school is run in Solihull than elsewhere.
- 3.73. Solihull fielded 11 candidates for UK Youth Parliament elections in 2009 and 3026 young people voted which is an increase on the previous year. 202 young people participated in decision-making and commissioning activity in 2008/9.
- 3.74. Significantly more Looked After children participate in their statutory review meetings in Solihull than the national average. A growing number of Looked After children chair their own review meetings, and participate in the recruitment of staff.
- 3.75. The Aiming High for Disabled Children survey of Solihull parents of disabled children rated health services far more effective at consulting them than education services, although all services scored very low on whether parent and child feedback was used to change services mirroring the national scores.
- 3.76. An increasing number of young people are choosing to become volunteers. The National Youth Volunteer Team (involved) have worked with 418 young Solihull volunteers aged 16 – 19 since April 2008, including young people with learning difficulties or disabilities; from Black and Minority ethnic communities; and those who have achieved below Level 2 in education.
- 3.77. Solihull is increasingly effective at diverting young people from the youth justice system. The number of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time has been reducing year on year since 2005 and exceeds regional and national averages.
- 3.78. There has been a significant reduction in re-offending rates for all penalty types except custodial sentences. The number of Solihull young people in custody is very small. There is a correlation between young offenders not engaged in education, training and employment and rates of re-offending.

Positive Contribution: Children & young people's ideas

- 3.79. They told us to listen more. "Ask us what we want to learn about". They wanted to make more choices themselves and to have votes. They wanted to be asked their views more, "see how we feel about it", and given good feedback about what happened.
- 3.80. They thought that children and young people arriving in our country to settle should be treated with respect and treated as we would want to be treated. They thought we should learn their language and help them learn ours.

Positive Contribution: Ideas from the Assembly

- 3.81. Crucial to engage children and young people in a meaningful way and avoid tokenism. Need to improve how we get the views of young people who we find harder to reach. Important to have training for both staff and children and young people to develop their skills.
- 3.82. More involvement of disabled children and younger children. Not just about teenagers. How do you involve young people with autism?
- 3.83. Need to develop role of school councils.
- 3.84. Need to provide access to opportunities to participate regardless of place – not just about the north of Solihull.
- 3.85. More information for children and young people about active involvement opportunities – can we be confident that they receive this information?

- 3.86. Volunteering provides important pathways to employment, but there is no common approach to volunteering.
- 3.87. Need to focus on the underlying reasons for offending behaviour. Drug and alcohol issues have a huge impact on offending. Positive activities are currently limited, need to provide alternate lifestyles.
- 3.88. Need to support the whole family, including using parenting assessments and interventions.

What should our 'positive contribution' priorities be for the new Children and Young People's Plan, and why?

Economic Well-being: The Outcomes Review

- 3.89. The majority of young people in Solihull aged 16 – 18 are in full-time education, employment or training. The number of 'NEETs' (not in education, employment or training) has reduced every year since 2005 and is below the national rate.
- 3.90. The percentage of young offenders who are in education, training or employment (NEET) has dropped recently to 70.6% against a target of 75%.
- 3.91. 69% of care leavers have been in education, employment or training at age 19 for the last 2 years, which is nationally classed as 'very good'.
- 3.92. More 19 year olds in Solihull achieve a Level 2 qualification or higher NVQ (76.9%) than the regional and national average. The percentage has been rising year on year.
- 3.93. Although Solihull is regarded as affluent, many children, young people and families live in circumstances of material deprivation. Nearly 20% of children under the age of 5 live in a home dependent on workless benefits. The proportion of children in income deprived families has been increasing, and the recession is likely to have accelerated this further.
- 3.94. In the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in 2007 three quarters of parents surveyed agreed that the quality of childcare available was high, although less than 50% agreed that there was good choice available. Stock of available childcare increased by 5.6% in 2008. A new Sufficiency Assessment will be carried out in 2010.

PRIORITIES

Economic Well-being: Children & young people's ideas

- 3.95. Children and young people wanted more accessible facilities for exercise – cheaper, more fun, and easy to get to by public transport or using cycle lanes.
- 3.96. They also identified the importance of caring for the environment and conservation.

Economic Well-being: Ideas from the Assembly

- 3.97. Catch children and young people before they become NEET.
- 3.98. Support for families facing poverty and worklessness. Financial advice; family support – all schools should have a family support worker. Information and advice needs to be accessible.
- 3.99. Empower parents to make the education system work to get the best outcomes for their children and young people. Build their confidence and aspirations to go outside their own experience.
- 3.100. Invest in prevention, longer term and at an earlier age. Support parents and raise expectations - children of third generation unemployed parents think there is nothing else.
- 3.101. Value life experience as well as qualifications.
- 3.102. Need to strengthen relationship with private sector housing providers to fill the gaps in social housing – for example for larger extended families.
- 3.103. Need to provide more access to employment for young people with learning disabilities and other young people who are vulnerable.
- 3.104. More child friendly community space and green space, informing regeneration and development, and providing opportunities for safe play.
- 3.105. Commissioning provision for young people with learning disabilities.

What should our 'economic well-being' priorities be for the new Children and Young People's Plan, and why?

4. PARTNERSHIP: WORKING TOGETHER

Partnership arrangements

- 4.1. Solihull, like every area in England, is expected to have a 'children's trust' partnership to improve the lives of children and young people. From April 2010 this partnership must by law be made up from a Children's Trust Board and Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- 4.2. The Trust Board is responsible for delivering the Children and Young People's Plan, across the 5 Outcomes.
- 4.3. The Safeguarding Children Board is responsible for agreeing how agencies in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.
- 4.4. There is no single model for how Children's Trust Boards and Safeguarding Boards operate, with considerable variation in scope, structure, membership, resourcing and ways of working.
- 4.5. In Solihull both of these Boards already exist, and are part of the Solihull Partnership. However the changes in national policy will require changes to the local arrangements.
- 4.6. Directors of Children's Services are accountable for the effective working of children's trust arrangements, as set out in statutory guidance (July 2009).

Six key challenges for 2010 - 13

- 4.7. Challenge 1: Wider partner involvement in the Trust Board.

New legislation places a requirement to extend the membership of the Trust Board. From April 2010 Children's Trust Boards must include Councils;

(Primary) Care Trusts; Strategic Health Authority; Youth Offending Teams; Police; Probation; maintained schools; academies; city technology colleges; special schools; short stay schools (formerly Pupil Referral Units or PRUs); FE and 6th Form Colleges; and JobCentre Plus.

In addition, local partnerships must engage with the following, and may want to involve them as members of the Trust Board: children, young people, parents and families; third sector; private sector; Sure Start children's centres; GPs; Acute, Foundation and Specialist NHS Trusts and Community NHS services; Housing sector, including registered social landlords; Diocesan boards of education; Independent schools and specialist colleges; work based learning providers; Young People's Learning Agency; youth custodial establishments; CAF/CASS; and the Court Service (HMSC).

This broadened membership of the Trust Board will significantly change the way in which it can conduct business and make decisions.

- 4.8. Challenge 2: Community engagement.

Community partnerships must connect with their communities. This means wider involvement of children, young people and families in the work of the Trust. Although the past few years have seen involvement of young people in commissioning, and the publication of a Trust Pledge and Active Involvement standards, there is much more to do.

- 4.9. Challenge 3: Involvement of Elected Members.

Councillors are elected representatives of the people of Solihull, but as yet they have only a limited role in our children's partnership. The Lead Member for Children and Young People is a member of the Trust Board and recently joined the Safeguarding Board, and the

Council's Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has had some involvement with both Boards, but Elected Members describe feeling held apart from the work of the partnership.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gives more powers to local government to scrutinise other partner organisations. There is an opportunity to grow partner scrutiny for partnership working.

4.10. Challenge 4: Increased pace of change.

Although progress has been made locally and nationally in the implementation of the Every Child Matters agenda, there is an impatience to accelerate the pace of change and secure benefits for children, young people and their families.

The Solihull Children and Young People's Plan in 2007 set challenging ambitions for change. Progress has been patchy, particularly in terms of integrated working and commissioning. The next 3–5 years bring a very difficult financial position for public services, but no let-off in the demand for service efficiency and improvement.

The Solihull Partnership is introducing a new Common Commissioning Framework to make commissioning simpler, more consistent and more effective. Recent consultation has shown support for the concept, but there are questions about how the Framework will be implemented, and how soon we will see a difference, particularly for the Voluntary and Community Sector.

4.11. Challenge 5: Whole Solihull Partnership approach.

The Solihull Partnership has been revitalised over the past 24 months and now has a Governing Board, five strategic groups (safer, stronger,

prosperous, healthier, and children and young people), and safeguarding boards for adults and children. Connecting together the work of these different groups is crucial because they are each tackling the same cross cutting issues.

4.12. Challenge 6: Independent scrutiny of safeguarding.

Safeguarding Boards are expected to be designed so that they can independently scrutinise the effectiveness of work to safeguard children and young people. "There must be a clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities between LSCBs and Children's Trusts to ensure appropriate challenge, scrutiny and impartiality" ... "The responsibilities of the LSCB, in ensuring that the multi-agency partners in each local area are co-operating to safeguard and promote the welfare of children effectively, are a fundamental part of the overarching responsibilities held by the Children's Trust" (Lord Laming, Report to Government, March 2009, P74 - 75).

The relationship between the two Boards is currently poorly defined at both a local and national level, and this reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of the whole partnership arrangement. The current arrangements make it difficult for the Safeguarding Board to independently scrutinise the effectiveness of services to safeguard children and young people, particularly as the Safeguarding Board itself leads much of the work to improve safeguarding practice. Distance between those that do the work and those that check the quality and effectiveness is an essential component of a robust scrutiny process, as seen in formal public sector scrutiny functions.

Proposals for a new children's trust governance structure

4.13. Widening the membership of the Trust Board. It is proposed that the membership of the new Board be extended to include:

- Solihull Council (current member)
- Elected Members
- Solihull Care Trust (cm)
- Third Sector (cm)
- Probation Service (cm)
- West Midlands police (cm)
- Secondary, Primary and Special Schools representatives (cm)
- Parents Forum
- Young People (reps)
- Schools Forum
- Solihull College and Solihull 6th Form College
- JobCentre Plus
- Academies
- Independent schools (rep)
- UK Borders Agency
- GPs (rep)
- Solihull Governors Association
- Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust
- Heart of England Foundation Trust
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Solihull Community Housing
- CAF/CASS

The new Trust Board would be the decision-making body of the Children and Young People's Trust, meeting on a quarterly basis. The Board would be responsible for agreeing the Children and Young People's Plan and the annual commissioning plan; quarterly performance management of the Plan; appointing an independent chair to the Safeguarding Children Board; reporting on progress to the Governing Board.

4.14. Creating a Trust Executive Group. The new Trust Board would be large and would require an executive group to drive forward its work. Membership of the Executive Group would be:

- Solihull Council (DCS and Service Directors)
- Solihull Care Trust (Commissioning & Community Services)
- Schools
- Police
- Third Sector

The Trust Executive Group would meet on a monthly basis and be responsible for management oversight of delivery against the Children and Young People's Plan, and Trust Commissioning Plan; resource management; preparing business for Trust Board meetings and taking forward decisions made by the Board. The Executive Group would replace the current Integrated Working Programme Board.

4.15. Creating a new Safeguarding Delivery Group, reporting to the Trust Board, which brings together the safeguarding lead officers from all partner organisations to work together to safeguard children and young people.

Membership of the Safeguarding Delivery Group would be:

- Solihull Council
- Solihull Care Trust
- Third Sector
- Probation Service
- West Midlands police
- Schools (rep)
- Colleges
- UK Borders Agency
- GPs (rep)
- Mental Health Trust
- Heart of England Foundation Trust
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Solihull Community Housing
- CAF/CASS

The Safeguarding Delivery Group would meet every 4-6 weeks and be responsible for local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This would include Section 11 compliance monitoring; 'safer' commissioning (e-safety, missing

children, domestic violence, personal safety etc); safe recruitment and vetting and barring; analysing child death information; action planning in response to serious case reviews; private fostering monitoring. Some of these responsibilities are currently discharged by the Safeguarding Children Board.

4.16. Changing the responsibilities and membership of the Safeguarding Children Board to enable it to carry out its independent scrutiny function.

Membership of the new Safeguarding Children Board would be drawn from:

- Solihull Council Scrutiny Committee for Education, Children and Young People
- Care Trust Board
- Police Authority
- Strategic Health Authority
- Government Office West Midlands
- Solihull Governors Association
- Parents Forum
- Young People (reps)

The new Safeguarding Children Board would be chaired and advised by an Independent Chair, appointed by the Trust Board.

The new Safeguarding Children Board would meet every 6 – 8 weeks and be responsible for scrutinising the effectiveness of Solihull partner organisations in safeguarding and promoting the welfare children and young people. This would include monitoring the effectiveness of local procedures and practice; establishing serious case reviews and communicating the findings to key stakeholders including the public and the press; reviewing information about child deaths; routine reporting on findings to the Trust Board.

The new Safeguarding Children Board would not include the officers who are responsible for delivering safeguarding, although they would be called as

witnesses to provide evidence to inform scrutiny. The Director of Children's Services would be required to attend all Board meetings.

The new Safeguarding Children Board would be administered and supported by the Council's Democratic Services.

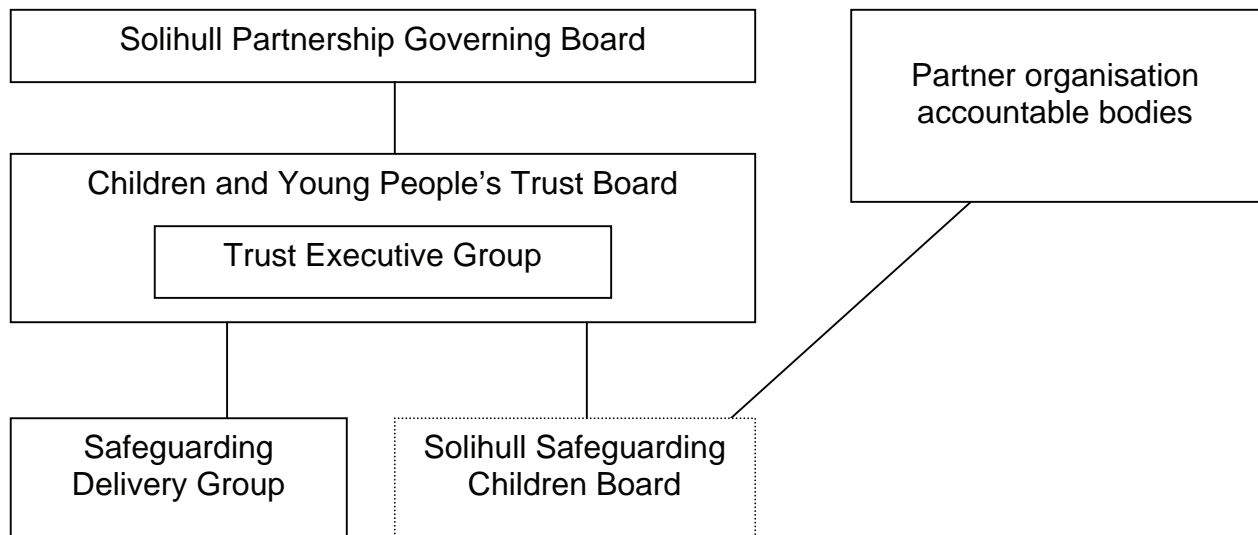
Responsibility for creating the new Safeguarding Children Board would rest with the Children's Trust Board, and the Safeguarding Board would set its workplan independently and report its findings routinely to the Trust Board and to the formal scrutiny structures of the Council, NHS and Police.

The Partnership Governing Board would ensure that the Trust Board is discharging its responsibilities to create an independent scrutiny body and respond to its findings.

4.17. Integrating safeguarding training within the Trust Board's arrangements for integrated working training and workforce planning, creating a single workforce team.

4.18. Creating a new Integrated Working Procedures Group to oversee the development of child protection procedures, LINCS procedures, ContactPoint procedures and any other procedures required to support integrated working.

Proposed Revised Children's Trust Partnership Structure



Would the proposals for a revised children's trust strengthen partnership working in Solihull?

Involving children and young people

- 4.19. The Children and Young People's Trust has published Standards for the active involvement of children, young people and parents, based on the National Youth Agency's Hear by Right Standards. The Trust has also published a pledge for children and young people, and another for Looked After Children.
- 4.20. Children and young people are formally involved in a range of decision-making bodies, including the UK Youth Parliament, schools councils, and the Youth Council. Plans are also in place to appoint full-time Youth Councillors for the first time in 2010 to champion issues for children and young people across the Borough.
- 4.21. The MAD (Making A Difference) Group of children and young people have carried out research into active involvement approaches to inform the further development of these in Solihull.
- 4.22. The MAD Group concluded that active involvement in Solihull should:
- HEAR the voices of children and young people;
 - Children and young people's views should make a difference;
 - Try and reach ALL children and young people;
 - Let children and young people choose to be a part of it.
- 4.23. They came up with the following ideas from their research to make active involvement in Solihull better:
- Give young people a budget to spend to make their area better.
 - More rewards, awards and prizes for children and young people that get involved.
 - A council run by young people and not adults as they can decide what is

best for children and young people – that feeds in to the adult council.

- A big Active Involvement event / fundraiser run by children and young people
- Have a Young Mayor.
- More training for children and young people so that they can get involved.
- Have an award ceremony for active involvement.
- Train 'young assessors' to inspect services for children and young people.

- 4.24. In November 2009 the Trust Board endorsed an outline proposal for elected Young Councillors in Solihull.

Involving Parents

- 4.25. A new strategic Parents Forum has been set up to support the work of the Children and Young People's Trust. The Forum aims to ensure that the views of parents and carers are heard and have some influence over the development of the services. There is a **core group** of parents who meet regularly, and an **extended group**, for those parents who don't want to commit to meetings but would like to receive information and be involved in other ways.
- 4.26. The Parents Forum is made up of parents and carers from across the borough and has a remit to:
- act as a consultative and advisory group for the Children and Young People's Trust
 - provide information and support to the Trust on engaging and communicating with parents.
 - help share information and key policies with the other parents
 - encourage other parents to become involved and have their say.

- 4.27. Under the proposed revised Trust arrangements it is intended that the Forum will hold a seat on both the Trust Board and the Safeguarding Children Board.
- 4.28. There is also a similar group called 'Can Do', which is made up of parents of children with additional needs and disabilities. This group is facilitated by the Parent Champion Team, who support the engagement of parents of children with additional needs and disabilities in services for themselves and their families.
- 4.29. A new Strategy for Parent Engagement is being developed which includes plans to map existing parent groups and support all agencies working with parents to develop and improve the way that parents are engaged.

How should we strengthen our arrangements to involve children, young people, parents and carers in the work of the partnership?

Integrated working

- 4.30. Solihull has an Integrated Working Programme of change projects to improve the way organisations and families work together at a local level to improve outcomes.
- 4.31. Integrated working in Solihull has 10 key characteristics – the 'IW10':
- Listen first: Listening to children and young people and families to better understand how they experience life, and involving children, young people and their families in designing and choosing the right services to meet their needs.
 - Easy access: a range of attractive and relevant services for children, young people and families under a single roof or locally available, for example through children's centres, youth centres or extended schools.
 - Right information at the right time: staff and volunteers across all front line services equipped to provide information about services so that children, young people and their families can make informed choices.
 - Think local: bringing together local leaders, staff, volunteers and the community to better understand issues and needs at a local level, and developing solutions which will make a difference at a local level.
 - Early identification: Universal services such as schools, early years settings, youth and health services designed to identify and respond quickly to vulnerable children and young people as early as possible. New roles developed to provide early support for children, young people and families who are vulnerable.
 - Multi-disciplinary support teams: Teams of staff and volunteers with different skills which are created for a

time limited period to give personalised support to individual children and young people who are vulnerable, or to support services, neighbourhoods or groups of children and young people that are facing challenging circumstances.

- Shared ways of working: Common processes used by multi-disciplinary support teams to agree and co-ordinate the support required, for example the Common Assessment Framework and ContactPoint, or the Schools Causing Concern process.
- Sharing resources: co-ordinating, aligning and pooling staff, skills and financial resources to get the best results for children, young people and their families.
- Service integration: Multi-disciplinary teams reporting to a single manager where there is a clear case that structural integration will improve outcomes, for example teams supporting Looked After Children or disabled children.
- Confident, competent and safe: Staff and volunteers recruited, trained and supported to work effectively with children, young people and their families. Retained professional knowledge, authority and support across multi-disciplinary teams.

4.32. Integrated working is supported by common processes, in particular LINC which incorporates the Common Assessment Framework, Lead Person and ContactPoint, and Safeguarding Procedures to protect children and young people from harm.

4.33. The Children and Young People's Trust has published a Workforce Strategy to create a diverse, integrated workforce which is flexible, competent, confident, respected and safe, and fully equipped to enable all children and young people and their families to grow and develop.

4.34. The Children and Young People's Trust has also published an Information Strategy to improve the accessibility, quality, coordination and consistency of information to children, young people, their parents and families.

4.35. The Integrated Working Programme also covers development of Children's Centres & Extended Services in schools

Integrated working in natural communities

4.36. The Children and Young People's Plan in 2007 focused on integrated services in three localities. From 2010 we intend to deliver integrated working at a more local level, building on natural communities.

4.37. Key components of this approach are:

- Joined up planning at a local level which reflects natural local community boundaries and builds on existing partnerships such as school clusters;
- Local commissioning for an area, based on local needs;
- Multi-agency LINC panels based in schools to ensure that vulnerable children and young people get the support that they need.
- Multi-agency leadership development, delivered in partnership with the National College for Leaders of Schools and Children's Services.

4.38. A small number of Natural Communities Pilots are being developed to roll out in spring 2010. The current Local Area Leadership Teams will be integrated within these pilots.

Do you agree with our vision for integrated working in Solihull – the IW10?

How can we further strengthen our arrangements for integrated working which makes a real difference for children, young people and their families?