

Children and Young People's Plan:

Consultation on Regulations and Guidance

Summary

This policy briefing summarises key points from the above consultation issued by the DfES on **14 March 2005**. The consultation closes on **6 June 2005** and invites comments from local authorities, their partners and national organisations involved in the delivery of children's services.

Consultation documents and the response form are available on the DfES consultation website at:

www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/

Contact at TEN: [Faiza Chaudary](#)

The information in this policy briefing applies to England only but the issues raised may be of a wider interest to our subscribers

You are encouraged to circulate this policy briefing to anyone in your authority who may find it useful, including headteachers and school governors.

Background

The Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) is a key element of the reforms underpinned by the Children Act 2004 and aims to bring key partners together to produce a single, strategic, overarching plan for all local services for children and young people. This should support more integrated and effective services to secure improved outcomes for children and young people as set out in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* and reflected in the Act. The plan will identify children and young people where outcomes need to be improved and how and when this will be achieved. It is also in line with the movement towards a single local authority grant.

The CYPP replaces a number of statutory and non statutory plans (see below) and thereby aims to reduce burdens for local authorities in planning for several plans.

Statutory plans replaced	Non-statutory plans replaced
Behaviour Support Plan	Area Child Protection Committee
Children’s Services Plan	Business Plan
Class Sizes Plan	Asset Management Plan
Early Years Development and Childcare Plan	Behaviour Improvement Plan
Education Development Plan	Excellence in Cities Plan
Local Authority Adoption Services Plan	ICT Development Plan
School Organisation Plan	Primary Strategy Plan
	Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
	Under performing Schools Plan
	Youth Services Plan

The regulations set out the requirements for content, timing, publication, consultation, review and exemption under the CYPP.

The first part of the guidance explains the policy context and requirements for the planning process. The second covers the essential content of the CYPP. Annex A summarises the legislation.

Consistency in planning

The overarching plan should cover all local authority services affecting children and young people and should be linked to the authority’s other corporate plans. The CYPP will also need to cover services provided by external agencies eg.

voluntary and community services. In such cases, where local authorities are not directly responsible for services, the plan will need to set out clear governance arrangements showing how services are working together to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people. As such the CYPP will need to be fully consistent with the separate plans partners are working to. In particular the Plan should capture key elements of plans used by statutory partners, eg. the local police authority's Three Year Strategy Plan and local policing plan.

Consultation and discussion

The guidance states that Local Authorities must consult those covered by the duty to cooperate under the Children Act: district councils, police authorities, local probation boards, youth offending teams, SHAs, PCTs, Connexions Partnerships, Local LSCs. In addition the regulations require the authority to consult children, young people, parents and carers, Diocesan authorities, the local School Organisation Committee, the voluntary and community sector and the Local Safeguarding Children Board in the planning process. Beyond that, authorities are advised to consult other key local partners eg. NHS trusts, local private sector providers or maintained and independent schools.

These groups need to be involved at a formative stage in the process, allowing time to discuss which priorities need to be addressed and how joint working can help to do this. For example, the local PCT will need to be involved in discussions around delivering joint outcomes and ensuring that their plans are working in complement to the priorities set out in the CYPP. Likewise, schools; who will be key in delivering services to children and young people, will need to work closely with children's trusts preparing and delivering the CYPP.

Planning and commissioning cycle

The planning process needs to identify which services are best placed to deliver the outcomes agreed. This will involve decisions by the children's trust about joint commissioning of services from within or outside the range of partners involved in the trust. Planning should help to identify the most important areas for action and allow for early movement to pooled budgets, and pooling of other resources, as appropriate, to support the planning process itself and commissioning arrangements agreed.

What will the plan cover?

Section 17 of the Children Act 2004 provides for regulations to require local authorities to prepare and publish a CYPP, setting out their strategy for services for children and relevant young persons. The term 'relevant young persons' is defined in section 10(9) of the Act to mean those of 18 and 19 receiving services, including leaving care and those over 19 and under 25 with learning difficulties. The regulations require the CYPP to cover:

- improvements which the authority intend to make during the plan period to the outcomes for children and young people
- a statement of the authority's vision for children and young people
- an assessment of needs in relation to the outcomes
- priorities and key actions planned to achieve the outcomes
- a statement of how resources will be deployed to achieve the outcomes
- an explanation of how the plan relates to arrangements for performance management and review of services
- the arrangements for co-operation under the duty to co-operate and with other partners
- an explanation of how the CYPP is consistent with the strategic plans of local partners.

Further detail setting out specific requirements for information to be included in the plan in relation to the above areas, is provided in part two of the guidance.

Timing and duration

The regulations and guidance propose that the first plan must be in place by 1 April 2006. Although the regulations do not define the duration of the CYPP, the guidance document recommends a period of three years as this gives a good basis for medium to long term commissioning. A new plan must be prepared when the old plan ends.

Inspection

Between September 2005 and December 2008 every area will be subject to a Joint Area Review of services for children and young people, led by Ofsted. Inspectorates will look at the quality of data, analysis and consultation leading up to the CYPP and the effectiveness of its implementation. Inspections will also determine whether the involvement of children and young people, their parents and carers has been effective in service planning and delivery.

Publication

The plan must be published. The regulations require local authorities to send a copy of the plan to all those involved in its preparation, place it on the authority's website and put a copy in public libraries and other local outlets. Local partners may want to circulate the plan amongst their client base to promote cultural change across all services.

Review

The CYPP should be reviewed annually to assess progress and consider whether needs have changed. This review will be supported by the self-assessment, which will be completed by Local Authorities in April/May each year as part of the Annual Performance Assessment of children's services. It is expected that the self assessment will incorporate all areas to be covered by the Joint Area Review. The review should be carried out by all partners to the plan and should involve consultation with service users and local people.

Exemption for 'excellent' authorities

The regulations and guidance state that local authorities categorised as excellent under Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) will not be required to have a CYPP, although they may wish to do so. Should an authority cease to be excellent, the requirement will take effect from 1 April in the second year following the change to allow time for preparation.

Comment from TEN

The move to formulate a single strategic plan, which should support local authorities and their partners to work together to meet agreed outcomes, is most welcomed. As is the fact that this plan will replace a total of 17 statutory and non-statutory plans for local authorities, thereby reducing the overall burden of planning and increasing the capacity for front-line delivery of services. However, these benefits will be accompanied by significant challenges for local authorities to secure the commitment of their local partners to meet agreed outcomes. Local authorities will need to ensure that their partners understand the need for consistency in planning so that all services are working jointly to deliver outcomes. The guidance and regulations understandably set out the need for agreed priorities and actions but this may have implications for local flexibility in delivering services that local authorities and their partners will need to be mindful of, when producing a CYPP for their respective areas.

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