

Shadow Dudley Health and Well Being Board – 5th October 2011

Report of the Acting Director of Children's Services

The Children and Young People's Partnership; An explanation of issues and joint provision for young people in the borough

Purpose of Report

1. To explain current partnership arrangements that exist to promote the health and well being of young people to members of the Board. This information can then be used to inform decisions by the Board about how it intends to promote and support the needs of children and young people.

Background

2. There has been a formalised partnership approach to children's services in Dudley for over ten years. During 2009 the former Children and Young People's Partnership (which was a discretionary body) was required to become a Children's Trust by the then Labour Government. The incoming Coalition Government has repealed the legislation in this area and once again allowed local areas to exercise their own discretion. In Dudley the Children's Trust agreed that it is in the best interest of children and young people for partners to work together, and so the relevant agencies continue to meet as a Children and Young People's Partnership (the constitution including information about membership is attached to this report as appendix 1). The Children and Young People's Partnership is part of the Dudley Community Partnership.
3. Essentially the role of the partnership is to improve outcomes and provision for children and young people across the full spectrum of services available within the borough. This includes health and well being as well as other important areas of performance. A valuable tool for appreciating the breadth of the work of the partnership is the Every Child Matters framework. This is no longer formally a part of Coalition Government policy but it is still widely recognised by professionals as a useful summary of what children's services are trying to achieve i.e. we will enable every young person to;
 - Be healthy
 - Stay safe
 - Enjoy and Achieve
 - Make a Positive Contribution
 - Achieve Economic Well Being

4. The Board of the Children and Young People's Partnership contains representatives of all the main service providers. In addition the Board has established a small Strategic Commissioning Group whose role is to determine priorities through the Children and Young People's Plan and to commission activities and services that will address these priorities. The current Children and Young People's Plan (attached as appendix 2 to this report) has evolved from what has previously been a very wide ranging document with a large and diverse set of objectives, to a much more focussed agenda. In essence the plan has identified nine super output areas in the borough (at least one in each of five townships) upon which agencies will concentrate their efforts. The super output areas have been identified using a range of data but essentially they are parts of the borough where need is very high e.g. rates of child poverty, referrals to social care, incidence of children in care, and health inequalities. Obviously mainstream services across all areas of the borough will continue but for the purposes of the plan the Partnership intends that wherever possible, in a time of contracting resources, agencies will seek to reduce inequalities in specific geographical areas.
5. The work of the Children and Young People's partnership is subject to significant internal and external scrutiny. Within the Council reports about children's services are requested and submitted to a number of committees. The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is the main group that focuses on provision for young people but in addition officers are required to report to the Community Safety and Community Services Committee, the old Health and Adult Social Care Committee, the Audit Committee and Area Committees as well. Aspects of children's services, including partnership activity, are subject to increasingly searching investigations and reports by internal and external auditors.
6. External review and inspection is conducted on a regular basis by OfSTED. During the course of each calendar year literally scores of inspections of educational and social care settings take place. In addition there is an annual overall assessment of children's services across the borough and regular inspections of key aspects of social care and other provision e.g. youth offending, safeguarding and services for looked after children, fostering, adoption, initial contact and referral services. All of these inspections investigate and report on the health and general well being of young people amongst other issues. In recent years OfSTED has consistently judged children's services to be good overall in Dudley. Recent unannounced inspections have identified child protection as a strength in the borough. We are currently awaiting a two week inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children.
7. Information was provided to the Health and Well Being Board at its first meeting about aspects of the health and well being of young people in the borough. For the purposes of this report it is not necessary to provide a further detailed analysis of these issues. However recent annual assessments conducted by OfSTED, and reviews carried out by different teams from the Department of Health, have all commented upon the fact that whilst the health of young people is generally in line with national averages and statistical neighbours, there are significant health inequalities across the borough and between certain groups. Hence the decision in the Children and Young People's Plan to focus upon specific super output areas.

Finance

8. There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

Law

9. During 2009 the former Children and Young People's Partnership (which was a discretionary body) was required to become a Children's Trust by the then Government. The incoming Coalition Government has repealed the legislation in this area and once again allowed local areas to exercise their own discretion. In Dudley the Children's Trust agreed that it is in the best interest of children and young people for partners to work together, and so the relevant agencies continue to meet as a Children and Young People's Partnership.

Equality Impact

10. The report is intended to assist in the improvement of provision for all children and young people. There has not been consultation with children and young people over the content of this specific report but children and young people are frequently consulted about the development of services on their behalf.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that the Board:-
- notes the contents of this report
 - takes the information provided in the report into consideration as it develops its strategy and arrangements for health and well being in Dudley take steps to ensure that any new strategies and arrangements relating to the health and well being of children and young people are compatible with existing strategies and arrangements.



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Jane Porter
Acting Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Ian McGuff
(Assistant Director for Quality and Partnership)
Telephone: 01384 814387
Email: ian.mcguff@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

1. *Constitution of Children and Young People's Partnership Board*
2. *Children and Young People's Plan*