

Schools Forum – Tuesday 5th February 2008

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Information Sharing and Assessment

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Schools Forum on the progress of implementation for Information Sharing and Assessment and pooled budget arrangements

Background

2. A pooled budget arrangement has been put into place for the implementation of integrated processes across all partner agencies and services within the Children’s Trust.
3. Each local area is expected to have Children’s Trust arrangements in place for April 2008 and the expectation for embedding the integrated processes for Common Assessment, Lead Professional, Information Sharing, ContactPoint and a Directory of all Services has been reinforced within the DCSF Children’s Plan to be completed by 2010 in order to deliver early intervention and prevention work with children, young people and families.
4. Schools Forum in February 2007 agreed a contribution to the pooled budget arrangement to roll out common assessment and lead professional processes along side a range of partners, who had similarly indicated a commitment to engage.
5. The original pooled budget arrangements expected a contribution from the Council; the Primary Care Trust; the Colleges; the Schools; Connexions Partnership; the Police; and Dudley Group of Hospitals. There was a differentiation on resource commitment to reflect that services and agencies would need to undertake further review and changed working practices to support the development of integrated service delivery. This will involve setting up multi-agency; multi-

disciplinary and locality teams in areas to support the ‘team around the child’ approach for early intervention.

6. The development of integrated processes and integrated service delivery are major change programmes to support improved outcomes for children and young people, moving assessment to a tool for accessing services rather than services using assessment as a tool to differentiate access.
7. The pooled budget arrangements for 2007/08 consisted of a full commitment and resource allocation as follows:

Agencies	Amount £,000
Schools (agreed through Schools Forum)	235
Colleges (confirmed 30 March meeting)	12
Connexions (confirmed)	30
DMBC (confirmed)	30
Dudley PCT (confirmed at PCT board 31 March)	34
Total	341
Leaving a shortfall in expected budget levels of	50

8. Difficulties arose during the financial year for different reasons with regard to Police and Dudley Group of Hospitals commitment of resources to the pooled budget. Both also involved changes of staff at senior level.
9. However, Neighbourhood Renewal Funding through the Community Partnership was sought and granted in December for £33,353, in support of the principle of pooled budgets for these purposes. The full £50,000 was not requested in recognition of the part year funding remaining and the delay in recruiting local managers to lead on the change programme.
10. The work undertaken to date includes the following:
 - Full roll out of multi-agency training for integrated processes
 - The appointment of one local manager
 - Further interviews in place for the 4 remaining manager posts following targeted recruitment with different agencies through the Children’s Trust
 - Agreement at the Children’s Trust to develop integrated service delivery, with full engagement of the PCT

- Agreement at the Children's Trust that integrated service delivery will be piloted in Halesowen Area, with roll out across all other areas in a stepped approach
 - Continued development of joint commissioning arrangements
 - The development of a Section 10 agreement to formalise the pooled budget arrangements
 - The confirmation that underspends arising from the pooled budget arrangements due to the delay in recruitment is returned on a pro-rata basis to funders: that is 60% of any underspends returned to schools budgets
 - Further engagement with the Police and a commitment of resource to the development of common assessment and lead professional roles in the shape of an Officer to undertake one of the area manager roles
 - Further discussions with Dudley Group of Hospitals with a commitment from the Children's Trust Executive Board members to rigorously support their engagement
 - Positive feedback from the Training and Development Agency, leading on support nationally for extended schools and 'swift and easy referral' that we are on the right track and making good progress with partners
11. Attached to this paper are copies of the reports and action plans which have recently been discussed and fully supported at the Children's Trust Executive Board for information regarding the development of integrated service delivery and joint commissioning in support of the development of integrated processes.
12. Case studies regarding early intervention and prevention work undertaken utilising the common assessment and lead professional approach were recently shared with colleagues at the Primary Forum, and copies of these will be available at the meeting should School Forum members wish to review them.

Finance

13. For the financial period 2007/08 a full accounting of expenditure will be drawn up at the end of March 2008 and any underspends will be returned to agencies on a pro-rata basis.
14. The full pooled budget commitment is required for 2008/09 and 2009/10 as detailed in the table below. Confidence remains that partner agencies who were unable to contribute during the financial year 2007/08 will contribute for the remaining two years of the change programme.

Agencies	Amount £,000
Schools (through Schools Forum)	235
Colleges (agreed by Principals)	12
Police (resource commitment agreed)	20
Connexions (resource commitment agreed)	30
DMBC (resource commitment agreed)	30
Dudley PCT (resources commitment agreed)	34
Dudley Group of Hospitals (to be confirmed – verbal update should be available at Schools Forum, February 2008)	30
Total	391

Law

15. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 outlines the duty to co-operate for partners, lead by the local authority within Children's Trust arrangements and to pool budgets/align resources to meet priorities for improved outcomes.
16. The Education and Inspection Act 2006 puts a duty on schools to be engaged with the Children's Trust through the Children and Young People's Plan priorities.

Equality Impact

17. The implementation of integrated processes – common assessment framework, lead professional role, information sharing, ContactPoint and service directory will ensure early intervention and prevention work, fulfilling the requirements of extended schools delivering 'swift and easy referral', enables services to target support and resources to where they are needed most. This includes vulnerable groups who may otherwise experience detriment of support towards achieving their potential.

Recommendation

18. It is recommended that Schools Forum:-
 - Notes the content of this report and the progress made

- Commits to further funding from the Direct Schools Grant to the pooled budget arrangements for the period 2008/09 and 2009/10 with further reports and updates to be given to Schools Forum during the autumn and spring terms of each financial year.



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List of Background Papers

Reports to Children's Trust Executive Board on 18 January 2008

- Joint Commissioning
- Integrated Service Delivery