

7. Policy Developments relating to Children and Young People

Local strategic planning reflects a number of national policy developments and programmes as part of the Government's commitment to transforming services for children and young people. These include:

DCSF Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures

This aims to strengthen support for all families during the formative early years of their children's lives, take the next steps in achieving world class schools and an excellent education for every child, involve parents fully in their children's learning, help to make sure that young people have interesting and exciting things to do outside of school and provide more places for children to play safely.

It also means a new leadership role for Children's Trusts in every area, a new role for schools as the centre of their communities, and more effective links between schools, the NHS and other children's services so that together they can engage parents and tackle all the barriers to the learning, health and happiness of every child. More information is available from www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan

Care Matters: Time for Change

This sets out the steps the Government intends to take, with local delivery partners, in order to improve outcomes for children and young people in care. *Care Matters* covers the role of the corporate parent, the work of social care practitioners, family and parenting support, care placements, the education of looked after children, the promotion of health and well-being and transition to adulthood. *Care Matters: Time to Deliver for Children in Care* was launched in March 2008. Further information is available from:

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00279-2008&>

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

The Act reforms the statutory framework for the care system, to ensure that children and young people receive high quality care and support and to drive improvements in the delivery of services focused on the needs of the child. It aims to enable those children and young people who enter the care system to be able to achieve the same aspirations parents have for their own children.

Key areas covered by this legislation are: improve stability of placements for children and ensure more consistency for children in care; improve the experience children in care have at school, give pilot local authorities the power to test a different model of organising social care by commissioning services from 'Social Work Practices' (Liverpool is one of the pilot authorities) and to enable regulation of these practices; increase the focus on the transparency and quality of care planning, to ensure that the child's voice is heard when important decisions that affect their future are taken; increase schools' capacity to address the needs of children in care; and to make sure that young people are not forced out of care before they are ready, by giving them a greater say over moves to independent living and ensuring they retain support and guidance as long as they need it. Further information is available from: www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080023_en_1

Liverpool CYPP 2009-11 : Section 7 Policy Developments

Aiming High for Disabled Children

The Government wants disabled children to be a priority, both nationally and locally: a commitment confirmed in the NHS Operating Framework and the DCSF Children's Plan. Aiming High for Disabled Children is the transformation programme for disabled children's services, supported by new funding and measures designed to make the system work better. The programme aims to deliver access and empowerment for disabled children and families, responsive services, timely support, and improved service quality and capacity. More information is available from: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/ahdc/

National Strategy for Carers 2008

This sets out the Government's short term agenda and vision of what the care and support of carers should be like by 2018. The strategy includes a set of commitments relating to young carers, which include more support for schools and a new programme of action as part of Healthy Schools, along with additional funding to increase awareness of caring and the issues it raises across children's settings, and a more joined up approach to family support. More information is available from:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/publicationsandstatistics/publications/publicationspolicyandguidance/DH_085345

Childcare Act 2006: Childcare Sufficiency Assessments

The local authority has to undertake a childcare sufficiency assessment at least every three years; consult with a range of interested parties in preparing the assessment; and publish the assessment.

The guidance focuses on analysing demand, mapping supply, and mapping supply to demand. The Act clarifies local authorities' vital role in shaping and securing children's services, in particular ensuring the provision on sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents' needs.

More information on Liverpool's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, together with an action plan and ward profiles is available from: www.liverpool.gov.uk/childcaresufficiency

Sure Start

In 2008, the DCSF, Department of Health and Department for Work and Pensions jointly highlighted the importance of local authorities, Jobcentre Plus and the National Health Service (PCTs and Strategic Health Authorities) developing even stronger and more effective local partnerships to meet the individual needs of young children and their parents. For more information: www.surestart.gov.uk/publications/?Document=1970

Commissioning Support Programme

This aims to transform the strategic commissioning of services for children, young people and families by Children's Trust partners. The programme is jointly sponsored by the DCSF and the Department of Health, having been developed in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government. It will run until April 2011 and cover the commissioning of all services including health and education. A website was launched in February 2009. For more information: www.commissioningsupport.org.uk/

Liverpool CYPP 2009-11 : Section 7 Policy Developments

Youth Crime Action Plan 2008

This action plan provides a comprehensive, cross-departmental analysis of what the Government is going to do to tackle youth crime, including victim support, intervention and sentencing. For more information: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthcrimeactionplan/

Youth Alcohol Action Plan 2008

This joint action plan from the DCSF, Home Office and Department of Health sets out the Government's top priorities for tackling the problems caused by teenage drinking: health risks, anti-social behaviour and crime, and how these will be addressed by Government through a strong partnership with parents, industry, criminal justice and law enforcement agencies, and communities. For more information: www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/