

why?

Fact sheet 9

Why Children's Trusts?

What is a Children's Trust?

In every local area organisations with a role in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families come together through co-operation and partnership arrangements to plan, deliver and review services which help to achieve this. Collectively all of these co-operation arrangements and partnerships in a particular local area are known as the Children's Trust.

Children's Trusts are not separate organisations in their own right so each partner retains its own responsibilities.

How do Children's Trusts fit with Every Child Matters?

Children's Trusts are the key instrument for improving the lives of children and young people across all five of the Every Child Matters (ECM) Outcomes: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; making a positive contribution; and achieve economic wellbeing.

Who are the Children's Trust Partners?

Organisations involved in Children's Trust arrangements are called Children's Trust Partners. Some partners are legally required to be involved in Children's Trusts alongside. These 'statutory partners' (in addition to local authorities who are responsible for ensuring that Children's Trust arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board are in place) include: strategic health authorities; primary care trusts; district councils; police; schools; further education and sixth form colleges; and Job Centre Plus.

Government guidance also recommends that other local partners such as voluntary and community sector organisations are included in Children's Trusts although they are not legally required to do so.

How are Children's Trusts structured?

Every local area is legally required to have in place a Children's Trust Board made up of a range of partners. The Board provides a governance role for the work of the Children's Trust and also leads the work of developing, reviewing and monitoring implementation of the Children and Young People's Plan- a joint strategy, agreed by all partners in the Children's Trust of how they will co-operate to improve outcomes for all children and young people in a local area.

Sitting under the Children's Trust Board there will often be subgroups or working groups bringing together practitioners and decision makers from different agencies and sectors to focus on a specific topic or theme, for example early years or youth offending. These groups are often concerned with the practical aspects of developing and improving services for particular children and young people and will feed into the decision making processes of the Children's Trust Board as well as communicate out to the wider Children's Trust Partners.

(Please turn over)

Why Children's Trusts?

How do Children's Trusts work locally?

The Children's Trust Board is responsible for developing the **Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)** setting out how local services will be delivered to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. The process of developing this plan should include a full assessment of the needs of children, young people and their families in the local area, understanding what services are already being provided, where the gaps are and how partners can work together to deliver better services. All Children's Trust Partners, as well as others with knowledge of the needs of and provision for children, young people and families should be included in this process, including children, young people, parents and families themselves.

The **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** is a non-statutory body which brings together public, voluntary and community, and private sector organisations to improve the quality of life of the whole community in a local area (not just children, young people and families). The LSP sets out a vision to achieve this, known as the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Children's Trust Board should have strong links with the LSP to ensure that decisions made to improve life for the whole community also take into account the specific needs of children, young people and their families and the priorities for this group set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.

The **Local Area Agreement (LAA)** sets out the agreement between local and national government on how an improvement in the quality of life for the whole community will be achieved and measured (based on the local selection of up to 51 targets from central governments' total set of 198 - the National Indicator Set). Children's Trusts should be at the centre of the process of agreeing these targets, championing the interests of children and young people as a key part of the wider community.

Children's Trust Boards must work closely with, but be clearly separate from, the **Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)** which is responsible for co-ordinating work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The recommendations of the LSCB must be taken into account by the Children's Trust in the development of the Children and Young People's Plan.

How can the VCS influence the decisions made by the Children's Trust?

In most cases there will be at least one voluntary and community sector (VCS) representative that sits on the Children's Trust Board and its subgroups. It is important to know who your representative is and how you can feed your voice and that of the children and young people who use your service into local decision making. If you do not know who your representative is, contact your council for voluntary services (CVS) or voluntary action (VA) centre. You may also be able to ask the Director of Children's Services to find out who represents the VCS on the Children's Trust and other strategic fora.

April 2010