

NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIP BOARD
20 November 2006
DEVELOPING A PARENTING SUPPORT STRATEGY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek agreement from the Partnership Board about the best way to develop a Parenting Support Strategy for North Yorkshire.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Objective 1.5 of the Children and Young People's Plan set out the following year 1 milestone:

To develop a Countywide Parenting Strategy offering different models and different levels of parenting, with targeted support to parents / carers with specific needs ie parents with mental ill health, learning disabilities, substance misuse and domestic violence. The strategy to be completed by March 2007.

Other objectives, most notably 2.5 and 3.5, make specific references to work with parents but good positive parenting and appropriate and timely support to parents are themes that are essential to CYP targets across many objectives. Work on the detail of the three specific objectives will need some discrete attention within the overall strategy so that the specific and different issues/concerns can be addressed whilst providing a framework which is relevant across them all.

2.2 So much excellent work with parents already takes place across the county that it would be invidious to select only a few examples. All agencies and organisations represented on the Board will be able to identify good practice from their own areas of responsibility and, in recent years and months, work with parents has been given a much higher priority. There are also some good coordinated approaches to the work. For example, in the eastern part of the county, the Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale Parenting Forum is active. However, inevitably there are gaps - sometimes in challenging areas - and sometimes there is duplication.

2.3 The re-structuring of NYCC's Children and Young People's Directorate recognised these developments and the need for a senior officer to manage and oversee activity. The responsibility for developing the Parenting Support Strategy with partners rests with the Assistant Director, (Learning, Youth and Skills), Chris McGee. As part of the review, responsibility for the work of the Parent Partnership Service was transferred into his service group.

3.0 DfES GUIDANCE

Given all of this, it is not unhelpful that, in October 2006, the DfES published guidance "to support local authorities and children's trusts in their development of a continuum of support for parents". The guidance is available at:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/77D7C323A111657E44A05FB633C2970D.pdf>

It sets out the case for improving support for parents, the policy framework (including links to other plans, strategies and initiatives), the current position in local authorities (including some examples of good practice) and recommends the development of a comprehensive strategy by local authorities together with stakeholders. The guidance sets out next steps for local authorities:

- Identify a single commissioner who will be the champion of parenting support across the local authority.
- Establish or identify an existing multi-agency steering group to develop the strategy.
- Undertake a needs assessment.
- Audit existing provision.
- Ensure that parenting support is incorporated in the development of the CYPP.
- Check that the full range of available support and intervention measures are being used.
- Commission local services that are needs and evidence based.
- Develop an on-going process of review and improvement (including parental involvement).

4.0 PROPOSALS FOR A WAY FORWARD IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

As indicated in 2.0 above, much good work is already underway in North Yorkshire and indeed some progress has already been made on some of the issues identified in 3.0 above. It is recognised however that the development of a strategy with underpinning agreement about shared values and approaches would add value to existing activity and enable improvements at county, area and locality level. It is proposed therefore that the Assistant Director, (Learning, Youth and Skills), supported by the Corporate Director's Professional Assistant, should make contact with as many stakeholders as possible in the near future for preliminary discussions based on existing activity and the issues identified in DfES guidance. A multi-agency Working Conference should then be held in late December / early January to devise the first draft of the Parenting Support Strategy for North Yorkshire and an associated Implementation / Improvement Plan. The draft Strategy would then be the subject of consultation prior to its approval by the Strategic Partnership Board before the end of March 2007.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the proposals set out in 4.0 above be agreed.

Chris McGee
Assistant Director (Learning Youth and Skills)
November 2006