

The Priorities Conversation

The Government has defined a process for assessing progress in children's services and managing changes across the country. The Priorities Conversation – a meeting of people from across the county with the Regional Change Advisor and others representing central government – is one element of this improvement cycle. Cumbria had its first Priorities Conversation on 17 May and it involved representatives of health and voluntary organisations as well as leaders of the various council directorates.

“The meeting itself was representative of the changes that have been happening in Cumbria. We are already seeing much greater partnership working across the different agencies working with children and young people and I am delighted that those working in health are involved in developing new ways of working together.”

Nigel Woodcock, Chief Executive, North Cumbria Primary Care Trusts

“Many of our joint priorities relate to new processes and ways of working to deliver real improvements and tangible outcomes for children and young people. For example, improving the educational achievements of our teenage boys, improving outcomes for children looked after by the authority, the recovery of youth work in the county and tackling childhood obesity.”

Peter Stybelski, Chief Executive



Pathfinder for Early Support

Early Support is a national programme designed to deliver better coordinated services for parents of disabled children under the age of three. It brings together education, social care, health services and the voluntary sector, working in partnership with parents to deliver the highest quality services to families with a young child.



A local bid from North and East Cumbria (Carlisle and Eden) achieved funding for a Pathfinder project in July of 2004 on the basis of existing good practice. Lindsey Winterton, based at the Richmond Centre in Carlisle, is the Cumbria Pathfinder Coordinator:

What is the key change at the core of the Pathfinder project?

We want to develop a Key Working approach to services so that there is better coordination and communication across the various agencies involved in supporting families of young disabled children.

How has this been developing so far?

We wanted to ensure that everyone involved had a good understanding of the approach and so we held a conference for practitioners, a meeting of Cumbrian managers and a meeting for families. We've also developed local materials to complement national guidance and we've just completed some Key Working training.

We've been bowled over by the positive response to these sessions – we had 115 practitioners at the conference and the full 70 capacity at the training.

What is the role of a Key Worker?

This has now been agreed with the managers involved and it is a role that is taken on by the principal worker with the family in addition to their usual professional role. There are several elements to the role and it includes:

- being the first point of contact for advice, support and assistance
- coordinating the assessment process, appointments, early intervention and review procedures
- ensuring that everyone holds up-to-date information about the child and family
- taking a proactive role with regard to the child's family, identifying needs and issues
- advising parents on how to be an advocate for their child.

What has been the feedback from parents?

Twelve families have received the family pack and been involved in the changes so far. They've been extremely positive.

“This is absolutely great – it's just what we've been waiting for!”

“It's all here isn't it? Everything we need to know.”

For further information contact Lindsey at earlysupport@cumbriacc.gov.uk



Voluntary sector agrees route to representation

The voluntary and community sector conference held at Newton Rigg, Penrith on Monday 9 May attracted some 165 delegates, all keen to participate in a discussion of how best to get involved and help to shape the future of children's services in Cumbria.

Ged Campion organised the event: "The delegates represented the whole spectrum of the voluntary and community sector in the county. The bigger players such as NCH, Barnardo's, YMCA and NSPCC were joined by people from some of the smaller local groups such as ADHD West Cumbria, Wigton Youth Station, Reivers District Scout Association. This is quite representative of the challenge facing us – we want to ensure that the views of such a diverse sector are heard and acknowledged by those in the various statutory bodies and elsewhere."

The main outcomes of the conference can be summarised as:

- Desire to participate
- Mandate for a reference group
- Start of an on-going process

To make your views on this known, contact Ged Campion on gc@cchildfund.org.uk

"We have a lot to offer the change agenda. Not only do we often have regular contacts with children and young people and their parents and carers but we can also see the needs in our communities from close quarters. The change agenda is all about different groups working together, putting children and young people at the centre of services and I think that we have a lot to offer from our past experience of making this kind of partnership working happen effectively and on limited resources."

Russell Norman, Chair, Cumbria Prevention and Family Support Group

"We are aiming to get this moving immediately and the indications are that the Voluntary and Community Sector want to seize this opportunity to be represented in the Change for Children process in Cumbria. The first meeting of the reference group is on 7 June at Penrith Parish Centre. I think most people are pleased with the outcomes of the conference and committed to making the structure for our involvement work for us and for the children and young people and families involved in our projects."

Ged Campion

Readers' feedback

Many thanks to everyone who took the time to complete and return the readership questionnaire distributed with the June issue of the newsletter. It was encouraging to realise that a vast majority of the 80 or so respondents find the newsletter useful (or very useful).

"As a middle manager in Social Services I have found this extremely useful for keeping myself and staff up to date with developments."

Although the feedback was broadly positive and encouraging, there are a few things that seem to need further development:

- **Distribution** - an apology to anyone who does not work with children and young people but is on the distribution for the newsletter – we are trying to iron out any glitches as soon as possible. Similarly, apologies go to those in the voluntary and community sector and healthcare professionals who are not receiving the newsletter reliably or regularly. We will try to make it more broadly available every month but any suggestions or recommendations on more consistent distribution in these areas would be much appreciated.

"Costs may be an issue but the broad distribution keeps children's needs at the forefront of our daily working and is therefore essential."

- **Format** – the preferences for email and print distribution were split almost 50:50, justifying a continued dual format but apologies to people who get both!
- **Detail and frequency** – over 80% of respondents thought that both the level of detail and the frequency was about right although a few people would like to see more detail and others thought that the newsletter could appear less often without losing momentum.

"There is enough information to stop and read as soon as I get it – any more and I think I would put it to one side for later and then it gets lost."

- **Content** - the responses on the most (and least) useful and interesting types of content varied across the whole range, an indication that not everyone likes everything but that the mix is probably about right. The trend from comments is for more grassroots projects and people, less management focus and more Cumbrian implementation and less national news.

"Use as little jargon as possible to make the newsletter as meaningful as possible to as many people as possible."

"Too much management waffle. I would like to know more about how this relates to my work."

"More input from front line staff."

"Local statistics and what is happening to change things in Cumbria would be better."

Thanks again and the Editor hopes that this particular issue, Summer 2005, begins to focus more on Cumbrian implementation and who is doing what – please let Mike Blakey know what you think as the newsletter evolves in the coming months.

In Cumbria Every Child Matters is published each month by the Cumbria Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, a multi-agency group with representatives from both voluntary and statutory organisations covering health, education, social care and all aspects of work with children and young people in Cumbria. The newsletter is also available online via the Cumbria County

Council website at www.cumbriacc.gov.uk. Ideas for future issues, requests for further information and comments should be addressed to the Editor, Michael Blakey, Project Officer – Change for Children Partnership on 01228 601192 or via michael.blakey@cumbriacc.gov.uk.

Summer 2005

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09

Great expectations



The June issue of this newsletter focused on the fifth and final Framework Outcome, **Make a Positive Contribution**. I am sure you will agree that the Cumbrian children and young people involved in the various participation activities gave us plenty of food for thought.

The young people have straightforward but demanding expectations: services that are connected, easy to use and fair; experts who make them feel comfortable and who are professional and reliable; adults who can be trusted to be confidential and who treat them with respect and as individuals. Everyone involved in children's services, whatever their role or their organisation, is involved in meeting these expectations and I want their expectations to be at the heart of our changes and developments in the coming months.

This issue begins to focus much more on the practical developments towards a children's trust way of working in Cumbria. The central pages give a summary of the roles and responsibilities that have been taken on by people across the county and across the various organisations involved in this change process.

Since the elections on 5 May, Philip Chappelhow has taken on the role as Lead Member for Children's Services. For the first time this role has an overview on behalf of the electorate of all aspects of the council's services for children and young people. I wish Philip well in this crucial role.

One name is still missing from our team and that is a new Corporate Director – Children's Services. I hope that the recruitment process for this post will be completed early in July and an announcement made as soon as possible.

But to finish where I started: any changes that we make in organisations, structures, roles and responsibilities must have a prime objective of improving outcomes for all children and young people in Cumbria. Every child in Cumbria matters and what they expect from us matters too.

Regards,

Peter Stybelski
Chief Executive, Cumbria County Council

Practical responses

"In terms of health, children and young people need different services from adults and the words of the young people reinforce that and also provide us with some challenges.

We do need to consider whether health services are Comfortable for young people so they feel welcome and whether they are Easy to understand and use. I also found the words Connected and Confidential provided a clarity that is often lacking. And I really appreciated the statement about Professional service.

We will use these statements as we develop the National Service Framework for Children. They are really useful - thank you."

Anne Ridgway, Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust

"I have already been involved in sharing the children and young people's expectations with a number of groups around Cumbria and their views have been really well-received.

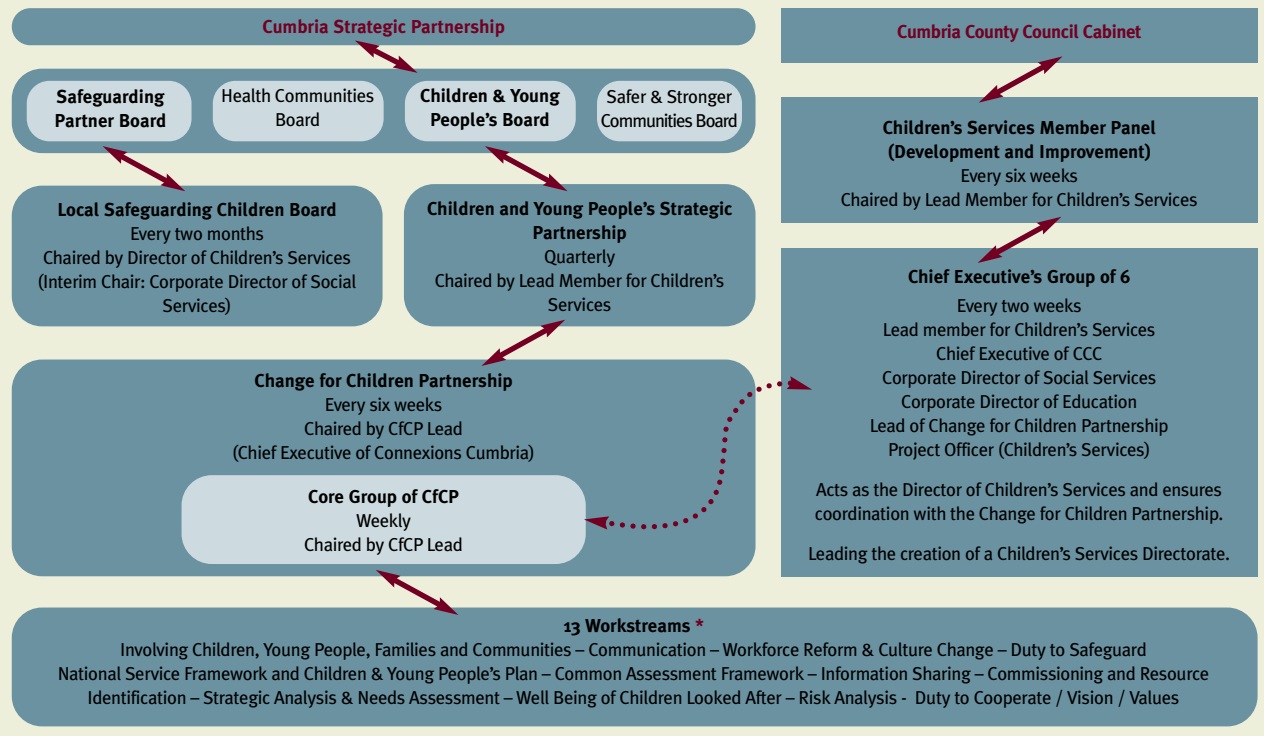
Many of the expectations - Connected, Professional and Reliable services, for instance - are shared by everyone working with children and young people in Cumbria but it has been refreshing and thought-provoking to see words like Comfortable, Fair and Easy to use as well. We have a lot to do but it is great to have such a clear sense of what we're aiming for in the future."

Jane Humphries, Cumbria Children's Fund

"I look forward to working with children and young people, and organisations dedicated to them, to make sure that their opinions count. I will help ensure that those with the power to improve children's lives live up to their responsibilities. Children and young people have often been ignored in public life and I am dedicating my role to setting that straight."

Professor Al Aynsley-Green,
Children's Commissioner for England

Proposed Governance Arrangements



Summary of Groups (as at 1 June 2005)

Please note that details of membership may change and the roles and membership of the other bodies mentioned in the Governance diagram, such as the Sponsor Group and the reconfigured Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, will be covered in future issues of the newsletter.

CEO Group of 6

With a specific focus on local authority services, there is the Chief Executive's Group of 6, made up of the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director of Social Services, the Corporate Director of Education, the Lead of the Change for Children Partnership and the Project Officer for Children's Services.

Its functions are to:

- Act as the Director of Children's Services and ensure coordination with the Change for Children Partnership.
- Lead the creation of a Children's Services Directorate within Cumbria County Council.

Change for Children Partnership – Core Group

Meets on a weekly basis.

Its functions are to:

- Undertake the business of the County Council as the lead body for the delivery of section 10 of the Children Act (2004) and the broader Every Child Matters: Change for Children requirements.
- Provide support to the wider Change for Children Partnership Group to carry out their role.
- Represent the County Council at meetings with the Government Office NW

(GONW), Council Members and others.

- Co-ordinate the functions/ responsibilities required of the County Council in relation to its role as lead body.
- Facilitate the required changes within the County Council and main partner organisations.
- Coordinate the arrangements for the delivery of key targets/requirements.
- Engage and ensure understanding by the constituent partner organisations.

Membership:

Siân Rees (Partnership lead)
Michael Blakey (CCC Project Officer)
Jane Humphries (Cumbria Children's Fund)
Susan Atkins (CCC Policy and Performance)
Anne Ridgeway (MB PCT)
Michael Watmough (CCC Education)
John Swainston (CCC Education)
Jane Williamson (Cumbria Sure Start)
Elspeth Alexander (North Cumbria Primary Care Trusts)
Paul Moore (CCC Social Services)
Paul Boyce (CCC Social Services)

Change for Children Partnership Group Meets every 6 weeks and is chaired by Siân Rees.

Its functions are to:

- Plan for the improved delivery of the five outcomes set out in the Children Act (2004).
- Advise the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership on progress and necessary actions.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of achieving the required outcomes for children and young people, including leading and supporting the workstreams.

- Represent the Partnership with external agencies, including attending conferences / events on its behalf.
- Engage and ensure understanding by the constituent partner organisations.
- Other tasks as appropriate to achieving the Partnership aims in the context of a developing agenda.

Membership:

Siân Rees (Change for Children Partnership lead)
Ged Campion (Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership)
Dave Todd (Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership)
Mark Bowman (Connexions Cumbria)
Jane Humphries (Cumbria Children's Fund)
John Swainston (CCC Education)
Michael Blakey (Change for Children Partnership)
Michael Watmough (CCC Education)
Paul Boyce (CCC Social Services)
Susan Atkins (CCC Policy and Performance)
Paul Moore (CCC Social Services)
Isabella Geraghty (Cumbria Sure Start)
Jane Williamson (Cumbria Sure Start)
Ian Parker (Eden District Council)
Lindsay Harford (Learning & Skills Council)
Anne Ridgway (Morecambe Bay PCT)
Mary Sloan (Morecambe Bay PCT)
Elspeth Alexander (North Cumbria Primary Care Trusts)
Jan Massey (Primary Headteacher)
Stewart Gimber (Secondary Headteacher)
Lynda Hassall (Local/mini Sure Start programmes)
Russell Norman (Voluntary Sector)
Kevin Royston (Youth Offending Team)

Workstreams

* The tasks involved in planning and implementing changes in Cumbria have been delegated to 13 workstreams, each involving a cross-section of the people and organisations that are involved in delivering improvements and each with clear responsibilities and goals for the coming months.

<p>1 Involving Children, Young People, Families and Communities Led by Richard Frank of Connexions Cumbria and Michael Blakey of the Change for Children Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To secure processes of participation in the Change for Children programme, develop a coherent strategy and a set of standards for participation. • To embed good participation practice in children's trust arrangements.
<p>2 Communication Led by Lindsay Harford of the Cumbria Learning and Skills Council and Jane Williamson of Cumbria Sure Start</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a strategy and processes for communicating with key stakeholders including children, young people, families, staff about the ECM: Change for Children programme.
<p>3 Workforce Development / Culture Change Led by Anne Ridgway of Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust and John Swainston of CCC Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a multi-agency strategy for workforce development. • To manage the process of multi-agency cultural change and ensure this is part of the workforce development strategy.
<p>4 Member and Board Support and Protocol Development Led by Siân Rees, lead of the Change for Children Partnership and Chief Executive of Connexions Cumbria, and Susan Atkins of the CFC Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of decision-makers, including council and board members, about the CFC programme.
<p>5 Duty to Safeguard Led by Michael Watmough from CCC Education and Paul Moore from CCC Social Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure a multi-agency approach towards the duty to safeguard children and young people in Cumbria.
<p>6 National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services / Children and Young People's Plan / Inspection Framework (Joint Area Reviews) / Performance Management Led by Michael Watmough from CCC Education with Colin Pritchard and Lesley Miller from CCC Social Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the children and young people's plan coherent with other strategic plans, including the National Service Framework local delivery plans. • To develop a multi-agency process to prepare for the first Joint Area Review. • To undertake these tasks in the context of the Inspection Framework for children's services.
<p>7 Common Assessment Framework Led by Dave Todd of Connexions Cumbria and Jane Humphries of Cumbria Children's Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for and implement the Common Assessment Framework across all agencies.
<p>8 Information Sharing and Assessment Led by Dave Todd of Connexions Cumbria and Paul Boyce of CCC Social Services and Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for and implement Information Sharing protocols and processes across all agencies. • To prepare for the implementation of the 'index' across all agencies.
<p>9a Commissioning and Resource Identification Led by Mary Sloan of Morecambe Bay PCT and Paul Boyce of CCC Social Services with an external consultant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a joint commissioning strategy across all agencies based on accurate resource identification. • To develop a joint commissioning function that will ensure that resources are focused on needs and improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.
<p>9b Strategic Analysis / Baseline Assessment / Needs Assessment Led by Siân Rees, lead of the Change for Children Partnership and Chief Executive of Connexions Cumbria, Jane Humphries of Cumbria Children's Fund and Anne Ridgway of Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that data is available and accessible to inform analysis, information and decisions about the future function and form of children's services in Cumbria. This includes information about children and young people's needs, current services' performance and the capacity for future development.
<p>10 Well Being of Children Looked After Led by Paul Moore of CCC Social Services and Eileen McLean of Children's Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop joined up approaches to continue to improve the well being of children looked after.
<p>11 Risk Analysis Led by Susan Atkins CCC and Michael Blakey of the Change for Children Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To analyse and manage risk throughout the change for children programme. • To embed a culture of risk analysis and management in future children's trust arrangements.
<p>12 Duty to Cooperate / Vision / Values Led by Stewart Gimber, Headteacher of Ullswater School and Michael Blakey of the Change for Children Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop multi-agency values and a vision for children's trust arrangements in Cumbria. • To secure agreement about the arrangements that fulfil the duty to co-operate.

"People need to know what's happening, when, why and how and they also want to know who to talk to and where to go with questions. The Communications workstream is going to focus on getting accurate information out to people as effectively and as efficiently as possible."

Jane Williamson, Cumbria Sure Start Manager

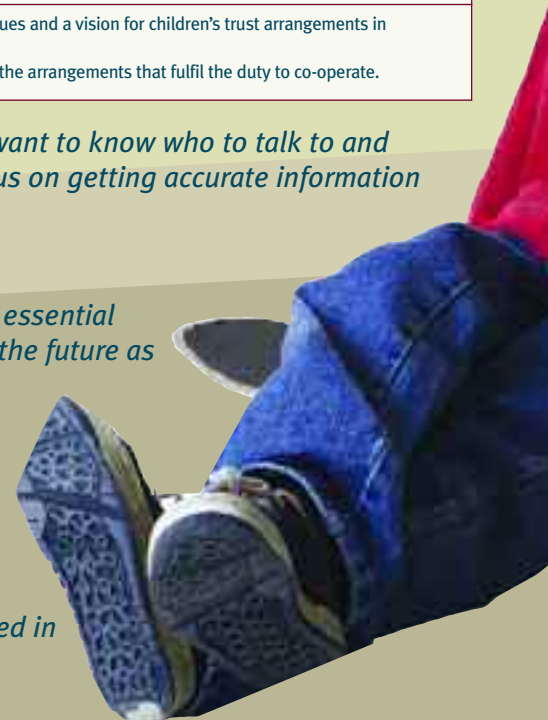
"The Workforce development and culture change workstream recognises how essential people are to embed change successfully. We need to reassure people about the future as well as involving them and providing them with opportunities to develop and contribute to tomorrow's services for children and young people."

John Swainston, Head of Standards and School Improvement

"The Commissioning workstream has the task of agreeing how we shape services to improve outcomes for children and young people. This agreement will be based on the needs of children and the views of those who use and provide services. This is a complex task and the partnership is being supported in progressing it by the DfES / DH external support team."

Paul Boyce, Senior Joint Commissioner

* Workstreams will continue to evolve - some will conclude their work and others may be added either from work already taking place or newly identified priorities

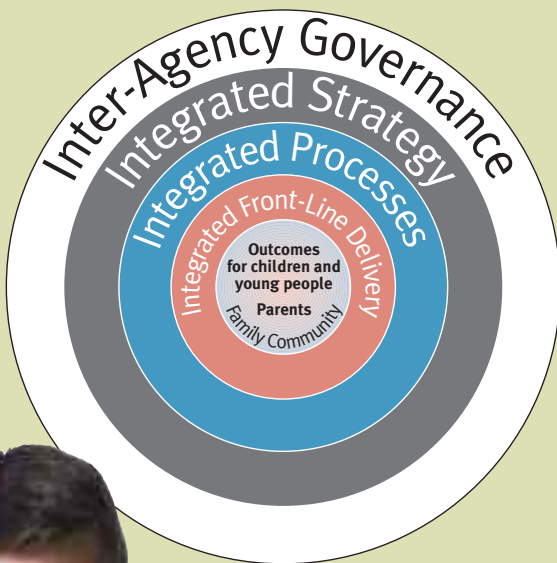


Frequently Asked Questions

What is a children's trust way of working?

Government consultation has endorsed the view that better outcomes will be secured by services working together more effectively on the front line to meet the needs of children, young people and their families. Such effective integrated practice is already in place in many areas, for example Sure Start, Connexions, Youth Offending Teams (YOT) and Drug Action Teams (DAT).

The Children Act 2004 gives a particular leadership role to local authorities in setting up the arrangements to secure co-operation among local partners. This duty to co-operate, embedded in children's trust arrangements, operates not just at the strategic level but also at the front line and the objective is always to create positive outcomes for children, young people and their parents, families and communities.



This is often illustrated as the onion diagram although anyone who attended the Cumbria Children's Fund conference in December 2004 may well remember the zipper analogy too – everything needs to be joined up at every level!

Children's trust arrangements will have four essential components:

- professionals enabled and encouraged to work together in more integrated front-line services, built around the needs of children and young people;

- common processes which are designed to create and underpin joint working;

- a planning and commissioning framework which brings together agencies' planning, supported as appropriate by the

pooling of resources, and ensures key priorities are identified and addressed;

- strong inter-agency governance arrangements, in which shared ownership is coupled with clear accountability.

Will we be forced to have a children's trust?

Most areas should have a children's trust by 2006 and the Government expects all areas to have a children's trust by 2008. That is, by 2008, local authorities are required to have in place arrangements that produce integrated working at all levels, from planning through to delivery, with a focus on improving outcomes.

We may not choose to call this a children's trust but the way of working must be in place and we must be able to show that we are committed to it.

What is the value of pooling funds?

The Children's Fund has been a catalyst in this area and there is already one major example of pooled funding in Cumbria: Early Intervention Projects in primary schools have had a significant impact on supporting children as soon as a specific need is recognised. There are currently 18 schools involved in this jointly funded work and developments in the new school year will focus on groups of schools working together to share their experiences and build their expertise.

This and other similar projects have proved the value of pooled funding in several ways:

- it encourages innovative and user-focused service design – funding loses its identity in the pool and the focus is more on the user of the service;
- pooling can generate services which are easier to access and more responsive as there is less tendency to duplication and more consistency on eligibility;
- pooled funds provide a crucial opportunity for integrated commissioning and decision-making;
- formal pooling agreements strengthen the bonds of partnership working and the process of pooling budgets challenges and drives partner agencies to be more effective and efficient in achieving shared outcomes;
- pooled funds often reduce the number of separate funding streams that users have to access, making things simpler for children and young people with multiple needs.

What are the roles of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member?

The Children Act 2004 requires every top-tier or unitary local authority in England to appoint a Director of Children's Services (DCS) and to designate a Lead Member for children's services (LM).

The DCS will be professionally accountable for the delivery of the authority's education and social services functions for children, and any health functions for children delegated to the authority by an NHS body. The DCS, together with the LM, will also have a key role in driving wider partnership working to integrate and transform services. The LM will exercise local political accountability for the same range of services as the Director, and is expected to take a particular role in safeguarding.

These FAQs are taken from the Every Child Matters website at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk. This website was re-launched in May 2005 and it aims to provide a dynamic news and information service and a variety of practical features and reference materials to help practitioners, manager and policy-makers. There are also sections for children, young people, parents and carers.