

Date: 23 June 2004

Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Children and Young People's Partnerships

Purpose

1. To update Committee members on progress of Children and Young People's Frameworks, Early Entitlement (Children's) Plans, and Extending Entitlement (Young People's) Plans.

Summary

2. The first part of this report (**HSS(2)-08-04(p.11a)**) provides an assessment of local authorities' Children and Young People's Frameworks and Early Entitlement (Children's) Plans, and presents issues and key messages derived from the assessment process. Each local authority was required to submit full plans in October 2003.

3. The second part of the report (**HSS(2)-09-04(p.11b)**) summarises progress by the 22 Young People's Partnerships in implementing "Extending Entitlement: supporting 11-25 year olds in Wales" between September 2002 and March 2004.

Background

4. The Children and Young People's Frameworks are intended to be over-arching plans covering all services provided locally by local authorities, the NHS and their partners in the public and voluntary sectors. The intention is that they should provide the 5-year strategic vision in terms of priorities, targets and outcomes. They give the context for two more detailed plans, dealing with children (0-10) and young people (11-25). In each local authority area, two sub-groups of the Framework partnerships (the Children's Partnership and the Young People's Partnership) are responsible for drawing up more

detailed Early Entitlement (Children's) Plans and Extending Entitlement (Young People's) Plans.

Action

5. Committee members are invited to note the progress being made by Children and Young People's Partnerships and the key issues and messages emerging from their plans.

Jane Hutt AM
Minister for Health and Social Care

HSS(2)-09-04(p.11a)

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S FRAMEWORKS and EARLY ENTITLEMENT (CHILDREN'S) PLANS

Local authorities submitted initial draft Children and Young People's Frameworks and Children's Plans in October 2002. It was recognised that the process of producing these plans in partnership would be a new one that would need time to evolve and become embedded in local practice. Full versions were submitted in October 2003.

As last year, a consortium led by Children in Wales has provided a written assessment of each plan, which has been passed on to the partnership concerned. Officials have now completed visits to all partnerships to follow up this written assessment with a meeting.

Plans were assessed overall as falling within one of three broad categories:

1. ready to proceed, possibly with points for further development;
2. partial – needing further work, with omissions or weaknesses, but balanced with major elements in place;
3. needing substantial work with significant omissions or weaknesses and/or evidence of poor process.

Summary of results

The results from the plans submitted in the autumn of 2003 are presented below:

<i>Category</i>	1	2	3
<i>Frameworks Assessment</i>	0 (0%)	17 (77%)	5 (23%)
<i>Children's Plans Assessment</i>	1 (4%)	13 (60%)	8 (36%)

In respect of Frameworks, last year's initial plans were subject to a small number of simple checks. This year the full template, derived from the planning guidance, has been used. The criterion to achieve Category 1 is that the plan satisfies the template in all major respects. It is not surprising therefore that no Framework plan reached Category 1, although at least three were very close to it. In category 2, a "partial" plan may well have examples of best practice alongside sections that have omissions. This category encompasses a wide spread of standards. There are fewer this year in Category 3, representing a degree of progress.

Only one Children's Plan reached the category of "ready to proceed," likely to be the result of the relatively recent formation of most Children's Partnerships. This is the first full plan that has been required. It shows good progress that the number of plans needing substantial work (Category 3) has significantly reduced, despite the increased requirements. The majority of plans that need further work (Category 2) again represent a wide spread of standards with some close to being "ready to proceed" and some "needing substantial work".

Summary in detail

The sections below follow the basic format of the assessment.

FRAMEWORKS

Accessibility

Most plans had improved in their lay out and presentation and three-quarters fully met the requirement. The remainder failed to follow guidelines, used complex language or made uneven presentation with different fonts and sizes.

Partnership and Planning

This section also improved from last year. Partnerships have moved on and developed generally, with one or two still struggling to establish themselves. All Framework Partnerships are multi-agency and most are well balanced in representation. The variation in numbers indicates different styles of operation

(8 up to 26 members) with small partnerships being the exception. Some include representation of young people, others over representation of local authority and/or under representation of voluntary sector.

Assessment of Current Position

Two thirds of plans include a broad assessment of existing provision and gaps and shortfalls and some still await work to be completed. Seven plans provided an analysis of strengths and gaps in services in relation to national and local objectives, based on the Assembly's core aims. Generally, there is a weakness in the collection of appropriate data and in its analysis. One plan stood out in gathering existing plans, strategies, and consultations, and assembling a data base of statistics from various agencies relating to the Assembly's core aims, in order to respond appropriately. This will be shared as an exemplar.

Consultation with Users

All but two plans contained references to the mechanisms employed. Some plans demonstrated full and comprehensive processes, including parents and toddlers as well as children and young people. Evidence of substantial commitment is recorded and there are indications of excellent work being developed. More attention is needed to participation of younger children, parents and carers.

Vision and Strategic Aims

All but one plan provided information on the vision and strategic aims of partnerships. Over a third fulfilled the purpose of the Partnership by providing a strategic vision to which all local bodies affecting children and young people contributed, giving a clear description of how national strategies, policies and priorities will be tackled locally. In some plans the linkages between vision, aims and priorities were not well made and this has been discussed with the relevant partnerships in feedback meetings. Examples of good practice will be shared.

Inputs and Funding

No plan met the requirement to state the overall contribution of each partner service to the strategic aims and priorities. Partnerships generally experience difficulty in sharing this level of detail. Inputs and funding appear to be the most problematical section of the plan. This is a key area for development if the Frameworks are to be real drivers for change.

There is a need to build trust between partners, working towards jointly agreed priorities and agreement on allocation of agency budgets to achieve strategic priorities. The key to further development lies in a greater understanding of the purposes of the partnership and the underpinning principles of partnership working. Underpinning statutory basis for the partnerships in the Children Bill should also help to address this issue.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Whilst all plans had an entry in this section, thirteen had no statement of how implementation will be monitored and reviewed over the life of the plan. Those who did so relied on statements of intent, work in progress, usually using task groups, and externally commissioned work.

Monitoring and evaluation remains an underdeveloped area. There are some examples of good practice to be shared. This is linked to the development of objectives and measures, issued for consultation in Part 4 of *Children and Young People: Rights to Action*.

CHILDREN'S PLANS

Accessibility

All but four plans fully met this check. Those that did not failed to follow Assembly Government headings and contained complex language or vague descriptions.

Introduction and Background

All but one plan included an indication of the partnership members, with varying degrees of detail. The size of Children's Partnerships ranged from 14 to 34 members. In some areas senior managers appear to lack understanding of their role and value. Many partnerships are at relatively early stages and their development will require continuing support. Placing them on a statutory basis should increase their importance in the eyes of senior managers of the partner agencies.

Current Position

Plans were mixed in providing a broad assessment of need relating to this age group. Ten contained the data but the quality, extent and relevance varied, often not provided for the whole age group or not specific to it.

The information in this section is critical to successful outcomes in the plan. A number of plans provided good quality data, but despite progress this year, the standard of the material is generally below that required. This is an area of practice that will be addressed further with Children's Partnership Co-ordinators.

Consultation with Users and Eligible Populations

Partnerships are at different points of development in the range of approaches used and the extent to which practice is sustainable. Consultation is seen as important by all, but evidence shows the commitment to implementation varies. Further efforts are needed to develop practice in children's

participation, including regular feedback to users. A Funky Dragon Conference on this topic is to be held and a number of Co-ordinators will be attending.

Objectives and Targets

This section required use of the Assembly Government's seven core aims for Children. A quarter of plans completed all the checks with minor gaps in one or other of the requirements and a half partially completed it. Some plans make an excellent job of this, but frequently either there are gaps or targets are not measurable because of they lack precision or a time scale for achievement. Partnerships would benefit from information and examples of good practice to assist them in setting measurable targets.

Inputs and Funding

As with Frameworks, it proved difficult for Partnerships to set out the contribution of each partner service in relation to the strategic aims and priorities. Over half the plans were not able to comply with the guidance requirements and just over a third achieved partial compliance. Cymorth funding was often included as the sole entry under this heading and statements of intent were frequent.

Again, the attributes of good partnership working are not sufficiently embedded and a high level of trust is needed to enable tough decisions to be made in setting challenging objectives and targets. But this must be done to make the process worthwhile

Outputs

Just over a third of plans listed activities and services against the impact objectives and targets to which they relate, with reference to the seven Core Aims. The majority of partnerships have considerable work to do in this area to fulfil properly the requirements of the guidance. There are sufficient examples of its proper completion to suggest that attention to improving planning processes and information would significantly improve this section.

Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

Three plans substantially fulfilled the requirements and showed that monitoring and evaluation had priority. Half partially fulfilled the requirements and a number have given indications of their next actions to develop practice. Despite the mixed picture, there appears to be progress in that partnerships are beginning to see that if they set measurable targets they are well placed to engage with the need to monitor and evaluate their impact.

Conclusion

Most plans have shown significant development this year and are well on the way to becoming fully completed Frameworks. There are clear and positive signs that the benefits of partnership and joint

planning are being broadly recognised and that effective practice is being achieved and this learning needs to become universal.

Further advice and support should help partnerships achieve better-balanced and finished plans. Greater clarity is needed in deciding where and in which plan material should appear and further work to develop planning templates will help to resolve this.

Consultation is well accepted and plans contain some excellent examples that can be disseminated. The process of consultation will be weakened if the influence of users is not clearly demonstrated. This has been raised with a number of Partnerships in the current feedback meetings.

Children's Partnerships are at relatively early stages in their development and will continue to need support, including from the Framework and Young People's Partnerships. Trust and mutuality need nurturing to ensure the benefits of partnership are realised. There is evidence of considerable progress in a number of areas but the overall picture remains very mixed.

It will be important to support and encourage the best practice where partnerships are significantly failing to deliver plans of sufficient coherence and quality. At each feedback meeting arranged with Partnership Chairs and Co-ordinators, agreement is reached on progress needed and how this can be effectively achieved.

Arrangements are in hand to share plans widely to disseminate good practice. General issues of good practice are to be discussed at the regular meetings of co-ordinators and officials. I have asked that a conference to share best practice is arranged for those involved in the Partnerships and Cymorth. This is planned for September. At the event consideration will be given to issues that have arisen in plan assessments and feedback meetings.

-

HSS(2)-09-04(p.11b)

EXTENDING ENTITLEMENT (YOUNG PEOPLE'S) PLANS

Extending Entitlement is an intrinsic part of developing 'The Learning Country' and the provision will make a significant contribution to the Assembly's commitment to working in partnership and to the four Welsh Assembly Government priorities identified in *Wales: a better country*:

- better health
- better jobs
- better skills
- stronger, safer communities

Extending Entitlement will contribute to the transformation of 14-19 provision and the aspirational target of 95 per cent of young people (by the age of 25) to be ready for high skilled employment or higher education by 2015. Within the context of universal provision it will enable all young people to have access to the services, support and opportunities they need.

Significant progress has been achieved since September 2002 in the following areas:

- better planning of services and joint planning
- identifying local priorities for action
- participation
- increased activities out of school hours
- better and more training for those who work with young people
- better information and guidance

The extent and breadth of the activities being developed to enhance the provision for young people throughout Wales and the initial progress towards analysing and developing strategic approaches to securing the entitlement of all young people to the network of services, support and opportunities to enable them to lead fulfilling lives and play their full part in their families, communities, and the economy of Wales is impressive. However, there is much still to do and all Young People's Partnerships are aware of the significant gaps in provision as well as the rich variety of opportunities that exist. Relationships are now developing in most areas to take forward the vision of *Extending Entitlement*, but this will need continued support and encouragement at local and national levels.

Progress reports September 2002 – March 2004

All 22 Young People's Partnerships have submitted draft progress reports on the first 18 months of their operation (September 2002 to March 2004). These provide far more detail and activity than can be included here, but this report demonstrates some of the ways in which the work of Young People's Partnership is contributing to the development of national and local policies in response to the identified needs of young people in their area.

During the first 18 months of their operation, Young People's Partnerships were asked to look at **three national priorities**:

- increasing the involvement of young people
- increasing the number of activities for young people 11-25 which take place out of school hours
- enhancing the availability of joint training

They were also asked to identify a small number of **local priorities** which addressed their particular local circumstances and the needs of the young people in their area.

The extent and breadth of the activities being developed to enhance the provision for young people throughout Wales and the initial progress towards analysing and developing strategic approaches to securing the entitlement of all young people to the network of services, support and opportunities to enable them to lead fulfilling lives and play their full part in their families, communities, and the economy of Wales is impressive. However, there is much still to do and all Young People's Partnerships are aware of the significant gaps in provision as well as the rich variety of opportunities that exist. Relationships are now developing in most areas to take forward the vision of *Extending Entitlement*, but this will need continued support and encouragement at local and national levels.

Conclusions

Points for the Welsh Assembly Government to note include:

- more proactive work with Young People's Partnerships to encourage development of Welsh medium provision
- work with Young People's Partnerships and the All-Wales Young People Organisations (AWYPO) Group to engage all organisations, including police forces, in the vision of *Extending Entitlement*
- identify further aspects of work which can be effectively supported through national training events
- identify forward plan for national priorities to assist Young People's Partnerships in reviewing their 5-year strategies
- continue work with Young People's Partnerships to develop effective monitoring and evaluation strategies to demonstrate impact
- develop performance indicators in collaborative with Estyn

Points for Young People's Partnerships to note include:

- continue efforts to engage all organisations in the area providing for young people in the wider partnership and develop mechanisms to sustain this
- encourage all organisations, including wider partners, to include in their planning, monitoring and evaluation how their activities contribute to the 10 entitlements
- work towards aligning aims and objectives of partnership with aims and objectives (core business) of the partner agencies
- build on considerable work to involve more young people in wider range of ways with more influence.

A fuller report on the progress of Young People's Plans will be presented to the Committee for Education and Lifelong Learning in due course.