

## Analysis of Children and Young People's Plans: Introduction and Overview

This paper gives a background and overarching conclusions to the analysis of Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs) from a representative sample of 75 Local Authorities (LAs). It covers:

- Brief details of the study's remit, funders and style of reporting
- An overview of the findings.

### About the research

NFER's study of the CYPPs aims to build a national picture of the content of the plans and how they contribute to the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM). It is intended to inform future approaches to planning and highlight those areas of support which will be useful to LAs.

The project is a collaboration between the following funders:

- Local Government Association (LGA)
- Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
- Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)
- National Youth Agency (NYA)
- National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)
- EMIE at NFER.

### About the findings

Following interim reporting on 50 plans, this series describes the findings that emerged from an analysis of the larger sample of 75 plans, and includes illustrative examples taken from the plans. Individual papers in the series cover the following themes:

- a comparative review of plans' content
- aspects of commissioning and resourcing
- performance management and monitoring
- consultation with children and young people, and needs analysis
- targets
- Every Child Matters: 'Be Healthy'
- Every Child Matters: 'Stay Safe'
- Every Child Matters: 'Enjoy and Achieve'
- Every Child Matters: 'Make a Positive Contribution'
- Every Child Matters: 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing'
- youth work.<sup>1</sup>



These themes were agreed jointly by the collaborating funders of the research. The sample of 75 LAs was drawn to be representative of all LAs in England in terms of authority type (county, unitary, London borough, metropolitan) and 2005 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) score (for LA Children and Young People's Services in improving outcomes for children and young people).

## Overview

When interpreting these summative findings, it is necessary to bear in mind that any judgement of plans using criteria based just on a check list of content is not appropriate. The CYPP is the result of the introduction of a new planning process, which requires each<sup>2</sup> LA to produce a high-level, overarching strategic plan focused on the needs of children, young people and their families in the locality. Thus, these plans are expected to reflect the different circumstances and priorities of each local partnership. As a result, plans vary in terms of their intended readership, and authorities may have produced other supporting documents that were not included in this analysis.

Some of the changes being suggested in the plans will inevitably take time to embed, so the change process is likely to be long term. The CYPPs will be reviewed annually and will evolve over time. Arguably, these first plans portray the direction, or route, that LAs are taking on their journey towards supporting a more integrated service delivery. Indeed, this concept of 'journey' features explicitly in some plans. Furthermore, LAs are beginning their journeys from different starting points and will therefore be identifying differing areas where progress is required to bring about improved outcomes for children and young people.

Taking on board this background context, some of the key findings and implications from the analysis are:

- Overall, across the plans, there is a recognition of the importance of developing **local partnerships** and responding to **local needs**.
- There is a marked **diversity** across the plans in the coverage of the different themes identified for this research. No plan covers all 11 themes in a similarly detailed way.
- As examples of this diversity, looking across the ECM outcomes there are:
  - **over 70 different key groups** referenced in this sample of plans, representing a wide spectrum of need within the population of children, with looked after children and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities being most referenced.
  - **some 90 different targets** (and their variants) for children and young people featured in the plans.
- **Varied usage of the ECM outcomes framework<sup>3</sup>** itself is evident: only four of the 75 plans relayed (or replayed) the framework in its entirety, suggesting that LAs are working with it as a conceptual tool rather than adhering to it as a blueprint formula.
- There were many examples of LAs producing additional material around the CYPP and five ECM outcomes, written specifically for children and young people. Such strong production values reflect an intention to be **accessible and engage young people**, and to encourage their participation in discussions about local service provision.
- Maturation of the planning process is evident, but there is scope for future guidance and/or support on identification and allocation of resources, performance management arrangements and commissioning strategies.



- The analysis suggests three particular avenues for development of further guidance:
  - Future plans to delineate clearly LA intentions regarding the next stages in planning and/or implementation, e.g. ‘Where next’ sections.
  - An agreed glossary of definitions, as well as clarification and further examples of terminology relating to priorities, actions and targets in the ECM planning process. The analysis has highlighted that, across this sample of plans, they are not used consistently.
  - Clear and specific links between actions and targets.

### Notes

- 1 The findings presented in the youth work paper are based on analysis of all the plans received by NFER at the time the analysis was carried out, i.e. 132.
- 2 Local authorities judged to be ‘excellent’ are not required to produce a CYPP; however, virtually all have now done so. The sample of plans included ‘excellent’ authorities.
- 3 Department for Education and Skills (2005). Every Child Matters. Outcomes Framework [online]. Available: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/A3C10E74-0B56-450D-BF0A-962E508D02A1/0/CYPOutcomesFramework.pdf> [20 July 2006].



**Research team:** Pippa Lord, Anne Wilkin, Kay Kinder, Jenny Murfield, Megan Jones, Tamsin Chamberlain, Claire Easton, Kerry Martin, Caroline Gulliver, Catherine Paterson, Juanita Ries, Helen Moor, Alison Stott, Carol Wilkin, Sheila Stoney.

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The full series of papers are available from [www.nfer.ac.uk/emie](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/emie):

- 1 Introduction and overview
- 2 The plans: a comparative review of content
- 3 Commissioning and Resourcing in Children and Young People's Plans
- 4 Performance Management and Partnership Arrangements in Children and Young People's Plans
- 5 Consultation with Children and Young People and Needs Analysis in Children and Young People's Plans
- 6 Targets within the Children and Young People's Plans
- 7 Every Child Matters: Be Healthy
- 8 Every Child Matters: Stay Safe
- 9 Every Child Matters: Enjoy and Achieve
- 10 Every Child Matters: Make a Positive Contribution
- 11 Every Child Matters: Achieve Economic Wellbeing
- 12 Youth Work Themes in Children and Young People's Plans

