

## HOW DO WE WORK TOGETHER?



The first in a series of three events to bring together the voluntary, community and statutory sectors to look at the future of support for the children, young people and families of Manchester

PART ONE:  
**17th October 2005**  
Chancellor's Conference Centre, Fallowfield

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# Summary Report

## Event One (of Three): How Do We Work Together? Voluntary, Community, Faith and Statutory Sectors

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2005**  
**Chancellors Conference Centre**

### Why a summary?

The following summary gives information of what happened at the event on the 17<sup>th</sup> October entitled 'How do we work together?' The aim of doing this is to:

- ensure that people who were unable to attend are able to get a sense of what was discussed and what were the views/questions raised
- give some feedback to those who did attend as to the views of the conference as a whole
- make sure it is not a one off event, but rather a 'work in progress'
- pull together a set of Frequently Asked Questions
- Outline issues that need further debate, discussion or action
- Inform Events Two and Three
- Capture a snapshot of current feeling/opinion, so that we can look back on this as we move forward

### What happened at Event 1?

The purpose of the first event was to:

- Provide an update on some of the major changes taking place in children's services
- Consider the unique contribution the voluntary and community sector is already making in supporting children, young people and their families
- Look at the sector's involvement as a key partner in the writing and delivery of the Manchester Children and Young People's Plan

The first event was very much about setting the scene and beginning to highlight some of the issues that need to be addressed to support the voluntary/community sector's active engagement in the writing and delivery of the plan.

A welcome and introduction was given by Pauline Newman, Director of Children's Services, outlining what she saw as the challenges and opportunities to this agenda.

Presentations were given by Julie Dugdale (Government Office Northwest, lead on the engagement of the voluntary/community sector) and Mike Wild (Manchester Alliance for Community Care, a local voluntary sector group) on the national and local agendas that are driving the integration of children's services.

In workgroups, delegates then discussed what had been heard in presentations and establish the viewpoint of/on the sector.

Graham Mellors, Head of the Joint Children's Unit gave an input on the Children and Young Peoples Plan as a way of introducing what is to be discussed in more detail, particularly in event 2.

## **Frequently asked questions (FAQs)**

At the event a commitment was made to addressing the questions that were generated as a result. Below is a list of the range of questions that emerged. These questions will inform the second and third sessions in November and February:

- Why couldn't we have had the plan in advance of event 1?
- How were invitations to the event communicated?
- Why was the event planned without children and young people?
- Why wasn't there a better representation of other agencies?
- What is relationship between this and other local plans, e.g. teenage pregnancy?
- Is there "real" opportunity for input?
- Why is there currently no voluntary and community sector representative at children's board level?
- How will the plan enable a person who feels the plan is not meeting their individual needs to voice that concern and also get a response to that concern?
- Are agencies signed up to service direction for all parties?
- Who is the consultation aimed at?
- How does this development influence all of the other agendas and can the Local Authority shift resources from meeting acute need to prevention & early intervention agenda quick enough?
- What learning has there been from initiatives such as Children's Fund re partnership working and how will this inform district commissioning?
- How do we make sure everyone understands the real impact of the 5 outcomes? How will you present opportunities for training and awareness?

- How will local knowledge be used more effectively?
- Is unnecessary jargon going to be removed?
- How can we ensure that communication is improved so that all sectors/communities can feel consulted and involved?
- How will the success and failure of the contribution of the voluntary and community sector be measured?
- How will the success of the Children's Plan and District Commissioning be measured? How will we know its working?
- How are we going to talk to the young people themselves who may not be accessing the services?
- What systems will we have to make sure children's voices are listened to on a regular basis across our district?
- In considering multi-agency teams do the panel think that the voluntary and community sector could be a fundamental part of the newly configured teams?

## **Themes from workgroups**

The following questions were discussed and debated in workgroups during the day. We have tried to represent the range of views given.

### **What do you think of the Government's approach?**

- There is no simple 'approach' from Government. There are a raft of policies and principles that are in conflict and create complexity for delivery.
- This approach appears well embedded into legislature and guidance. Fundamental principles have been agreed.
- Massive change required in a very short time.
- Take a generation to make a difference.
- Could go wrong in a big way.
- Ambitious.
- Challenging.
- High risk.
- Lack of understanding about the realities of funding – and the impact it has on operations/delivery.
- Hopefully will generate single performance management framework.
- Participation and consultation. Ensuring children and young people are involved.
- How will we ensure 'sector' is actually represented and that people within it feel/know they are engaged?
- Need to see voluntary and community sector as a sector not 1 organisation.
- Is this forcing a voluntary and community sector ideological shift? To our loss!!

### **How much of this are we doing already?**

- Best partnership working going on already. Careful with structures – don't want to lose good relationships we have. Defeats objectives.

### **What do you see as the main barriers to the plan?**

- Conflict between a 'Manchester plan' and the Government targets and expectations of the Joint Area Review (the new inspection process).
- Could be too simplistic and not enable a consistency of approach through different interpretations.
- Emphasis on 'high level indicators' keep or narrow delivery into 'processing children' – most phrased quite negatively.
- Opposing/different criteria for agencies/groups.
- Minimal emphasis on preventative services and early intervention in 20 targets (despite national agenda).
- How do you make a document like this meaningful?
- Will universal outcomes meet every individual Child's needs.
- Availability of the plan in alternative formats, i.e. large print, tape, languages or consulting in alternative methods children's groups; children not accessing universal services.
- A need to identify potential gaps in voluntary and community sector in the quest to contribute to the Children and Young People's Plan.

### **What do you see as the main opportunities coming from the plan?**

- Provide consistent info across sectors/communities.
- Voluntary Sector role – feedback opportunity to the plan (wealth of knowledge).
- Good opportunity to look at services that offer generic provision to focus on children and young people.
- Opportunity to 'showcase' what works, what we do well.
- Opportunity for more accountability.
- Chance to 'have a say'.
- Avoid duplication = saved time, resources.
- To agree a more rounded approach to delivering outcomes for children.
- Opportunity to have a shared understanding of the direction and purpose for services to children - including the understanding of children and young people.
- Opportunity – united vision – all singing from the same sheet.
- Work force development opportunities
- Opportunity for Manchester to listen to children.
- Cultural change – common language, respect, willingness to work together, value all contributions.

- voluntary and community sector needs to address its capacity to be pro-active/reactive.

### **How can we join up all the work that is being done?**

- District commissioning process will potentially improve joined up learning
- Make decision-makers accountable.
- Need more debate on what services will meet needs.
- Identify more effective infrastructure for the workforce development proposals.
- voluntary and community sector – share resources and infrastructures more, e.g. larger ones supporting funding applications for small group, small groups jointly fund a ‘fundraising’ officer
- Continue to develop and invest in structures to support a systematic involvement of voluntary and community sector

## **Evaluation feedback**

41 Evaluation forms were returned in total. We have tried to give you a flavour of the feedback, but a full summary of the feedback is available from either MACC or the Joint Children’s Unit (see “More Information” below).

### **1. How useful was the event?**

We asked people to rate the Presentations, Group discussions, Written information and Overall perception. These are the results:

| <u>Heading</u>             | <u>Very useful</u> | <u>Okay</u> | <u>Poor</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Presentations</b>       | 24                 | 17          | 3           |
| <b>Group Discussion</b>    | 27                 | 14          | 0           |
| <b>Written information</b> | 33                 | 6           | 1           |
| <b>Overall</b>             | 27                 | 11          | 0           |

### **2. Are there things you would have done differently?**

We received a range of responses to this question, mainly about practical arrangements. Examples of responses:

- Invite the Scarman Trust
- Mix the groups for sessions one and two
- It would have been useful to have the Children’s Plan before the event
- Separate rooms for groups in the main hall – hard to hear sometimes
- Video very good – need to hear more from children what are their dreams and aspirations
- We need to be inspired
- Provide a general table for people to put their information on

### **3. How did you find the venue/timing of the event?**

Generally, people found the venue and the timings either very good or excellent. The majority of the comments were positive, but there were with some comments on the start and finish times.

#### 4. Any other comments on the day?

- Not made clear that there are three linked events
- Very good and useful
- Look forward to seeing the 'write up'
- Some people and speakers use too much jargon
- Very helpful in gaining the bigger picture of issues facing both the statutory and voluntary sectors
- A chance for the sectors to come together
- Don't really feel like I have learnt anything new
- Good for networking
- Same old topics covered
- Overall, very enjoyable with lots of food for thought to take back to my organisation and district
- Useful day – good group discussions – looking forward to the next two

#### Who attended?

- **121** people responded to the invitation to say that **they would be attending**.
- **93** people **actually attended** on the day.
- **55** people attended from the **Voluntary Sector**.
- **38** people attended from the **Statutory Sector**.

#### More information?

For the full version of either the evaluation report or the write up from workshops then please contact either of the following:

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