

HARTLEPOOL CHILDREN'S TRUST

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FINAL VERSION – 28th August 2009



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1. Purpose

To work in partnership with all stakeholders, promoting and improving the well-being of all children and young people in Hartlepool.

2. Outcomes

The Children's Trust Board will:

- work together to provide high quality, convenient and coordinated services when children and young people and their families need them;
- ensure that all of the relevant partners are involved in the Children's Trust arrangements;
- establish a robust participation mechanism to ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the Children's Trust developments;
- identify the needs of children and young people in Hartlepool, highlighting both gaps and duplication in service;
- commission appropriate services from a range of high quality providers in order to meet identified need, maintain high standards and ensure value for money;
- ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm at all times, in partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children Board;
- prevent children and young people experiencing negative outcomes and social exclusion and promote positive outcomes for all children and young people;
- provide leadership in relation to the overall vision and strategic direction for children and young people's services within the Borough through the Children and Young People's Plan.

3. Functions and Roles

The Children's Trust is the embodiment of the local partnership between children and young people, parents and carers and all commissioners, together with current and potential providers of services for children, young people and their families.

It is underpinned by the duties in section 10 (1) and (5) of the Children Act 2004 on local authorities and their 'relevant partners' to cooperate in the making of arrangements to improve well-being for local children. Well-being is defined as the five Every Child Matters Outcomes: that all children should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and enjoy economic well-being.

The Children's Trust is comprised of six main bodies: the Children's Trust Board (comprising the relevant and other key partners); an Executive Group; two age related partnerships (a 0 to 11 Partnership and a 11 to 19 Partnership) a Stakeholder Group (through which children, young people, parents/ and other communities of interest are represented); and an Infrastructure Group (that will bring together all activity that supports the operational activity of the Trust, such as the Common Assessment

Framework and Workforce Development). The age related partnerships will be supported by a number of task and finish groups.

The Children's Trust is a themed Partnership of the Hartlepool Partnership and also works closely with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, an independent body established to oversee the safeguarding arrangements in Hartlepool.

The Children's Trust will:

- determine the local needs of children and young people and their families through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the age related partnerships which will regularly report to the Executive Group in terms of needs and gap analysis, performance against outcomes and potential new developments to meet those needs;
- have comprehensive consultation arrangements in place to support the work of the Trust and its age related partnerships;
- ensure the preparation and regular review of the Children and Young People's Plan;
- ensure that the resources necessary to deliver the Children and Young People's Plan are available including appropriate budgetary arrangements;
- establish a robust performance management system to support the planning and review process;
- set aspirational targets as part of the strategic direction for the future development of services for children and young people in Hartlepool;
- direct joint commissioning arrangements within Hartlepool in line with statutory guidance, taking account of national and local priorities;
- act to ensure that all services for children and young people in Hartlepool comply with the values set out in the Commissioning Framework;
- direct integrated working arrangements within Hartlepool in line with statutory guidance;
- promote continued workforce development priorities to ensure that the children and young people's workforce across Hartlepool is:
 - **Ambitious** for every child and young person;
 - **Excellent** in practice;
 - **Committed** to partnership and integrated working;
 - **Respected** and valued as professional.

4. Children's Trust Board Membership

Chair/Vice Chair

- The Chair of the Trust will be the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. The Vice Chair will be elected from the membership of the Children's Trust Board at the first meeting and thereafter on a biennial basis.

Role of Chair

The role of the Chair of the Children's Trust Board is to:

- lead the work of the Children's Trust, ensuring that the views of the Trust are communicated to a wide audience;
- represent the partnership on the Hartlepool Partnership;

- meet with the Chair of the Hartlepool Partnership to review the performance framework as required and ensure the business of the Children's Trust is conducted in an efficient and effective manner;
- promote effective partnership working between members of the Children's Trust and if necessary resolve conflict and help foster an environment of mutual interest;
- approve the formation of Working Groups to deliver specific items of work on behalf of the Children's Trust;
- agree the agenda, associated papers and minutes of previous meetings.

Role of Vice Chair

The role of the Vice Chair is to:

- deputise for the Chair as required;
- support the Chair to ensure that the work of the of the Children's Trust is undertaken effectively.

Expectation of Chair/Vice Chair and Children's Trust members:

Members of the Children's Trust will be subject to safer recruitment procedures and required to have an enhanced CRB check.

Standards of Behaviour

As a member of the Children's Trust, whether in Trust meetings or working on behalf of the Children's Trust, the following guidelines outline what the Trust expects of its members:

Accountability: to work openly and honestly and to report back their work on the Trust to their organisation or sector.

Commitment: to attend Children's Trust meetings, participate in occasional task group meetings and one-off events. To be properly prepared for meetings by reading the paperwork beforehand. To be prepared to learn from others and from good practice elsewhere and to further develop the breadth of their knowledge of their organisation or sector's role within the town.

High Quality Debate: to remain focussed and strategic. To contribute positively to discussions work with other members to achieve consensus and take important decisions regarding children and young people in Hartlepool.

Honesty and Integrity: to act with honesty, objectivity and integrity in achieving consensus through debate. To respect the confidentiality of the information provided.

Objectivity: to consider what is in the best interests for the common good of children, young people and the Hartlepool and to weigh this along with the interests of their organisation, their sector and themselves when making decisions.

Representative: to effectively reflect the interests of their organisation or sector, to raise areas of concern and contribute their experience and expertise to Partnership discussions and decisions to achieve good workable solutions.

Respect for others: to respect and to take into account the views of other members regardless of their gender, race, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation or any other status.

Trust: as 'trust' is at the heart of partnership relationship, it can be used as the overall barometer of partnership working.

5. Membership

Membership of the **Children's Trust Board** will be drawn from Hartlepool Borough Council and its 'relevant partners' as set out in the Children's Act 2004 and subsequent statutory guidance, as well as other key local partners) . Membership will be as follows:

- Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Hartlepool Borough Council;
- Chair, Children's Services Scrutiny Committee;
- Director of Child and Adult Services, Hartlepool Borough Council;
- District Commander, Cleveland Police;
- Director of Operations, Teesside Probation Service;
- Head of Community Safety and Prevention, Hartlepool Borough Council;
- Child and Maternal Health Services Adviser, NHS North East;
- Director of Health Systems and Estate Development, NHS Hartlepool;
- Representative, Hartlepool & North Tees NHS Foundation Trust (Local Requirement);
- Partnership Director, Learning and Skills Council - County Durham & Tees Valley (to be reviewed post April 2010);
- Representative, Cleveland Police Authority;
- Representative, Hartlepool Primary Schools;
- Representative, Hartlepool Secondary Schools;
- Representative, Hartlepool Special Schools;
- Representative, Hartlepool Post 16 Colleges;
- Representative, Community Empowerment Network (Local Requirement);
- Partnership Manager, Job Centre Plus;
- Chair of the Stakeholder Group;
- Chair of the Infrastructure Group;
- Chairs of the Age Related Partnerships.

Partners will be able to identify a nominated deputy who is able to commit their organisation/community of interest to any decisions made by the Board. A nominated deputy must be fully briefed to ensure that they can take an active part in the deliberations of the Board.

Officers in Attendance:

- Assistant Director, Planning and Service Integration, Children Services, Hartlepool Borough Council;
- Head of Commissioning & Children's Trust, Children's Services, Hartlepool Borough Council;
- Locality Director of Health Improvement, Hartlepool Borough Council/Hartlepool Primary Care Trust;
- Assistant Director, Children's Services (Commissioning), Hartlepool Primary Care Trust.

Membership of the **Children's Trust Executive** is set out below:

- Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Hartlepool Borough Council (Chair);
- Director of Child and Adult Services, Hartlepool Borough Council;
- Assistant Director of Children's Services (Planning & Service Integration) Hartlepool Borough Council;

- District Commander, Cleveland Police;
- Director of Health Systems and Estate Development, Hartlepool Primary Care Trust;
- Director of Operations, Teesside Probation Service;
- Head of Community Safety and Prevention, Hartlepool Borough Council;
- Representative, Community Empowerment Network.

Officers in Attendance:

- Head of Commissioning and Children's Trust;
- Assistant Director, Children's Services (Commissioning), Hartlepool Primary Care Trust.

The purpose of the Children's Trust Executive is to: direct and manage resources; direct and manage performance (holding partners to account when necessary); manage inter - agency delivery; and to procure services.

The membership of the **Stakeholder Group** will be drawn from a broad range of backgrounds and will include children and young people, parents and carers and will reflect the diversity of the local population in Hartlepool. The Chair/Vice Chair of the Group will be elected from the membership of the group. The Chair will be a young person (under 18 years of age) to ensure young people have a voice at Board level. The Chair and group will receive appropriate support from the Participation Manager. The Stakeholder Group will receive papers for consideration by the Board, four weeks in advance of the Board meeting; the views of the Stakeholder Group will be put forward to the Board by the Chair of the group or their nominated representative.

The membership of the **Age Related Partnerships** will be drawn from children and young people, parents and carers and communities of interest; all providers of services for children, young people and families as appropriate from the private, independent, voluntary and community, non statutory and statutory organisations. Members of the Stakeholder Group will also participate in the Age Related Partnerships. The Partnerships will be chaired by a 2nd Tier Officer from a Relevant Partner organisation. The Vice Chair will be elected at the first meeting of the Partnership and thereafter on a biennial basis.

The purpose of the Age Related Partnerships is to assess need, identifying children and young people who need help and co-ordinate information, performance and resources from all organisations delivering services to children and young people.

The Age Related Partnerships will also be responsible for ensuring that **Cross Cutting Themes** are addressed. These include for example:

- children and young people looked after by the local authority;
- children and young people with a disability or special educational need;
- children and young people from black and other minority ethnic backgrounds;
- health services.

6. Principles

All members of the Children's Trust shall be committed to applying the principles established in the Community Strategy:

- decision making and communication;
- effective partnership working;

- efficient partnership working;
- integrity;
- involvement and inclusion;
- leadership and influence;
- performance and management;
- skills and knowledge;
- sustainable development.

The Children's Trust will strive to meet the standards set out in the COMPACT's code of practice on communication and consultation. The Trust will also refer to the protocol between Hartlepool Partnership and the Hartlepool Community Empowerment Network.

7. Decision Making and Risk Management

The Children's Trust will operate within the delegated authority of the parent organisations to ensure the effectiveness of the partnership. Members of the Children's Trust Board should, where practicable, have the authority to make decisions and make commitments although the respective statutory organisations will ultimately retain responsibility and accountability for decisions on service delivery and use of resources.

As far as practicable business will be conducted in the spirit of partnership and consensus will be sought without resort to votes. In exceptional circumstances where a vote proves necessary, each member will have a single vote and in the event of a tied vote, the Chair will have the casting vote. The quorum for the Children's Trust Board will be 60% of the membership and must include representation from Hartlepool Borough Council Children's Services and the Hartlepool Primary Care Trust.

The Children's Trust will call on professional advice and support when deemed necessary, particularly when the outcome of the decision has a significant legal or financial implication.

All information, advice and support will be fit for purpose and tailored to the functions of the Children's Trust. The Children's Trust Board will ensure that all information is directly relevant to the decisions being taken and is:

- Timely;
- Objective;
- Sufficient;
- clear and concise;
- reliable.

The Children's Trust Board will take a planned and systematic approach to identifying, evaluating and responding to risks that threaten the delivery of the strategic direction endorsed by the Children's Trust Board. The Board will continuously check that various good management disciplines are in place, including:

- strategies and policies are fully implemented (where appropriate);
- high quality services are delivered efficiently and effectively;
- performance is regularly monitored and effective measures are put in place to tackle poor performance;
- laws and regulations are complied with;

- information used by the Children's Trust is relevant, accurate, up to date, timely and reliable;
- financial and human resources are managed efficiently and effectively and are safeguarded.

8. Performance Management

The Children's Trust is responsible for delivering the Children and Young People's Theme of the Community Strategy. The Children's Trust Board will receive quarterly reports on progress against the relevant indicators within the Local Area Agreement, Children and Young People's Plan and any other plans as required. Where performance is not on track, the Children's Trust Board will take action to address this.

The accomplishments of the Children's Trust will be measured in terms of a range of national performance indicators/Local Area Agreement targets and contribution to the Comprehensive Area Assessment and other relevant inspection regimes. Overall its success will be measured by:

- a narrowing of the gap between all children and young people and the most disadvantaged and vulnerable;
- a reduction in inequalities (particularly in health);
- a children's population that is resilient to the demands of modern day living;
- the eradication of child poverty;
- a safe environment free from anti-social behaviour, crime and abuse;
- ensuring the active engagement of all partners to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people;
- ensuring the active engagement of children, young people and parents/carers in the planning and decision making process.

The Children's Trust will ensure that the values outlined within its Commissioning Framework are championed and met.

9. Developing Capacity and Capability

The Children's Trust is aware of the importance of recruiting people with the right skills, knowledge and experience to play an effective part in delivering the strategic aims of the Trust. We aim to recruit individuals who reflect the community that they represent. A balance will be made between the need for stability, which comes from continuity of knowledge and relationships, with need for new ideas and new thinking. New members will receive a thorough induction which is tailored to their role in the Children's Trust.

All Children's Trust members will be given the opportunity to further develop skills and develop their knowledge throughout the period of their membership. Members will be encouraged to use the Skills and Knowledge Framework (developed by the Hartlepool Partnership) to assess their development needs and plan for how they will be addressed.

10. Engaging with Stakeholders

The Children's Trust is accountable as a themed partnership to the Local Strategic Partnership.

The Trust will be representative of a wide range of stakeholders and will ensure there is extensive consultation in the development of the Children and Young People's Plan and any other issues that the Children's Trust considers appropriate.

The Children's Trust will adhere to the best practice outlined within the Hartlepool Compact between the Local Strategic Partnership and the voluntary and community sector.

11. Accountability, Relationships and Stakeholder Engagement

The Children's Trust will be accountable to the Hartlepool Partnership for the delivery of the children and young people's outcomes of the Local Area Agreement.

The Age Related Partnerships will be accountable for their performance to the Children's Trust Board.

The Children's Trust will consult and engage children and young people, their parents and carers on service development and service changes through active participation in the Age Related Partnerships, as well as wider consultation through Children's Centres and other service access points.

The Children's Trust will take the lead in forming and maintaining relationships with other themed partnerships which will affect or influence the Children's Trust. This will include the following partnerships:

- Health and Well-being Partnership;
- Safer Hartlepool Partnership;
- Skills Partnership;
- Economic Forum;
- Culture, Leisure and Community Learning Partnership;
- Housing Partnership;
- Community Network;
- Environment Partnership.

Theme Partnerships are expected to refer certain matters to the Hartlepool partnership Board. Matters referred would include issues that:

- are strategic and involve very substantial changes in structures, services and use of resources;
- significantly effect the delivery or development of the Community Strategy or the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy;
- previously have been referred to the Hartlepool Partnership;
- are cross cutting;
- are contentious or novel;
- report on progress towards targets.

12. Operation of Theme Partnership

Frequency of meetings

The Children's Trust Board will meet seven times a year: there will be four meetings to consider quarterly performance management reports in respect of the Local Area

Agreement and other performance frameworks; there will also be three business meetings.

The Age Related Partnerships will meet as frequently as required, but not less than quarterly.

Secretarial Arrangements

Secretarial support will be provided by the Children's Services Department and includes:

- arranging meetings of the Children's Trust Board;
- circulating agendas, papers and minutes of previous meetings at least 10 days in advance of meetings;
- arranging for guest speakers and reports from external bodies for Board Meetings;
- any general administrative support to ensure the smooth running of the Children's Trust;
- arranging training, induction and other development events for the benefit of Children's Trust members;
- managing communication, consultation and performance management events on behalf of the Children's Trust;
- submitting funding applications where appropriate and managing and accounting for resources allocated to the Children's Trust.

Agendas will be structured as follows:

- Presentations
- Items for Discussion/Decision
- Items for Information.

13. Making a Complaint

The Children's Trust is keen to ensure that all Members, partners and residents are satisfied with the procedures and arrangements in place. If an individual is dissatisfied they should first raise their concern with the Children's Trust Manager or the Chair who will endeavor to resolve the problem quickly and amicably.

In the event of the issue not being resolved the individual should then make a formal complaint, in writing to the Chair detailing the nature of the complaint.

Due to the nature of the Children's Trust and the diversity of its membership the following procedures are proposed:

- if the complaint is in relation to the procedures of the Children's Trust Board or conduct of its meetings, the complaint will be dealt with by the Children's Trust Manager and the Chair/Vice Chair;
- if the complaint is in relation to the procedures of one of the Age Related Partnerships or the conduct of a meeting, the complaint will be dealt with by the Chair of the respective Partnership;
- if the complaint is in relation to a Hartlepool Borough Council staff member, or an elected Member of the Council, the Hartlepool Borough Council's Complaints procedure will apply;

- if the complaint is in relation to a member of staff from a constituent organisation of the Children's Trust, the respective organisation's procedures will apply.

In all cases the written complaint should be sent to the Children's Trust Manager, who will respond in writing within five working days, setting out who will be dealing with the complaint. A full response will normally be delivered within 15 working days.

A complaint form will be available online or from the Children's Trust Manager.

The terms of reference set out above comply with the standards expected of a themed partnership by the Local Strategic Partnership.

