

**Will it always be like this ?**

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# Children Matter East

## East of England Children and Young Peoples VCS Forum

### Editorial

Firstly my sincere apologies for the delay in this edition, I can only plead the loss of production time in early January due to an injury sustained in the first wave of winter weather. By the autumn the newsletter will be back on customary publishing schedule (at the start of each term)...but talking of difficult conditions and whilst the last few days have provided an improvement in the weather which almost led to a different front cover, the same could not be said of the conditions for the sector.

All the messages Children Matter East receives are indicating what can best be described as freeze – thaw conditions for the sector (think roads and potholes) with gaps appearing in budgets and a bumpy ride for all. As result Children Matter East has extended its research effort, launching Every Contribution Matters - page three for details, which it hopes will provide catalyst for a realistic post election pre Comprehensive Spending Review dialogue with the sector across the region.

However there is fear that parts of the sector will not be in a position to survive a prolonged freeze. Children Matter East's Spring Forum focused on What Works (page nine) and explored the emerging practice that might just help the sector ameliorate the approaching ice age of investment. Enough about climate change ...or is it? this issue also takes the opportunity to explore the sectors experience of local government reform; in particular, in what was once the authority known as Bedfordshire. The message from this and our recent census work is unequivocal – for the sector there is no benefit in fragmentation; consistency, stability and cohesion across Children's Trust partners will help the sector to maximize its ability to contribute to improved outcomes.

Very fortunately the sector might just get an assist with some of these messages, Ofsted's new, current (to 2<sup>nd</sup> April) and annual MORI – Ipsos Third Sector Safeguarding survey goes beyond safeguarding and asks questions about commissioning, workforce and partnerships. The results will be fed back to individual Children's Trusts in May and June and will help inform discussions during any future inspections. However the survey is a quantitative one (remember the NI7 work) and therefore out of necessity quite blunt, Children Matter East is very keen that Trusts should be sharing the results with the sector and developing joint plans to address any identified needs. The survey needs the support of a qualitative narrative and the findings of Children Matter East's Every Contribution Matters; Stay Safe work will hopefully be of benefit in any ensuing local discussions.

*Kevin Garrod March 10*



## ***Every Contribution Matters***

Every Contribution Matters is a joint project between the East and South East regions voluntary and community sectors that work with children, young people and their families. The work is sponsored by the principal regional agencies that provide support to the sector, including; two DSCF funded programmes (Safe Network and VCS Engage) and the two regional umbrella organisations (RAISE and COVER) and both Government offices.

The research began in the late autumn in the eastern region exploring the **Be Healthy and Making a Positive Contribution** outcomes, the early results have provided the momentum to secure resources to deliver two parallel pieces of work **Enjoy and Achieve and Stay Safe**

### **Every Contributions Matters Aims are to;**

1. Map and articulate the contribution the sector makes to Children Trusts and their partners achieving improved outcomes.
2. Explain the policy context in which these contributions are made and identify the performance criteria against which they are assessed.
3. Identify priorities for the sector and its partners whose implementation will help the sector continue to deliver its distinctive contribution to improving outcomes.

There are individual strand briefings that provide greater detail and the research will be published on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Its commissioners have also incorporated a formal opportunity for the sector and its partners to consider the results and their implications at Children Matter East's annual conference, called '**Every Contribution Matters**' at the British School of Racing on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010. To book early please contact [Janice.Mossey@cover-east.org](mailto:Janice.Mossey@cover-east.org)

**What do you need to do?** in addition to signing up for the event the research focuses on a case study approach collecting and reflecting best practice, **so this is an opportunity to get your organisation and its work centre stage.** The project is being led by Justine Henderson from Willoughbys Ltd, working jointly with ETC. Justine can be contacted at 01245 363778 / 07919188998 or [willoughbys@mac.com](mailto:willoughbys@mac.com)

Kevin Garrod, Regional Manager Safe Network  
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## Getting Personal Emilie Whittaker, Children England's Policy officer

Personalisation is the concept of individuals having greater choice and control over the services they use. It forms a vital part of the Government's plans to reform social care for adults, and is increasingly being seen as a way of improving services for children, young people and families more widely. Emilie Whittaker, Policy and Information Officer at Children England, outlines the key principles of personalisation and looks at what it could all mean for the children, young people and families voluntary and community sector.

Personalisation is the philosophy of tailoring services to individual needs and preferences. Personalisation seeks not only to give users greater choice and control over the services they receive, but encourages them to become participants and investors in their own care.

In practice this means the development of flexible, person-centred services that give individuals greater choice and say over the support they receive. The 'big idea' of personalisation is individual budgets. Individual budgets are an allocation of money to an individual based on an assessment of need, with which they can spend in any way (purchasing both goods and services) that meets the objectives of their agreed support plan. Individual budgets pose the biggest concern for the voluntary sector as it represents a fundamental

shift in how services are paid for and commissioned.

Personalisation in children's services is still in its infancy, and as such the evidence base is patchy. However, there have been pilots in delivering individual budgets to children and their families – particularly through the Aiming High for Disabled children agenda. An aligned approach is the development of the Budget Holding Lead Professional role – where a professional administers a budget on a child or family's behalf. Much of the current work has been led by local authorities with the support of the social enterprise In Control, and as such different local authorities are at different stages in rolling out individual budgets for children and their families.

The children and families voluntary sector is increasingly concerned about how personalisation will be translated into practice, with organisations raising questions about emerging ideas, issues and implications. Some potential impacts are outlined below:

**Commissioning:** One of the likely impacts of personalisation is the development of a more complex, yet flexible commissioning system. Providers will have to move away from negotiating large block contracts with local authorities to working with individual families on a micro-commissioning basis. In short,

commissioning will move from a wholesale model to a retail model. Financial viability will become more dependent on ensuring a stream of individual families pay for tailored services on an ad hoc basis. A 'one size fits all' approach will be inadequate. Commissioners will be charged with shaping the provider market to ensure a plurality of high-quality; locally-based, flexible services are available to cater to the needs of the next generation of individual budget holders. As families exercise their commissioning power, new service models and providers are likely to appear and less popular services may well fold.

**Support services:** Choice and control are laudable elements of a new system of social care, but they are not without their challenges. Identifying and purchasing support can be bewildering or stressful, particularly for families who are already parenting under pressure. Support planning, independent advice and advocacy will be fundamental to the effectiveness of individual budgets, as they enable families to identify their goals and aspirations and how to meet these through appropriate services, solutions and goods. There are real opportunities for the VCS to engage with this part of the personalisation agenda and to perform these roles.

**Participation:** Providers will need to find new and collaborative ways of working with the children and families they support. In policy terms this is referred to as co-production. Co-production actively encourages service users to engage in the design, delivery and evaluation of services. This will form the cornerstone of

personalisation as providers need to alter and re-design services to ensure they reflect local needs and preferences, whilst offering children and families a meaningful way to take control of their lives.

The children, young people and families voluntary sector has much to offer in the field of personalisation – it has experience and expertise in developing person-centered and recovery focused services. The sector is also very strong on delivering services to diverse communities, engaging with and involving those who use their services including those who may have been disengaged and excluded from statutory services. Through these activities the VCS is already working with values aligned to personalisation.

The key difference between existing person-centered work being delivered by the VCS and the personalisation Government and policy-makers are talking about is system-change. The entire foundations of publicly-funded services are being re-assessed with moves towards individual-commissioning, entirely new roles for providers, commissioners and the wider children's workforce. But the VCS is in a strong position to respond to these calls for change, as for many they already understand and work with users in a participatory context, building on the capacities and aspirations of users through tailoring their support.

Further information:

[www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/healthandwellbeing/ahdc/AHDC/>

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/managersandleaders/leadprofessional/budgetholding/bhlpp/>

## Learning the Lessons from Baby Peter

Throughout the autumn and spring Children Matter East via its delivery of the Safe Network programme in the region has been providing opportunities for the sector to take on board the key learning from the Baby Peter case. This activity is crucial, not only for the principal benefit but in any post election reinterpretation of Every Child Matters there is expected to be a greater emphasis on a *spine* of children's services including early intervention and ongoing intensive support for the most complex families and greater partnership with the sector.

Embedding and developing appropriate practice is therefore vital to the welfare of families but equally it will enable the sector to develop resilience during the tough times ahead. As the immediacy of Baby Peter is replaced by the latest set of concerns, the Birmingham and Sheffield cases have reminded us again that these are not isolated cases, so it is important that the sector has the skills it needs to make its contribution effectively. Nowhere is this becoming more prevalent than in providers ability to input into Serious Case Reviews (SCR's), via Individual Management Reviews (IMR's) there is an example of eight VCS organisations currently contributing to an SCR. So Children Matter East via Safe Network will be exploring how it can provide a learning bridge for the sector via a dedicated one day course this summer. Meantime for those who could not attend the events Howard Jones from Family Action/ Haringey LSCB provided a detailed insight and reflection into the learning and key messages from Baby P, which includes;

1. The importance of learning from the past
2. Safeguarding really is everyone's business, and its complex
3. Authoritative practice is imperative, and includes the ability to challenge and being prepared to think the unthinkable
4. Past history as an indicator of risk and that willingness to interact and good attachment are not the same, establishing the difference takes proper assessment
5. Participation is not the same as cooperation, and neglect is not just a relationship issue

And identified some of the available sources of research and support;

- Biannual reviews of SCRs [www.dcsf.gov.uk/research](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research)
- [www.C4EO.org.uk](http://www.C4EO.org.uk) (Centre for Excellence Outcomes in Children & Young People's Services)
- [www.rip.org.uk](http://www.rip.org.uk) (Research in Practice)
- [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk) (Social Care Institute for Excellence)
- [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk) (National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence)
- [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## The first year of local authority reorganisation in Bedfordshire

Unitary change has had a high impact on the Voluntary Sector creating uncertainty around structures, relationships and priorities. This combined with the economic climate and the additional work load for many organisations working with the new unitary authorities of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire instead of one countywide authority has made 09 – 10 a very difficult and challenging year for the Voluntary Sector in Bedfordshire.

Both the new unitary authorities have faced enormous challenges in house in managing the change, staff retention and re-organisation all in the climate of reduced budgets; this has impacted on the VCS. Contracts were rolled over for 1 year in March 09 and there was considerable uncertainty in the sector around this process. Service provision from the Voluntary Sector continued during this period uninterrupted whilst final discussions were taking place. This has improved considerably for the financial year 10 -11 although it has been necessary to rollover contracts again for the year 10 -11. 1 year funding makes it very difficult for the sector to plan and develop service areas.

Both authorities have set up Children's Trusts and have a wide range of partners on the Board. There are strong links with the LSCB and Safeguarding is at the top of the agenda. The Children's Trusts are seen as delivering the additionality in the service provision that partnership

working can deliver. The respective Children's Plans are key to the commissioning process, if it's not in the plan then it is unlikely to be commissioned, All work needs to support the ECM outcomes and be measurable. It is important for Voluntary Sector organisations to recognise this changing world.

There were a number of funding streams where the planning had been started in the old authority and these became difficult to manage in the new authorities through staff changes and loss of continuity. The new Children's Partnerships were under pressure with time scales to deliver or loose the funding. The Voluntary Sector has had a positive influence in both the Targeted Mental Health in Schools and Aiming High for Disabled Children projects to ensure the funding was used effectively and within the time frames.

There is concern in the sector as to what happens on 31 March 2011 when ring fenced funding ceases and the impact of future reductions in Central Government funding for local authorities begins to manifest itself. The commissioning process is seen as the way forward to achieve value for money but there is huge concern amongst the local agencies currently delivering local services to local people that the pressure for savings will be so strong that contracts will be going to the national organisations who can loose project start up costs and management costs within the overall core costs.

Although consortia & partnership working has been discussed and had endorsement from Bedford Borough around the Children's Centre contracts due to go out in 2011 this way of working involves a massive culture shift from that of competition to working together.

The sector is in a very difficult position. It feels as though there will be a greater division over the next few years between those organisations who make the conscious decision to adapt and change to pick up work from the local authorities which fits in with their overarching purpose and ethos, and those who make the decision not to go down this route and must find their funding from other sources. The larger number of smaller organisations has little or no contact with the local authority but provide the hidden early intervention and prevention agenda. These organisations need support and

advice on issues such as safeguarding and good practice to ensure they are not compromising the good work they are doing. There will be more and more pressure on all organisations whatever their size to have some form of quality mark. Parents will begin ask how they can be sure their child is safe. It is important for local authorities to recognise this work and encourage it though the grant process which needs to be linked to quality of provision.

The place of the voluntary sector in the delivery of services to children, young people and families is changing dramatically, whatever the organisations size challenges are coming and the sector needs to be ready to meet them.

Linda Bulled,  
Voluntary Organisations for children,  
young people and families  
Bedfordshire

## Children Matter East

**To watch out for** - An election!! And the launch of Every Contribution Matters on 7<sup>th</sup> June <http://www.childrenmattereast.org.uk/>

**Events (See Children Matter East website for details)**

<http://www.childrenmattereast.org.uk/Meetings.asp>

**Eastern Region Infrastructure Network (ERIN) annual event:** British School of Racing on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2010. To book early please contact; [mandy.crawley@cover-east.org](mailto:mandy.crawley@cover-east.org)

**'Every Contribution Matters':** Children Matter East's annual conference at the British School of Racing on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010. To book early please contact [Janice.Mossey@cover-east.org](mailto:Janice.Mossey@cover-east.org)

**'Are they safe?'** Safe Network pack familiarisation session – for VCS development workers, COVER Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June, provisional [kevin.garrod@childrenmattereast.org.uk](mailto:kevin.garrod@childrenmattereast.org.uk)

# Children Matter East

## East of England Children and Young Peoples VCS Forum

### What Works?

Was the title of Children Matter East's most recent Forum meeting at Cambridge's SmartLife Centre on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March, the audience heard from a range of contributors on what they felt were important indicators of best practice; Most of the presentations are available via Children Matter East website, however not all of their content is downloadable.

**Mark Mower** kicked off proceedings with a timely look at what is in local authorities thinking in terms of best practice – which turned out to be a euphemism for saving money. Mark provided an entertaining and insightful look at how this plays out but more importantly what this might mean for the sector and how it can to interpret some of the noises Trusts are making. [mark@cranhurst.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:mark@cranhurst.orangehome.co.uk)

**Dave Springett** helped delegates to explore the ramifications of Clubs for Young Peoples Blue Print – Somewhere to Belong; which included the following findings,

1. No accurate figures for number of clubs means it is difficult to plan strategically.
2. Funding is too fragmented, complex, and too weighted towards targeted work
3. Many voluntary sector clubs felt disregarded by local authorities
4. Lack of youth worker training and support in club specific skills and knowledge
5. Need more co-ordinated approach to driving up quality standards

[david.springett@clubsforyoungpeople.org.uk](mailto:david.springett@clubsforyoungpeople.org.uk)

**William Allen** provided a working exemplar of a consortium model exploring the experience of Cross Herts Community Counselling and its range of contracts with Hertfordshire County Council. William identified the benefits of the consortium as; collective power, value for money and economies of scale but equally that consortiums also bring with them *hard work items* that should not be forgotten or diminished; maintaining consensus and cohesion, bringing in enough resources! and balancing different forces. [checc@btconnect.com](mailto:checc@btconnect.com)

**And Matt Buttery** provided an insight into a Bedfordshire based VCS consortia that has developed to deliver Central Bedfordshire's Targeted Mental Health in School's programme. This included the experience of being; commissioner, quality assurer and provider including the challenge and benefits of working with Schools and having funded statutory services making applications to the tender process. [matt@familymatters.org.uk](mailto:matt@familymatters.org.uk)

Safe Network is a DCSF funded partnership between NSPCC and Children England that was a promise from the Children Plan and Stay Safe Action Plan 2008, based on a hub and spokes model that works closely with partners. The programme features national leadership from NSPCC combined with regional leadership from Children England. In the regions the programme is closely aligned with the VCS Engage programme and its focus on the sectors engagement and its ability to take opportunities.

### Key outcomes

- **Safer practice** - organisations have effective safeguards in place to prevent the abuse of children and young people.
- **Safer recruitment** - practices for paid staff and volunteers in the Third Sector reflect best practice and are demonstrably safer.
- **Safe Risk** - Organisations have in place effective and proportionate arrangements for assessment and management of risk in all their activities involving children.
- **Safe Partnerships** - The safeguarding arrangements of Third Sector organisations are integrated into local inter-agency safeguarding arrangements.

### So Far since Jan 09

- 1,600 VCS orgs accessing VBS /Safeguarding seminars, with a reach to over 10,000
- 2 `learning the lessons from Baby P seminars`
- S11 Safeguarding compliance standards developed for the sector
- 2 regional reports completed

### What Next?

1. S11 workshops and intensive support in Hants, Herts and Peterborough
2. Rural / Urban grassroots path finders (Reading, Sussex)
3. **National products** : Core Standards , capacity building familiarise the trainer road shows, 3 pilots (nationally) `local` Safe Network officer posts
4. Major event with learning from Baby Peter embedded –South East, Guildford 28<sup>th</sup> April
5. Cross region Baby Peter learning ( Northern Thames Valley /Herts border )
6. Every Contribution Matters – Stay Safe Outcome research
7. Faiths/ Rural VBS events in South East and East
8. LSCB VCS representatives residential ( inc Trust VCS reps) ( South East)

**Kevin Garrod** Feb 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 [kevin.garrod@childrenmattereast.org.uk](mailto:kevin.garrod@childrenmattereast.org.uk),  
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