

Children Matter East
East of England
Children and Young
Peoples VCS Forum

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Children Matter East
East of England Children and Young Peoples VCS Forum
SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Features:-

Children Matter East: Update on recent developments

Children England: National Infrastructure Programme

Safe Network: Roll out of the Standards, Modular Training and Champions programme

Other updates: Final Munro review; Impact of funding cuts; Support Youth Unemployment; Children on the edge of care and urge for a full merger of Health and Social Care ...

Welcome to Children Matter East News, this edition focuses on letting you know that Children Matter East (CME) is forging ahead, despite the VCS Engage programme coming to an end in March 2011.

CME will be building on aspects of the work previously carried out through the VCS Engage programme. This will be carried out as part of Children England's National Infrastructure Programme, which involves working with key partners to offer a range of opportunities to the voluntary and community sector. The future plans and focus of forthcoming work are elaborated on in the newsletter.

Safe Network has been successful in obtaining ongoing funding through the DfE and is rolling out a Safe Network Champions programme and as well as promoting and rolling out the National Core Safeguarding Standards.

Eileen Munro has submitted her final report, and we give a brief summary of the findings and recommendations made.

Children England has recently published a report, 'Counting the Cuts', which highlights the extent of the cuts on the sector as well as the sectors positive determination to meet the challenges head on to ensure that services to children, young people and families continue as far as possible.

We briefly touch on Supporting Youth unemployment, the recent report 'Children on the edge of care' and a Tory MP's urge for a full merger between Health and Social Care as well as the current debate on the Health and Social Care Bill.

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Children England has appointed four regional managers to lead the delivery of the National Infrastructure programme. We would like to welcome Sharon Long and Kerstin Neason, who will be sharing the roll in facilitating regional networks within the Eastern Region.

Both Sharon and Kerstin have extensive knowledge of the VCS and were involved in the delivery of the VCS Engage programme in London and the South West.

Sharon and Kerstin aim to build on the work already facilitated across the region via VCS Engage and will facilitate a range of opportunities for the VCS as part of the National Infrastructure Programme of work.

Contact details

Sharon Long - Email: sharon.long1@virgin.net / Tel: 07780 674311

Kerstin Neason - Email: kneason@btconnect.com / Tel: 07817233009

CME will be engaging a number of VCS groups to gain feedback as to where the National Infrastructure portfolio of support is best directed in the East on England.

We shall elaborate more on this at the next **Children Matter East Forum** which will be held on the **18th October 2011**. Invites will be sent out at the end of July, thus we do urge you to pencil this date into your diaries.



Children England was successful in their bid to be the National Infrastructure Partner to the DfE.

Children England alongside their partners, Community Matters, NAVCA, NCVYS, Race Equality Foundation and Social Enterprise Coalition, as well as specific work stream delivery partners LGID, Oxford Brooks University aim to achieve the following: -

Aim 1 Develop VCS organisational capacity and workforce skills

Aim 2 Extend VCS representation, voice and influence

Aim 3 Strengthen networks and cost effective communication

A range of training, support and peer learning sets will be on offer nationally, as well as regionally. Some of the key themes of support are around:

- Commissioning & consortia development
- Community asset management and business planning
- Engaging children & young people
- Tackling child poverty
- Promoting diversity and equality
- Making informed choices about social enterprise

Alongside of this, Children England is part of the Strategic Partnership Programme for family support which is being led by Barnardos. The focus of this work will be on three overarching priorities for the year, Relationship support, Parenting and Families with complex needs.



Safe Network has also been refunded by the DfE until April 2013.

Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) has recently joined the partnership which will strengthen Safe Network's ability to support local community groups in preventing serious accidents to children.

The Safe Network Standards were launched in February 2011 and are designed to help non-statutory organisations keep children and young people safe. They are accessible and easy to use, even for smaller voluntary and community groups that may have limited resources. If you work specifically with children and young people, or work with them as part of your wider activities, the standards may be helpful to you.

By registering on www.safenetwork.org.uk, you can also access an interactive self-assessment tool. This covers all the elements of each standard and helps determine where your organisation is strong and where it needs to improve its safeguarding practice. A range of support and guidance is also available to help organisations meet the standards.

Safe Network has launched its **Safer Organisations, Safe Communities modular training** which aims to support organisations embed the core standards. Safe Network will be rolling out training on this resource to champions.

The Safe Network Champions programme,

The role of a champion is to utilise the Safe Network core safeguarding standards for safeguarding children within the voluntary and community sector. The champions act as Safe Network representatives within their local community, where they already have strong existing links. Champions have a good level of knowledge and understanding of children's safeguarding issues. They too are able to facilitate the level of delivery required in rolling out the standards and support to VCS groups and tailor this to suit local needs.

Safe Network is seeking to recruit Safe Network champions in the Essex who will be able to meet the key requirements and in return Safe Network offers an opportunity to strengthen the skill base of their organisation/s. Champions have the ability to collaborate with partners locally and regionally. They get a chance to be part of a supportive volunteer network, that aims to alleviate the impact on potential or actual reductions in local funding.

If you are an infrastructure organisation operating in Essex and would like to find out more about the champions programme, please contact with Justine Henderson –Tel 01245363 778 or email: Justine.henderson@childrenmattereast.org.uk

Other updates: -

- **Eileen Munro review**

The third and final report 'A child-centered system' from the Munro Review of Child Protection was presented to Ministers on 11 May 2011. The report delivers a range of recommendations that are likely to have significant implications for the way that child protection services are run at a local level.

Eileen Munro's first report published in October 2010 analysed why problems had come about in the child protection system and why previous reforms had unforeseen consequences.

The second report, published in February 2011, considered the child's journey through the protection system and how the system could be improved.

The final report is written to be free-standing and reiterates the main points from first two reports.

The review is especially clear that child protection systems must be fully focused on the needs of individual children and young people rather than centrally imposed processes and targets. There is a strong message of the need to reduce the level of government prescription, with formal child protection procedures to be cut back and greater emphasis placed on local discretion and professional judgment.

The review does suggest a new duty to be placed on local authorities and partner agencies, to secure sufficient provision of local 'early help' services for children young people and families and to produce a strategy outlining how they plan to do so.

The key themes of the report are as follows,

Local practice and reducing prescription, proposing a revision of the *Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their families*, including removing the distinction between initial and core assessment as well as the format and timescales for completion.

Role of Senior leaders, makes the recommendation of the LSCB submitting an annual report to the local authority Leader and Chief Executive, as well as local police, Crime Commissioner and chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board. The LA leader and Chief executive are to produce an annual assessment of local safeguarding arrangements and ensure robust relationships are in place across the local safeguarding partnership as systems & structures continue to develop, and ensure safeguarding children remains high on the agenda of all agencies.

Early help, the review emphasizes the importance of early help initiatives and the increasing evidence that early intervention is cost effective and produces strong

and positive outcomes for C&YP. The report details that the government will need to give some thought to resourcing this new duty, since predicted savings may take some time to appear and it is vital that agencies are not discouraged by short term costs involved.

Serious case reviews, Munro recommends that LSCBs should use systems methodology in future reviews of serious cases, moving away from the specific features of an individual case, to consider the deeper, underlying issues that influence multi-agency practice more generally. This is a far more collaborative approach, involving practitioners from an early stage and focusing on holistic factors rather than seeking to identify individual errors.

Ofsted and inspections, the review finds that announced inspections are costly and create undue anxiety amongst professionals, recommending instead that Ofsted focuses on a detailed programme of unannounced inspections as well as an end to Ofsted's evaluation of serious case reviews.

There is a strong emphasis on having a multi-agency focus to these inspections, taking account of the full range of agencies. This approach should be crucial in ensuring that all agencies are fully aware of the safeguarding responsibilities, and this should be mirrored in the Ofsted inspection programme for schools.

The report also highlights that the current system of performance indicators and targets has 'skewed and misdirected local priorities' highlighting that information cannot be viewed in isolation and must instead be seen holistically to provide a context for a more detailed analysis of the health of safeguarding arrangements in the area.

Health and education, the report touches on the ongoing reform to the health service, and raises concerns that safeguarding and child protection could become sidelined in the new arrangements. The report highlights the crucial importance of named and designated professionals and notes that some areas are already seeing the erosion of previously well established local relationships as organisations are restructured or replaced.

The report makes 15 recommendations.

The final report can be downloaded by clicking on the following link

http://www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/downloads/8875_DfE_Munro_Report_TAGGED.pdf

• Counting the Cuts

Children England recently carried out a survey of its members to gain a snapshot impression of the challenges currently facing children, young people and families' voluntary sector.

Some of the key findings made:

- Most participants (71%) are experiencing cuts to their budgets in 2011/12; of those organisations in receipt of local government funding 80% are experiencing cuts.
- 40% of organisations anticipated staff cuts in the first 6 months of 2011, rising to 66% over the whole year.
- There were 14 instances of service closures reported, with Children's Centre's, Sure Start Services, youth work, family support services and play services being amongst the hardest hit.

The full report can be downloaded by clicking on the link attached

<http://www.childrenengland.org.uk/upload/CountingTheCutsFinalforPDF.pdf>

• Supporting Youth Employment

The government has unveiled a £60m package of measures designed to reduce youth unemployment. The money aims to increase places for unemployed 18-year-olds on the government's Work Programme. The latest funding commitments have been revealed in a government report called *Supporting Youth Employment*.

The plans are to reduce bureaucracy around apprenticeships and pilot an outcome-based payment system for firms that provide training for young people.

Jobcentre Plus will gain additional funding to provide training and work experience places for 16- and 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training.

Charitable organisations will also be able to access a newly created £10m **Innovation Fund** for schemes that support unemployed young people.

According to a statement issued by 10 Downing Street, "100 large companies and tens of thousands of small companies around the country have responded to the government's call and pledged to offer work experience places".

A pre-apprenticeship scheme to help 10,000 young people develop employment skills will also be launched.

• Children on the edge of care

A report, undertaken by the Children's Rights Director for England, reports on the views of 332 children and young people who took part in consultation sessions about the DfE's *Edge of care* policy. Those taking part were drawn from children and young people in care and care leavers.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that those going in to care really need to and that children can go back home from care if that is in their best interest.

Extract from the report, “just over four out of 10 children (43%) thought that if there had been more support, they would not have needed to come into care. Just over a third of all the children (36%) thought that even if there had been more support to them and their families, they would still have needed to come into care.”

The full report can be downloaded by clicking on the link attached.

<http://offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/NewsAttachments/PYC/Children%20on%20the%20edge%20of%20care.pdf>

- **Former health secretary urges full health and social care merger**

Tory MP has called for provisions to fully integrate health and adult social care to be incorporated into the government's health reforms, to achieve "large-scale efficiency savings".

"The Health and Social Care Bill is an opportunity to grasp the issue," he wrote in an article for [The Times](#). "A clear commitment should be written into the bill to achieve full institutional and managerial integration of the NHS and adult social care in England."

The former health secretary said the move made sense at a time of tight resources because people with long-term conditions accounted for three-quarters of NHS spending and almost all adult social care spending.

It would give the NHS a chance of delivering on a 4% efficiency targets over the next four years – something that has never been achieved by any healthcare system anywhere in the world. The targets are necessary to tackle rising demand for health at a time of flat resources.

- **Health Bill hold-ups**

The NHS Confederation has refused to back the government's planned health reforms. The confederation, which represents more than 95% of NHS organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, has said it is in favour of reform of the NHS. But it believes the plans need to be 'better focused on the challenges that the NHS now faces'.

The proposed reforms would transfer health care commissioning from primary care trusts to consortiums of GPs. It would also open up NHS services to 'any willing provider' to provide care.

The reforms were put on hold in April when Health Secretary Andrew Lansley said that the government would embark on a 'listening exercise'.

It is argued that further delays to the government's health reforms could detract from the 'urgent business' of saving £20bn from the cost of the NHS, however Nuffield Trust argues that part of the reforms are already under way, including GP commissioning pathfinder consortiums, a modified Bill should be passed to keep the 'health service on the rails between 2011 and 2015' when it must make the savings.

The proposals for Health and Wellbeing boards (HWB) are to bring together key players across the NHS, social care and public health in order to integrate services and ensure that the needs of children and their families are met. There are already 134 out of 152 top-tier councils who have volunteered to become 'early implementers' of HWB.

The King's Fund highlighted in a paper: "While the bill would place a duty on boards to promote integration, there is no equivalent duty on consortia"ⁱ. The NHS Confederation also argued that the health and wellbeing boards' "ability to hold organisations to account needs to be strengthened". It said: "These new organisations will not achieve their potential if they are given the responsibility for strategy but not the capability to deliver it. Health and wellbeing boards need to be sufficiently powerful to hold organisations to account if outcomes are not delivered or engagement is lacking."ⁱⁱ

The King's Fund have stated that amendments in this area could deal with some of the concerns about accountability of GP consortia for the use of public funds, by strengthening HWB oversight of consortia commissioning plans, thus offering an immediate stepping stone to help get the government's reforms on a more stable and promising trajectory.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/health_and_wellbeing.html

ⁱⁱ www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2011/05/health-bill-hold-ups-could-jeopardise-saving

ⁱⁱⁱ www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/health_and_wellbeing.html