



Annex A – Covering Template for Responses

Please complete the attached cover sheet when sending evidence, indicating the set of questions to which a response is being provided and contact details of the person for any follow-up queries.

Contact details for respondent	
Name	
Job title	Policy & Performance Officer
Do you represent an organisation? (If so, name of organisation and type: e.g. voluntary, public body, private company).	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Children’s Services Department
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	Which area of the review are you responding to? (please mark X)
Prevention strand	
Review of disabled children	X
Strategy for youth services	X
Review of high cost, high harm families	

Annex B2: Terms of reference for the Review of Disabled Children

Objective:

To improve outcomes and life chances of disabled children through the development of effective and accessible services for disabled children and their families.

The scope of the review will cover:

- services specifically for disabled children, including how specialist services for disabled children support access to universal services, specialist services provided in a universal setting and how universal services refer children to specialist services;
- childcare services, which are of particular importance in the early years for children's development and to support their parents;
- appropriate support for disabled children during the school years and in making the transition into adulthood;
- how expenditure by one service/department can avoid or reduce concurrent or later expenditure by another department.

The Government recognises that financial support and benefits have played an important role in reducing the risks of poverty and delivering economic wellbeing. This provides the foundation on which families, communities and government can work together to secure better outcomes for disabled children and their families. Although financial support and benefits will not be a focus, the review will consider the interrelationship between poverty and service delivery needs.

The review will consider the actions that can lead to better outcomes for those children already with a disability, including family support e.g. respite provision, rather than prevention and risk factors, which will be considered as part of the wider Children and Young People's Review.

The key questions the review will address include:

1. The changing profile of disabled children, for example, due to increases in complex disability and rise in Autistic Spectrum Disorders, profound and multiple learning disabilities and low birth-weight babies and the challenges this poses to services.

Children with a disability are living for longer periods and in some communities, children born with disabilities are becoming more prevalent. This obviously places increasing demand on services that do not have the capacity to respond – for instance, the growth in requests for equipment for children with a disability has the obvious cost implications.

Services are responding by reviewing their eligibility criteria to ensure that they are targeted to support families where there is the greatest need. Furthermore, resources are being targeted in the same way and allocated more effectively with best value at the

centre of such decisions. There is a shift away from seeing the child as the issue and placing the child out of the family home for 'respite' towards building resilience in families to enable them to care safely and confidently for their son or daughter in their home environment. This shift will take time to bed in and may be resisted by some families.

Financial investment is required in order to invest in the necessary equipment and adaptations for children with a disability. It is also required to extend the provision of Direct Payments.

2. What progress has already been made in addressing the needs of disabled children and their families?

- Improved assessments by social workers
- 'Scientific' resource allocation (i.e. agreed eligibility criteria are being developed to ensure resources are allocated equitably)
- Multi agency identification and agreement about 'who does what' means that children with additional needs will be identified at an early age with co-ordinated support in place throughout the child's life.
- Development of Children's Services Integrated Teams with a view to the creation of a Children's Trust.
- Communication between agencies has been greatly enhanced.
- A greater range of support services (other than residential respite) are becoming available.

3. What are the barriers currently restricting access to services and therefore effective intervention?

There are two elements to this response:

Parents would say that eligibility criteria excluded their children.

Service providers would say that eligibility criteria allow services to be targeted to those most in need.

Parents would say a lack of funding prevents access to services

Service providers would agree but acknowledge that they have finite budgets which must be managed.

Parents would say that GP's and Community Paediatricians know best and that when these people say they should have respite, they must have this service.

Service providers would say that they won't do diagnosis if GP's and Community Paediatricians don't allocate resources. This process is based on social work assessments.

Parents would say that they can provide better services if they were budget holders.

Service Providers would say that this often masks a lack of parental responsibility for the care of children with a disability

Parents say they need respite.

Service providers say that they need to be supported in caring for their children.

4. Are services sufficiently co-ordinated at local level to allow families to access sufficient support to meet their needs?

Mixed response.

Yes, because there have been great single agency strides forward in co-ordinating and sustaining service allocation.

No, because other than in early years settings, truly integrated and co-ordinated service provision is only just starting to develop with the creation of Children's Services Departments.

5. How does the system of support for disabled children and their families compare across the country and abroad? Are there lessons we can learn to improve outcomes?

There are lessons to be learned. For instance, Bolton has an integrated equipment assessment and provision process which is light years ahead of what happens in East Lancashire.

Better links need to be made locally with Adult Social Services to enable consistency of eligibility criteria and seamless transition planning. We are working towards this but have some way to go at this time.

There are few opportunities to benchmark with other councils and little or no opportunities to benchmark with other counties. Both options would be appreciated and we have recently asked the IDeA about Beacon Councils for services to children with a disability to try to learn from these other councils.

In terms of outcomes, one significant achievement would be to increase the opportunities for young people with a disability to share their views on outcomes and what worked for them? Outcomes currently tend to be parent driven (e.g. "my child needs respite" – but do they?)

6. What family support services i.e. key workers, short breaks, sibling support, behavioural management are currently available and how do these relate to other services?

A range of family support services are available including short breaks, link families, direct payments, home care, domiciliary care, outreach support, family 'well being' support, recreation and play services, child minding services, counselling and so on.

These are well co-ordinated for families with a pre-school child but less well co-ordinated for older young people. The Children's Services Dept in Blackburn with Darwen is striving to introduce processes to ensure the consistent co-ordination of services regardless of age.

7. What are the most cost effective interventions in delivering better outcomes?

- Enabling families to care for their child at home from an early age with appropriate support is the most cost effective intervention.
- Direct Payment can enable some families to develop value for money packages of support.
- Co-ordinated planning using integrated services reduces duplication.
- Ensuring that services are appropriately targeted reduces costs (of supplying services inappropriately).
- Co-ordinated assessments could lead to the bulk purchasing of equipment which must be recycled.
- Engaging families in shaping services reduces conflict and ensures that the development of services focuses on actual as opposed to perceived needs.

Behaviour management support for children with ASD is available from health and social care professionals. Sibling support is being addressed and a group is being convened led by children's child psychology / social care services.

8. Are there interventions which, if made earlier, could reduce more costly interventions later? How can we identify the need to intervene earlier?

Interventions for pre-school children are well co-ordinated in the Borough through an Early Years Support Panel which identifies children with a disability and co-ordinated planning in a multi-agency forum. The vision for the future is that this process will be extended beyond early years to ensure that plans have multi agency input throughout a child's life. Children with particular special needs or those who present significant challenges have support made available in order to ensure that family 'crises' in later life are avoided as far as possible. However, it should be recognised that there will always be young people who present significant challenges both to their carers and to the services that support them.

9. What lessons can we learn from the legal frameworks in other countries that might inform the review?

No data available. It would be useful to benchmark legal frameworks against outcomes in a range of counties.

Annex B3: Terms of reference for the Strategy for Youth Services

Objective:

To review the current provision of youth services and support for young people with a view to identifying longer term policy directions that will bring about improvements in the life chances of young people.

The scope of the review will cover:

The services / support provided for young people in the following areas:

- positive activities to engage young people and also places for young people to go;
- opportunities for active citizenship such as mentoring or volunteering;
- young people's access to youth activities and places, for example their location and consideration of transport needs;
- The current role and practice of the youth worker and the support and advice they provide as an integral part of youth activities.

The review will examine existing provision, the impact of different services and support on outcomes for young people and how outcomes could be further enhanced. The review will also consider the role and opportunities for children and young people's participation in the design of services and decision-making.

The key questions the review will address include:

1. What is the current distribution of youth services and youth engagement activities available across the country? How is that likely to evolve following the Youth Green Paper?

The current distribution is variable. Provision suffers from the fact that:

- There is no statutory role for Youth Services.
- In general, the provision of services for young people isn't well understood, with confusion existing between diversionary and participatory engagement and the need to develop young people.
- There is a lack of analysis of the purpose of provision and its impact in relation to what should be complementary agendas.
- In youth policy nationally and locally, the issues for young people are, in general, based firmly on the perceptions of adults. This leads to contradictory messages of wanting to listen to young people yet also acting on negative images not necessarily backed up by good information.
- There needs to be support for the challenges that listening and responding to young people through engagement processes will bring.

Youth Matters could have provided clearer guidance in taking the agenda forward. However, it does provide a broad supporting context for recognising youth voice and also integrating services: these needs to be translated into a broader challenge.

2. Building on the Youth Green Paper, is there more that could be done to improve and sustain the effectiveness in the delivery of existing services and activities?

There needs to be more clarity across the range of programmes providing services to/for young people, and more transparency in the decision-making process regarding changes to these services.

Both central government and local authorities need to be pro-active in ensuring that there is no loss of skills when services or programmes are altered or amalgamated.

Youth Services tend to be fragmented: for example, there is more scope of integration of youth justice services with a range of other youth support services. This gap is reflected in the lack of consistent focus in policies– young people need to be seen as citizens first, with a consistent focus on delivering services that help to develop young people and that incorporate their views. Rather than focusing only on diversion around anti-social behaviour, this should be part of a broader youth support approach.

3. What are the particular barriers faced by different groups of young people, including disabled young people, in accessing services, and what are the policy issues that arise?

Insufficient funding and resources remain key obstacles to engaging with young people and providing the services they need. For example, in promoting access, the limited funds available from the Youth Capital Fund are insufficient to meet the cost requirements of developing needs-led youth services and youth friendly centres.

Provision is often based in poor and unsuitable accommodation, leading to reluctance among young people to use the service, or even resulting in physical barriers to access. Better quality accommodation that is fully accessible to all young people, including those who are disabled or disadvantaged, will promote development and use of universal services across the range of young people.

One key area for promoting access has been missed nationally as there is no specific requirement for schools to participate. We are utilising resources around schools, but even with the “Extended Schools” agenda and schools working together in “clusters” to provide additional community services, issues remain. In Blackburn with Darwen, some local schools are located in the “wrong” area given subsequent economic developments and demographic changes, and a number require structural work and/or redecoration to better promote access, particularly out of school hours. Additional resources from the “Building Better Schools” initiative may help, but will take a number of years for development and implementation.

The challenge exists of commissioning services when budgets are being cut - the Youth Service budget is vulnerable as it is not statutory.

4. What is the national and international evidence on the effectiveness of different types of services and activities in terms of better life outcomes?

No response included.

5. How can we best combine demand led provision for young people with provision that is planned and structured to have the best impact on outcomes for children and young people?

A clear, consistent strategy at all levels of government is needed that combines universal and targeted provision and that incorporates strategic priorities for targeting e.g. NEET and JWOT.

- Agreement on a baseline of entitlement for all young people
- Partnership working
- More effective monitoring.

At a local level, this strategy needs to be based on identified levels of needs at both neighbourhoods level and borough-wide.

6. What more can we do to support and enable young people to exert a strong demand side influence on provision? What would we expect in return from young people – their rights and responsibilities?

Providing young people with mechanisms to express their views and taking note of those views is vital to this. In Blackburn with Darwen, our first Children & Young People's Plan 2006-09 (CYPP) has been developed in co-operation with young people, as well as partner agencies who deliver services (see page 33 – 35 of attached copy of the CYPP).

We are developing a variety of arrangements to capture the views of young people and involve them in designing services. For example:

- Earlier this summer, young people were involved in designing and running an anti-bullying conference, as bullying is a key area of concern identified by young people locally (see pages 1-3 "BwD Youth Forum" newsletter attached). Young people, who are among those most vulnerable, may well respond more to their peers.
- Activities such as the survey carried out by the NEB Youth Voice Project (see page 4 "BwD Youth Forum" newsletter)
- Work on developing School Councils
- Building representation on youth forums
- Participation by children and young people on strategic partnership groups.

We are currently working with young people locally to develop a Youth Charter, including a statement of entitlement.

7. What principles and priorities should guide the allocation of current and future resources? And who do we need to target?

We are currently undertaking a review of youth services locally and decisions on resource allocations will be reviewed drawing on all of the points made above.

Every Child Matters provides a coherent framework for the principles to guide allocation, and our local Children & Young People's Plan provides the priorities for decisions

within the borough. Nationally, there need to be a clear steer based on listening to young people and balancing initiatives.

In Blackburn with Darwen, we believe that the prime aim should be to target services that provide the right environment for all young people and their contribution to society.

8. What measures and milestones need to be in place to ensure that performance can be assessed and delivery monitored at a local level.

The Children & Young People's Plan provides a range of measures and milestones based on the priorities identified by young people in the borough and is being monitored on a quarterly basis, with an annual review.

The review of Youth Services being undertaken within the borough will provide identified needs on which to develop additional measures and milestones.