

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 11th SEPTEMBER 2009

APPRENTICESHIPS, SKILLS, CHILDREN AND LEARNING BILL AND WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST

Introduction

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill is passing through Parliament. This briefing outlines the implications for the Children's Trust Board and relevant partners.

Arrangements include children and relevant young people. Children are defined as a person under the age of 18 and 'relevant young persons' includes people aged 18 and 19, care-leavers over the age of 19, and people over the age of 19 but under the age of 25 who have a learning difficulty within the meaning of section 13 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 who are receiving services under that ACT.

The Bill Part 9 - Children's Services

Clause 184: Arrangements to promote co-operation

Relevant Partners

Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 is amended to include new relevant partners who must co-operate with the LA.

New relevant partners will include:

- Schools, FE institutions, non-maintained special schools, city technology colleges, city colleges and academies
- JobCentre Plus

The extension of this duty to co-operate to these new partners is to give them a stronger voice within the arrangements to improve children's well being, greater influence over the local strategic direction taken, and better support from other partners.

The Children's Trust Board (CTB) may also include other persons or bodies that the LA thinks appropriate. One or more people are allowed to represent more than one CTB member or a group of CTB members.

Relevant partners can provide staff and other resources to each other and other relevant partners of another local authority.

The new arrangements allow relevant partners more flexibility over how they share resources and pool funds through the option to operate one fund.

Clause 185: Children's Trust Boards

LAs are required to set up Children's Trust Boards as part of the arrangements to improve children's well being.

CTB are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State relating to CTB procedures and the exercise of their functions.

CTB activities may be inspected under an inspection of children's services.

Two or more CTBs are allowed to pool funds for the purposes of their work.

A person or body represented on a Children's Trust Board must supply any information requested by the board for the purpose of enabling or assisting it to perform its functions.

The funding of CTBs, the supply of information to CTB and the need to have regard to the CYPP when exercising its functions are added to the list of relevant functions of a LA. This allows the Secretary of State to intervene in LAs in connection with their CTB and CYPP activities.

Children and Young People's Plans

The duty of preparing and implementing Children and Young People's Plans (CYPP) is transferred from LAs to the CTB.

The CTB must adhere to government regulations in the preparation and publishing of CYPP. The CYPP will continue to be the single strategic overarching plan for all local services for children and young people.

All partners are under a duty to have regard to their local CYPP when exercising their functions. This includes maintained schools not represented on the CTB.

The CTB will monitor partners' progress in implementing the CYPP and report annually on how well CTB partners are acting in accordance with the strategies set out in the CYPP.

The new functions relating to CTB and CYPPs are added to the list of functions of a Director of Children's Services.

Schools forums have a duty to have regard to the CYPP produced by their local CTB.

Summary

The changes outlined in the Bill are reflected in Wirral Children's Trust new memorandum. Strengthening the structure and governance of the Trust provides the foundation to enable clause 185 to be achieved and to drive forward the sharing of resources outlined in the Bill to improve outcomes for the Children and Young People of Wirral.

RECOMMENATIONS:

1. That Wirral Children's Trust Board note the report.
2. That the contents of the new Bill are cascaded to partner organisations.

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