

Case study: Every Child Matters (England)

Every Child Matters

In England ***Every Child Matters (ECM)*** was the national reform programme focusing on prevention and early intervention that aimed to integrate services for all children from 0-19 years old. It was initially introduced in 2003. It mandates agencies working across professional boundaries to co-ordinate support around needs, using common processes and language to meet those needs in the best possible way. Incorporated within *ECM* is a national strategic vision for children, a common national and local framework to support integrated service delivery and the programme is supported through legislation.

A 'whole system approach' is used for the implementation of *ECM* and therefore local delivery of integrated services;

- An integrated strategy (requiring the production of a service plan for the area)
- Centrally devised integrated processes (e.g. common initial assessments and better data sharing)
- Integrated front line delivery (e.g. services not built around professional boundaries),
- Inter-agency governance (a designated lead member with responsibility and accountability).
- Another core element to the approach is having in place a range of supports for local integrated working such as guidance for front-line workers to demonstrate how integrated working is beneficial and on the use of processes and tools to improve outcomes for children.

Children's Trusts

Peterborough Children's Trust is a local area partnership who aim to improve the well-being of all children in the area and within the 'whole system approach' is the core structure responsible for local implementation of *ECM*. The *Trust* is led by the local authority and brings together the key local agencies who are under a statutory duty to co-operate. It is part planning body that guides decisions about **commissioning of services** and part ensures that front line services work together to improve outcomes.

A *Partnership Board*, that evolved out of existing partnership work in the local area, sets out the principles and procedures for the operation of the *Children's Trust* arrangements in Peterborough, and makes provision for future legal agreements to be made with regard to the pooling of resources.

Activities

In consultation with key stakeholders, the *Peterborough Children and Young People Plan* was developed by the *Children's Trust*. Based on the five national outcome areas it sets out the local vision for children, priorities for next 3 years and the areas that will be worked on to address each priority.

Implementing the plan involved the development of a local integrated service delivery framework, a model of work that includes the use of multi-disciplinary teams, services with strong links to locally based staff, partnership arrangements to identify local need and monitor performance as well as management arrangements to co-ordinate services for different age-groups.

Lessons/Challenges	Benefits
ECM has provided a clear direction and framework	Easier for children, young people and families to access services;
Strategic, executive and operational roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined and described	Easier for partners to work together – clearer and simpler referral routes for all services
Memorandum of understanding, partnership contacts and work plans are seen as essential tools for bringing clarity about decision making, accountability, responsibility and ownership	Better use of resources
Resources and joint commissioning have been the levers for integrated working.	Better overall co-ordination of services based on local needs
Communication is seen as critical, particularly when linking with partners who are ‘not around the table’ such as schools and GPs.	Greater engagement with parents and communities
Involving children and young people in the work at all levels in the work of the children’s trust is also experienced as challenging.	Early intervention means that fewer children require complex/acute care services;
Putting the policy framework in place is a key part of the process; the children and young people’s plan creates the context	Improved attainment, health and emotional well-being results in improved life chances for all children and young people in Peterborough.
There was significant training around formal inter-agency working processes, but limited training on how people learn to work together, and work out where their loyalty and their sense of identity lies	Consistent approach through use of the common assessment framework and associated integrated processes