

Safe Supported Fulfilled

Wakefield Children & Young People's Plan 2012 - 2016

Working in partnership

Wakefield District Children's Partnership aims to deliver the best possible future for local children and young people. It is voluntary and brings together professionals from; the council, health, schools and colleges, the police, fire & rescue services and voluntary groups. This is our five-year plan.

Setting the scene

Wakefield's youngsters are a credit to the district, with many shaping their own futures including becoming members of the youth parliament and youth councils.

Outcomes are improving and we are closing the gap between Wakefield and England's average evidenced by the following:

- the teenage conception rate is higher than the national average but we have seen a downward trend over the last two years
- our children & young people appear to enjoy school more than their peers consistently having lower levels of absence and persistent absence at secondary school level than comparator groups
- there has been an upward trend for Wakefield in pupils receiving 5 or more A* to C grade GCSEs since 2004/05.
- children & young people locally are afforded more opportunity to participate in the two hour PE and physical activity offer
- access to health care services for children and young people has improved

However, we still face challenges including:

- 21% of youngsters are living in poverty
- the life expectancy gap is continuing to widen - children born in our most disadvantaged areas will live up to nine years less than their peers in more affluent areas
- babies born in our most deprived areas are more likely to have low birth weights
- 10% of Reception children and 20% of Year 6 children are classified as obese
- hospital admissions for alcohol, substance misuse, and accidental injury are higher than the England average.

Our vision

We believe that all children and young people should feel safe, supported and fulfilled in order to achieve their full potential.

Our priorities

We have identified five key priorities as a Partnership:

1. Keeping children and young people safe from harm

We want to make sure youngsters are safe (and feel safe) in their homes, schools and communities. It is important that we protect the most vulnerable.

2. Reducing child poverty

We aim to reduce the number of youngsters and their families living in poverty. To do this, we need to address the underlying causes of poverty.

3. Raising aspirations and achievement

We aim to empower young people to achieve economic wellbeing, by closing the gap in educational achievement and boosting their chances to get jobs.

4. Improving health and tackling health inequalities

There are links between early disadvantage and poor health outcomes throughout life. To break this pattern, we aim to improve health and reduce inequalities before birth and continue to support people throughout their life.

5. Supporting the transition to adulthood

We want to make sure all young people move successfully into adulthood. We aim to equip them to take control of their lives and relationships.

Key approaches

In order to deliver against our priorities we have also identified three key strategic approaches we will adopt:

1. Child and family-centred

We are committed to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This goes hand in hand with promoting the rights of all children in Wakefield.

All professionals have to put the needs and experience of this group at the heart of everything they do. This includes adult services, where parents are involved.

This approach will:

- put communities at the heart of decision-making;
- make sure that no decision about youngsters and their families is taken without them;
- enable children to get the help they need, when they need it; and,
- support a positive shift in culture, systems and practice.

2. Early intervention and prevention

We need to move from crisis management to prevention, breaking cycles of poor outcomes in people's lives.

To do this we will make sure the right support is available at key points when people need it so that those at risk, or in the early stages of developing difficulties, do not go on to crisis point.

Individuals, families and communities have strengths. These need to be supported, and developed, long-term to achieve results.

Evidence shows young people's behaviours expose them to a number of risks. We need to move from tackling issues in isolation to a more preventative approach.

We want to help young people to be more independent, supporting them to develop:

- stronger social relationships;
- a greater sense of purpose;
- the skills they need for living and working;
- improved chances in education;
- better employment rates; and,
- a stable place to live.

3. Collaboration & Integration

We aim to give people:

- easy access to advice and help;
- simple processes for assessment and decision-making;
- swift delivery of help when needed;
- a service with a smaller margin for errors; and,
- maximum opportunity for controlling their own life events.

By doing this:

- services will be organised effectively around the user and not organisations; and,
- professionals will recognise that action in one part of the system has an impact elsewhere.

Finances

Large sums of public sector funding are given to local organisations to support services. The voluntary sector also collects and spends funds within the district.

Decisions about how to use this money are central to cross-agency working and joint commissioning. There are two main ways of doing this as a partnership; to align or to pool budgets.

Partners can align funds when they agree outcomes and/or targets to be achieved and work in parallel towards achieving them.

Pooled budgets are created under legal powers and bring funds together under a single accountability and management structure.

The Children's Partnership will operate mainly within an aligned budget arrangement, but will also include a number of pooled budgets where there are obvious benefits.

This model is very flexible and will help us to address the needs of our communities within the current financial and political context.

Measuring performance

A report card will be produced for each of our priorities. This will include measures of our performance with information about past performance and future expectations. It will be a record of the story behind what is happening locally.

Priority statements and delivery plans

For each of our five priorities there will be a statement of what we intend to do and these will be supported by a range of more detailed delivery plans.

The plans for 2012 -2013 will be published as early as possible in 2012. After this we will aim to publish the Yearly plans in March or April.

You can find this plan and other documents in local libraries and at www.wakefield.gov.uk

