

To: Cambridgeshire Police Authority

From: Chief Constable

Date: 29th June 2010

EVERY CHILD MATTERS - UPDATE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Authority on the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda including the role, structure and responsibilities of Children Trusts and the development of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

2. Background

- 2.1 Every Child Matters (ECM) is the Government's response to the inquiry into the murder of Victoria Climbié in 2000. ECM is a fundamental and far-reaching approach to the well-being and welfare of children and young people from birth to age nineteen.

- 2.2 The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

- 2.3 The strategy involves multi-agency partnership working and a framework of accountability to deliver improvement and effective services. The Local Authority Director of Children's Services is responsible for establishing and leading the cooperation with partners – including public, private, voluntary and community organisations, in order to create a shared vision and improve outcomes for children and young people.

- 2.4 The Children's Act 2004 provides the legislative framework to enable more effective co-operation between agencies dealing with children and young people. S 11 of this Act places a duty on Local Authorities and key statutory agencies, which includes the Police and Police Authority, to ensure that their functions are:

“discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.”

2.5 An ECM strategy has been produced together with a development plan to ensure that the Constabulary fulfils its statutory obligations under the Children Act 2004.

2.6 Progression of the ECM agenda is managed within the Constabulary by the ECM Steering Group, which is chaired by the DCC.

3. Key points from the implementation plan

3.1 There remains a need to develop the awareness of ECM with operational staff. New staff and those in specialist roles involving young people already receive bespoke inputs. Work is being progressed to train additional trainers from within Learning and Development, to provide resilience in delivery of these inputs. An e-learning package in relation to safeguarding children is being finalised and roll out to all staff across the Force is anticipated from August 2010.

3.2 The level of engagement with youth continues to grow. A Community Engagement Policy – Children and Young People has now been approved by FEB. The focus is on encouraging effective participation of youth in the policing of Cambridgeshire, including the promotion of Safer Schools Partnerships.

3.3 The ACPO Children and Young People National strategy is being launched on 10th June 2010. The engagement policy will be evaluated against this, before being marketed across the Force.

4. Children's Trusts

4.1 Children's Trusts, which support the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, are local partnerships which bring together the organisations responsible for services for children, young people and families in a shared commitment to improving children's lives.

4.2 The term "children's trust" applies to the whole system of children's services, covering the work of partner agencies at every level but they are not separate organisations in their own right. Each partner retains its own responsibilities, while working together to deliver co-ordinated services.

4.3 Children's Trusts develop the local strategy, promote joint planning and commissioning of services and focus on a number of key priorities which are clearly set out in the shared children and young people plan.

4.4 Each authority area has its own Children's Trust, strategic plan and meeting arrangements. Constabulary representation currently sits across two directorates, with Chief Superintendent Hebb representing Peterborough and Chief Superintendent Sunman representing Cambridgeshire.

4.5 Both authorities follow a similar meeting structure and governance arrangements for their respective Trusts:

- ***Children's Trust Board***

Set the strategic direction and commissioning of services.

- ***Children's Trust Executive Group***

Secures democratic accountability and ensures executive input on decision making for the business of the Trust.

- ***Area Partnerships***

Provide practitioner support

5. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and National eCAF

5.1 The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a national initiative used by Children's Services across the country. It provides a shared assessment tool for use across all services for children which aims to help practitioners in different organisations coordinate and plan their work and interventions to meet a child or young persons identified needs.

5.2 Effective communication and information sharing are vital for keeping children and young people safe. The Constabulary is committed to making best use of information exchange between agencies, continuing to engage in partnership work undertaken to implement CAF across the county. A copy of the CAF can be seen at Appendix 1.

5.3 National eCAF is an electronic version of the CAF process. It is a secure IT system for storing, managing and sharing information captured through CAF assessments.

5.4 Alongside staff from partner agencies, a number of police staff have undertaken training for the eCAF for managers delivered through Cambridgeshire County Council. Implementation of CAF is also to be piloted locally by the Constabulary on St Neots Sector later in the year, to coincide with the planned roll out of CAF to the LA locality team in that area.

5.5 The Constabulary has continued to monitor developments in relation to CAF at both government and ACPO national level. The recent decision by the new coalition government to decommission the current ContactPoint database¹ has led to a degree of uncertainty as to the way forward.

5.6 The Constabulary has only today (Friday 4th June 2010), received definitive written national ACPO guidance as to the nature and extent of police engagement with the CAF process.

¹ Contact point is an online directory available to authorised practitioners to enable them to find out who else is working with the same child or young person, assisting in delivery of coordinated support.

- 5.7 The guidance has been received in a letter circulated to all Chief Constables and Commissioners, by the ACPO Information Management Youth Portfolio lead for the Children and Young People Business Area.
- 5.8 Engagement by the police service with the CAF process is endorsed as part of the service-wide responsibility to keep children and young people safe. Key points of the guidance are:
- Engagement should be appropriately tailored, identifying key individuals within the organisation to lead and ensure close links with local authority coordinators.
 - Police Officers and police staff should only perform the role of Lead Professional in exceptional circumstances.
 - The Police Service should where possible, work towards adoption of the electronic completion and data sharing of CAFs (National e-CAF).
- 5.9 Further consultation on this approach is to take place at the ACPO Children and Young People Conference on 10th June 2010 with more detailed guidance due to follow by the end of July 2010.
- 5.10 Progress in relation to the Constabulary's engagement with CAF will continue to be monitored at the ECM Steering Group, chaired by the DCC.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 The Authority is asked to note this report.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document (s)	Contact Officer	Location
	T/Chief Inspector Mike Hills (01480) 428103	Cambridgeshire Constabulary Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 6NP.
<p>Originating Officer DCC</p> <p>Is it considered that this report contains 'exempt information' and should be considered in private? No</p> <p>If the answer is "YES", please state the nature of the exempt information and the relevant clause in Part 1 of revised Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>The attached report has been cleared with the under mentioned Officers: (delete as appropriate)</p> <p>Deputy Chief Constable and Treasurer</p> <p>Others</p> <p>Submitted on16th June 2010.....</p> <p>A report will not be sent to the Authority unless this box has been satisfactorily completed and all necessary consultation carried out - the responsibility for which rests with the originator (except for consultation with the Chairman and this will be undertaken by the Chief Executive).</p>		