





C4EO Brief No. 2 (February 2009)

Welcome!

This is the second newsletter from the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO).

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|  | <h3>Early Years Sector Specialists start work</h3> <p>C4EO has recruited its first batch of 21 Early Years Sector Specialists.</p> <p>Read more about Early Years Sector Specialists and how their services can be accessed through our tailored support programme.</p> |
|  | <h3>What are progress maps?</h3> <p>To help professionals get the evidence and data they want from the 'what works' reviews, C4EO has developed an online search tool called a Progress Map.</p> <p>Read more about how progress maps work and what benefits they will bring.</p> |
|  | <h3>Getting the views of carers and parents</h3> <p>If C4EO is going to succeed in improving outcomes for children, young people and families, we need to know what they want and expect from the services we offer.</p> <p>Read more about how the Parents and Carers Panel plays a key role in helping C4EO.</p> |
|  | <h3>Updates</h3> <p>Read the last updates from C4EO including C4EO's launch of its first online resources for the Early Years theme, the appointment of the Theme Lead for the Child Poverty Cross-Cutting Theme and recruitment of the Child Poverty Sector Specialists.</p> |

Introducing the Early Years Sector Specialists

C4EO has recruited, trained and accredited its first batch of Sector Specialists for its Early Years theme. There are 21 altogether, drawn from across the nine Government regions. They have diverse professional backgrounds, working in a variety of roles. These include: heads of services for early years, Sure Start programmes and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The majority are drawn from local government with a variety of professional experiences including working across teaching/headship, social work, children's centre management, educational psychology and commissioning.

Carmel Burton is one of the Sector Specialists for the South West Region. She is currently based at Swindon Borough Council where her responsibilities include the Children's Centre programme, provision and quality of childcare, and training for the early years and childcare workforce. She also has strategic and operational responsibility for the extended services programme and the Parent Partnership.

Carmel originally had a teaching background (Maths) and has subsequently worked as an area organiser for the Pre-School Learning Alliance, Under Eights Manager in Wiltshire, Ofsted Early Years Team Manager and Sure Start Partnership Manager.

C4EO Brief asked Carmel four questions about becoming a Sector Specialist and what she expected:

- **Why did you become a Sector Specialist?** 'I was looking for a career development opportunity and this sounded both interesting and challenging.'
- **What do you hope to achieve from being a Sector Specialist?** 'I hope to be able to share learning with others; to empower and facilitate others; to develop and structure the knowledge and ideas they already have. I also hope to be able to learn from the professionals I work with and to use this learning to develop my own practice and those of others in Swindon.'
- **What do you think will be the major challenges?** 'I think the key ones will be establishing credibility and winning the confidence of others.'
- **What do you expect it to be like when you start working with Local Authorities and their partners?** 'Probably quite daunting initially – the word "specialist" is a little overwhelming, but with growing confidence I expect it to offer real insight, stretch my skills and give real job satisfaction.'

From the end of February, Carmel and her Sector Specialist colleagues will be available to work with Local Authorities and their Children's Trust partners. Each Children's Trust will be able to access a programme of 'tailored support', which will be adapted to tackle the local challenges they face in improving outcomes for younger children and their parents and carers.

Engagement with the Sector Specialists is completely voluntary. There is no financial cost and people who choose to work with Sector Specialists will be completely in control of their participation.

The type of support Sector Specialists will offer will be dependent on local contexts. Sector Specialists will coach and support key individuals or teams who are leading local change. Some examples of support could include:

- spreading knowledge of 'what works' for a theme (e.g. running a local workshop for relevant Children's Trust staff)

- supporting the use of evidence-based audit tools to assess performance and practice locally (e.g. to develop a local progress map – one of the key products from the Centre)
- assistance with ‘translating’ C4EO outputs into an appropriate local improvement plan
- facilitating the use of performance improvement or change management approaches, such as the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) ideas – perhaps running local ‘Turning the Curve’ workshops, engaging a range of agencies within and outside the Children’s Trust
- facilitating local ‘learning sets’ to explore and apply the evidence base on a priority issue
- providing an external perspective to challenge local policy, processes and practice in light of the knowledge base.

Support can only be provided in response to requests for assistance from Directors of Children's Services. Requests should relate to the key priorities within the Early Years Theme. These are:

- **narrowing the gap in outcomes** for young children through effective practice in the early years
- improving children’s attainment through a better quality of **family-based support for early learning**.

The Centre will broker these requests for support to help with local improvement activity, but may have to prioritise those that can demonstrate how the support will:

- align with local priorities (as set out in the local area agreement)
- complement any existing improvement support
- achieve strategic, systems-level change
- accelerate the expected rate of improvement of outcomes
- leave a sustainable legacy in terms of capacity for change and improvement within the locality
- generate learning from which other agencies can benefit.

DCSs can request tailored support by **completing the tailored support form** on the C4EO website.

Further information

Email **Sue Rowley** or contact her by phone on 07917 663 785.

What are C4EO progress maps?

The progress map is an interactive web-based tool. It aims to help professionals access and apply the 'what works' evidence that C4EO has collected. This evidence has been shown to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The progress maps aim to provide a 'one-stop shop' for professionals to access the very latest information, resources and data. They have been designed to:

- enable professionals to compare data on children's services in a range of flexible ways
- benchmark a local authority's performance with other authorities, regions or national averages
- identify where change is needed
- act as a guide and evaluate improvements to systems and services.

They aim to promote the better use of data and evidence, to challenge and plan changes to practice and service delivery as well as being tailored to people's own needs.

Currently they focus on 'what works' evidence for two key areas of the Early Years Theme:

- **narrowing the gap in outcomes** for young children through effective practices in the early years
- improving children's attainment through a better quality of **family-based support for early learning**.

The progress maps will be updated as new evidence emerges from the series of **knowledge workshops**, the tailored support programme delivered by the **Early Years Sector Specialists** and other resources and research suggested by the sector.

The progress maps for other themes will be delivered as the themes progress. The next set of progress maps will be for the Disability theme in June 2009.

Structure

Each C4EO progress map is split into the following sections:

a) Summary – containing:

- key messages from the knowledge review
- research findings
- implications arising from the research that may impact on local service improvement
- background to the issue and why it is important
- views of key stakeholders.

b) Data synopsis and data visualisation tool – providing users with:

- immediate access to relevant up-to-date data displayed in easy to understand tables and graphs

- data available at a national and regional level
- the facility to compare data at national and regional level
- a tool for customising and downloading datasets and reports for local use.

c) Resources database – providing links to:

- C4EO publications and resources
- links to external resources from partner organisations
- links to communities of practice – online networks for sharing ideas
- references from the knowledge review
- events
- validated local practice examples.

The progress maps also enable users to:

- subscribe to email alerts for a specific theme
- subscribe to RSS feeds for specific priorities
- suggest resources
- share good practice examples.

Further information

[View the progress maps for on the Early Years theme.](#)

[View the progress map leaflet, which outlines the purpose of progress maps.](#)

Getting the views of parents and carers

If C4EO is going to succeed in improving outcomes for children, young people and families we need to know what they want and expect from the services we offer. Research suggests that the most effective strategies involve using a range of approaches so that children, young people and parents with different capabilities and attitudes can participate.

To help C4EO do this it has established two groups: the Parents and Carers Panel and the Children and Young People's Network. This edition will focus on the work of the former; the latter will be covered in the next edition.

The Parents and Carers Panel, managed by the Family and Parenting Institute (FPI) on C4EO's behalf, comprises of 40 parents and carers. They are drawn from across the English regions and have a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and interests.

They will play a key role in ensuring that the views and experiences of mothers, fathers and carers inform the work undertaken by the Centre. Through a series of meetings and consultations, parents and carers will be involved across C4EO's work, looking at:

- contributing to the determination of future theme priorities from a service user perspective
- identifying issues of concern to parents and carers in relation to the theme areas, and feeding in issues and suggestions from a service user perspective
- reading and commenting on the main knowledge reviews from the perspective of parents and carers assessing the relevance of the review findings for service users and their regions
- contributing to dissemination and advising on how the messages can be shared with parents and carers across the country.

In addition, it is planned that parents and carers will assist with the work of C4EO by contributing their own material at the end of the programme, such as a video or report. The focus and format of this will be developed in consultation with the Panel, but its objective will be to relay messages from parents and carers to practitioners and service commissioners about parental engagement and securing better outcomes for children and families.

For more information on the C4EO Parents' and Carers' Panel please contact **Joanne Kellett**.

Updates

C4EO publishes the scoping studies for its Disability theme

On 16 February C4EO published the three scoping studies for its second theme Disability.

Scoping studies systematically compile the available 'what works' evidence from databases, websites, experts and other sources for each priority in each theme. They provide an overview of the type and nature of knowledge in relation to specific review questions. Scoping reviews are the start of the process that C4EO has developed to provide professionals with the best available evidence on improving outcomes for children and young people.

A study was completed for each priority which covers:

- Improving the wellbeing of disabled children (up to the age of eight) and their families through increasing the quality and range of early interventions.
- Improving the wellbeing of disabled children and young people through improving access to positive activities: extended services, youth work, inclusive play and leisure opportunities, sports and the arts.
- Ensuring all disabled children and young people and their families receive services which are sufficiently differentiated to meet their diverse needs.

More information on the scoping studies for the Disability theme are available on the C4EO website.

C4EO changes the order of themes: Schools and Communities Theme is moved forward.

The Centre has changed the order in which it will work on two of its seven themes. The Schools and Communities theme will swap places with the Parents, Carers and Families theme. The Schools and Communities theme, lead by National Foundation for Educational Research, will now start in June 2009. The Work Parents, Carers and Families theme, led by the Family and Parenting Institute (FPI), will start in December 2009. The change has taken place to align the work of the Schools and Communities theme with the current debate on the 21st Century Schools. The Centre is grateful to FPI for their support of this re-ordering of the themes. The order of the C4EO themes is:

- Early Years
- Disability
- Vulnerable Children (particularly children in care)
- Child Poverty
- Schools and Communities
- Youth
- Parents, Carers and Families.

Child poverty cross-cutting theme – theme lead

The Centre is delighted to announce that Catherine Fitt, Director of Children's Services for Newcastle, has accepted the role of theme lead for the Centre for

Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services cross-cutting theme of Child Poverty.

The Theme Advisory Group will look at the local policies, strategies and interventions that are most effective in reducing child poverty and tackling inter-generational cycles of poverty, and at 'what works' to facilitate systems change that improves development and outcomes for poor children.

For more information contact **Helen Goody**, Assistant Director – Themes Coordination.

C4EO seeks Child Poverty Sector Specialists

C4EO are looking for twelve Child Poverty Specialists to work across the nine Government Office regions. These are staff currently working in children's services who have a recognised expertise in Child Poverty and who can demonstrate a track record of achieving effective practice locally. The Specialists will help to spread knowledge about what works and will support outcome improvement work within their region. They will be accredited, trained, supported and deployed by the Centre, and will work for the Centre for up to 50 days over an 18-month period. There is backfill funding available for organisations who second their staff to C4EO in this way. Sector Specialists are not part of the field forces and will only work when invited into a locality. If you would like to discuss the role please contact C4EO Assistant Director **Sue Rowley** on 07917 663 785.

An **information pack** is available from the C4EO website.

C4EO launches 'one-stop shop' on what works in children's services

Delivering on the work of its first theme, Early Years, the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) has launched a major new knowledge resource and sector-led support programme.

At its heart is a free online 'one-stop shop' resource that focuses on effective family support and how best to narrow the gap in outcomes for vulnerable groups of young children. It contains the latest 'what works' evidence about systems and strategies that have been shown to improve outcomes in early years services. This will, for the first time, give children's sector professionals the latest data and evidence in one location. They will be able to search for information relevant to their context through an interactive search facility known as a Progress Mapping Tool.

This 'one-stop shop' concentrates on evidence for two priority areas:

- narrowing the gap in outcomes for young children through effective practices in the early years
- improving children's attainment through a better quality of family-based support for early learning.

The Centre is offering a programme of sector-led tailored support to help professionals to access the information. This support programme includes a series of nine regional knowledge workshops, one being held in each Government Office region. The Centre has also recruited and trained 21 Sector Specialists from across the children's sector as peer advisers. These specialists will be available, on request,

to work with Local Authorities and their Children's Trust partners to use the evidence to improve outcomes in their local context.

Visit the **Early Years theme on the C4EO website** for more information.

About C4EO

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) was launched on 10 July 2008 at the Manchester conference of the Association of Directors of Children Services. The Centre will identify and coordinate local, regional and national evidence of 'what works', to create a single and comprehensive picture of effective practice in delivering children's services. Using this information, C4EO will offer support to Local Authorities and their Children's Trust partners, working with them to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The Centre will focus its work on seven national themes identified in Every Child Matters. These are: Early Years; Disability; Vulnerable Children (particularly children in care); Child Poverty; Schools and Communities; Youth; and Parents, Carers and Families .

The Centre is also conducting primary disability research into two areas – the effectiveness and costs of different modes of delivering behaviour management interventions to parents of disabled children, and the effectiveness and costs of early identification and intervention for sleep problems.

C4EO is working with a consortium of core partners: National Children's Bureau, National Foundation for Educational Research, Research in Practice, and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

The Centre is also supported by a number of strategic partners, including the Improvement and Development Agency, the Family and Parenting Institute, the National Youth Agency, and the Institute of Education. There will be close and ongoing cooperation with the Children's Services Network, Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Local Government Association, the NHS Confederation, the Society of Chief Executives, Ofsted and the regional Government Offices.

C4EO is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

For more information

Visit C4EO's website at <http://www.C4EO.org.uk> or sign up for regular email updates at <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/myaccount/signup.asp>

For general enquiries email: contactus@C4EO.org.uk

C4EO's administrative base is located at NCB headquarters in London. All correspondence for the Centre should be addressed to: C4EO, 8 Wakley Street, London, EC1V 7QE. Tel: 020 7843 6358.