

April 2012

Request for Local Practice Examples: Early help for families to prevent the neglect of children

Context

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) has been commissioned by the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) to identify innovative examples of local practice in relation to services that provide **early help** to vulnerable children and families, in order to reduce the incidences of neglect and abuse. By collecting and sharing proven local practice, we are seeking to ensure that directors and managers in local authorities, along with their partners, have up-to-date, accurate evidence of robust local practice around early help.

The context for this call for local practice examples is framed by the recent government reviews led by Graham Allen MP, Dame Clare Tickell, the Rt Hon Frank Field MP and Eileen Munro, which all refer to the growing body of evidence in relation to the effectiveness of early intervention and prevention services. These types of services can do more to reduce neglect and abuse than reactive and expensive referral services.

Within preventative and other services, good mechanisms are needed to help identify those children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, harm from abuse or neglect and who need referral to children's social care. We are particularly seeking examples that demonstrate all or some of the following:

- Real and measurable benefits for children and their families;
- a focus on services and systems that are designed to intervene early;
- the engagement of partners in planning and implementation, specifically health and the voluntary and community sector and other relevant local partners;
- specific interventions by those partners which demonstrate effectiveness measured by the delivery of outcomes in CAF plans;
- systemic reform – new models and ways of delivering services, linked in particular to current initiatives including Community Budgets and the Improving Futures Programme;
- early intervention and prevention strategies that are embedded in local authority children's services, and where resources are being reallocated

from expensive specialist support to early intervention and prevention services;

- social return on investment models – new models of financing children’s services;
- common processes that are embedded across universal and targeted services, particularly at critical transition points for children, young people and their families;
- flexible pathways between levels of need so that families can move between services as needs change;
- services and systems that have clear mechanisms in place which demonstrate that vulnerable children and young people are prioritised and identified early.

Why collect and use local practice examples?

C4EO believes that there is invaluable evidence based in experience and practice in local authorities and in their partner organisations working in the children and young people’s sector. Moreover, local knowledge and practice on ‘what works’ is often ahead of that contained in research reports. We wish to mobilise and share this valuable local resource and use it to complement and extend the formal research evidence available to the sector.

For this call, we are interested in collecting both *validated* and *emerging* local practice examples, as we believe that local areas will find both types useful.

To be ***validated***, local practice needs to be able to demonstrate the achievements (outcomes and results) of local practice. ***Emerging*** practice examples may not yet be able to demonstrate improved outcomes, but the thinking, direction of travel and process of change being implemented, could be shared and be of value to others.

How do I submit a practice example?

Either by:

- Completing the online submission form on the C4EO website; (the forms are slightly different for *emerging* and *validated* practice)
- Or downloading a submission form from the C4EO website and emailing it to C4EOteam@nfer.ac.uk.

Validated local practice submission form:

http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/files/vlpform_jul2010.doc

Emerging local practice submission form:

<http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/general/emergingpracticeexamples.aspx>

The forms are designed to enable you to describe your practice and tell us why you believe it is successful.

Guidance on completing your submission is also available on the above Web pages but, if you have any queries or need support completing the form, please do not hesitate to contact the C4EO Team at NFER on 01753 637178 or C4EOteam@nfer.ac.uk. If you are not sure whether your practice example would best fit the *emerging* or *validated* local practice categories, we would urge you to contact us before completing a submission form.

Our intention is that, by sharing this information, you will contribute to the development of a picture of effective and emerging local practice in relation to early help for the most vulnerable children, young people and their families.

This is an ongoing call for practice, but if you would like more information about submission timelines, please contact Monica Hetherington at NFER or Helen Goody at C4EO on 0207 843 6358.

Many thanks for your support.

Christine Davies, CBE
Director, C4EO