

January 2010

Dear Colleagues

## **Call for Effective Local Practice Case Studies on Local Area Early Intervention Arrangements**

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO) wishes to secure excellent 'validated' examples of effective local practice which is leading to significantly improved outcomes for children, young people and their families. At present we are particularly interested in hearing about good practice in local area early intervention arrangements. In sharing this information with us, you will be sharing it with others across the Children's Sector, helping them to make service improvements which really work, as well as showcasing your and colleagues' successes.

### **We are interested in identifying practice which:**

- Is aimed at supporting vulnerable children and families.
- Enables effective identification of vulnerable children and families and assessment of their needs.
- Shows schools/Children's Centres/other children's service settings working in partnership to meet the needs of vulnerable children, including by commissioning services from others, e.g. the voluntary sector.
- Highlights effective practice in supporting individual children and families.
- Successfully engages parents at the early signs of a child or young person's problem and works in partnership with the family to address this (e.g. through Family Support Workers, effective engagement as part of the special educational needs (SEN) process etc).
- Demonstrates efficient and appropriate links/referrals between adult and children's services, and that practitioners in these setting are prepared and equipped to address family need, not just those of the child, young person, or adult.
- Demonstrates how the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process can be used to enable the provision of more effective support to a child.
- Supports a strong culture of prevention.
- Demonstrates how services can be rationalised to focus on evidence-based practice.
- Investigates how to design and develop a coherent set of programmes to support vulnerable children and families.
- Shows how clear and effective lines of accountability can be put in place to ensure consistent practice, e.g. through monitoring against key indicators, multi-agency management meetings, etc.

- Demonstrates different models for structuring effective multi-agency support (such as co-location, or multi-agency teams based around partnerships/clusters of schools etc).
- Indicates how joint working by Children's Trust Board partners has enabled a focused approach to early intervention.
- Has led to a reduction in 'heavy end interventions' and possible cost savings.

**The children, young people and families we are particularly interested in are those:**

- Who are vulnerable and may have needs that need to be addressed to prevent problems escalating and requiring complex interventions later on.
- Who could already be receiving some targeted or specialist services but these may not yet have been sufficiently co-ordinated, or tackled the root of the problem.
- Children, young people and families *in between* those with no apparent need receiving general universal services, and those with severe needs and in receipt of specialist services.

**We are also interested in:**

- Practice examples around the use of parenting orders/contracts.

**We are not interested in learning about:**

- Services/practice which focus on all children and families and/or children or families with low-level needs.
- Services/practice which focus only on very high end need, e.g. chaotic children and families or those with complex needs.

**Why use validated local practice examples?**

C4EO recognises that not all useful knowledge about 'what works' and why, is to be found in research reports and papers. We believe that there is invaluable evidence based in the experience and practice in schools, local authorities and local strategic partnerships. Moreover, local knowledge and practice on 'what works' is often ahead of that contained in research reports, which can take months or years to publish. C4EO wishes to mobilise and share this valuable local resource and use it to complement and extend the formal research evidence available to the sector.

We need, however, to ensure that the local examples of what works used by C4EO can demonstrate the achievements (outcomes; results) of effective practice. This is where 'validation' comes in. It is a two stage process:

- The self-validation stage, when local areas set out their examples in a consistent format.
- The external validation stage, when C4EO theme advisory groups of expert practitioners and sector specialists assess that sufficient and appropriate detail is provided by the practice account.

We do recognise that the development of successful practice is generally achieved through a journey of implementation, adaptation and further development as experience accrues. The template for submission of practice examples hopes to capture some of this.

### **How do I submit an example of effective practice?**

Please complete the online template/submission form. This enables you to describe the practice and tell us why you believe it is successful. We really want examples where there is good evidence and some documentation on how and why the practice has worked to improve outcomes, so the more that you can tell us about this, the better. Also, if you have it, do send us any other substantiating evidence such as an internal or external review, assessment or evaluation report. We do not, however, need lots of detailed paperwork. Please do not be put off if you do not have this; just complete the form as fully as possible.

If you have any queries or need support filling in the template, please do not hesitate to contact Monica Hetherington and the C4EO team at NFER on 01753 574123 or [C4EOteam@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:C4EOteam@nfer.ac.uk).

### **What will we do with the examples?**

We will acknowledge receipt of the submission and then gather together the practice examples and put them through a simple external validation process using a small panel of C4EO staff and advisers.

The validated practice will contribute to a bank of online exemplars on the C4EO website.

We will advise you of the outcome of the validation process and how we plan to use the material. If we are to use the example on our website or in a publication, we will first send you the text and seek your clearance for it to be included in a named or anonymous way.

Many thanks for your support.

**Sharon O'Donnell**  
**C4EO Head of Knowledge Management**  
National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)