

# Supporting the development of children and young people's plans (CYPPs)

## The case-study data



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# 1 Introduction

This report focuses on the findings from case-study research into the development of children and young people's plans (CYPPs). Within this chapter, the following are detailed:

- about the research
- the local authority case studies
- structure of the report.

## 1.1 About the research

As from April 2006 all local authorities were required to prepare and publish a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) that is to be reviewed annually. The CYPP is a strategic document, planning the coordination and development of services to deliver and improve outcomes for children: in effect, an overview of local agencies' activities to implement the requirements of the 2004 Children Act. In 2006, EMIE at NFER collected all the CYPPs and made them available on the EMIE website, and NFER published an analysis of a sample of 75 of the plans. This study, which was funded by a group of sponsors, generated significant interest. In addition, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) sponsored two series of regional workshops for the local authority officers responsible for the plans under the title 'Planning for Excellence' (PFE). These were well attended and well received, and a third series of workshops took place in June 2007.

The PFE network suggested that further analysis of the CYPPs should focus on topics of current relevance to local authorities. They, together with the Local Government Association (LGA), highlighted a particular interest in the commissioning process and the value of analysing the 2007 revised plans and reviews in relation to the areas of safeguarding and looked-after children (LAC). In addition, analysis of the 2007 plans/reviews included a re-examination of the format and presentation of the CYPPs. The first report, published in May 2008, presents the findings from this analysis (Atkinson, 2008). This can be accessed by [clicking here](#). It is worth noting, that as with the first report, this current report uses the term CYPP to include 'plans', 'reviews', 'refreshes' or variations of these adopted by local authorities.

The PFE network also suggested that analysis of the plans should be combined with qualitative research examining the planning processes. As such, this report details the findings from six local authority case studies which focused on examining the planning processes involved in the development of CYPPs in more depth.

## 1.2 The local authority case studies

Six local authorities were selected as case studies on the basis of the information analysed within their CYPP and using information from local authority Annual Performance Assessment (APA) letters. Whilst the main aim was to examine the overall planning processes involved in the development of the CYPPs, in keeping with the themes utilised within the analysis of the plans, two of the local authorities were selected as exemplars for commissioning, two for safeguarding and two for LAC. Local authorities were also selected to cover, as far as possible, a range of types and sizes.

The case-study authorities are set out in Table 1.1.



**Table 1.1 Case-study authorities**

Authority	Focus	Type	Size (based on number of schools in the authority)
Coventry	Commissioning	Metropolitan	Medium
Liverpool	Commissioning	Metropolitan	Large
West Berkshire	Safeguarding	Unitary	Medium
York	Safeguarding	Unitary	Small
Gloucestershire	LAC	County	Large
Portsmouth	LAC	Unitary	Small

A total of 24 interviews were conducted with around four people in each authority. Interviewees were identified by the local authority as either having a key role in the overall development of the plan or a key responsibility and involvement for the specific theme under examination within the case study (that is, commissioning, safeguarding or LAC). Interviews were recorded and summarised into common templates to facilitate the extraction of key themes and issues. Interviews were carried out either face to face or over the telephone between March and May 2008.

Interviews were conducted with the following representatives:

- commissioners, including commissioning managers/directors
- assistant directors
- heads of strategic services/intelligence
- team managers of strategic planning teams
- heads of safeguarding.

The remainder of interviewees included: a Principal Executive Officer, Director of Children's Services, Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Learning and Achievement, Corporate Parenting Officer, Policy Executive, Head of LAC, Inspection Planning Manager and Head of a Virtual School.

### 1.3 Structure of report

The findings from the case studies are presented under the following chapter headings:

- key findings
- planning structures and support
- alignment with other planning and inspection processes
- developing and using CYPPs
- benefits, challenges and good practice.



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## 2 Key findings

This report explores the development of Children and Young People's Plans in six local authorities. Some points of interest about the development process are highlighted.

- The importance of **consulting with children and young people** at all stages of CYPP development is highlighted. Interviewees stressed the value of involving children and young people in the process, ascertaining their views and asking for feedback on priorities and actions.
- In turn, by **reflecting the needs of children and young people** in the CYPP, local authorities are more likely to secure buy-in and commitment to the plan amongst all levels of personnel and across all services. Ensuring that local authority staff are consulted throughout the process and demonstrating how individual roles contribute to the CYPP are also important for securing buy-in.
- Given that the **CYPPs are used for a variety of purposes**, producing a single plan to meet the needs of all users, at different levels of seniority and across all services, is challenging. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the style, structure and presentation of the plans. One approach is to produce different plans for different audiences. Children and young people's versions of the plans, produced in a variety of formats, are considered a valuable tool for their engagement.
- In most cases, the **CYPP has been successfully aligned** with other local authority planning cycles, and in some, the CYPP is moving towards a closer synchronicity with inspection processes. For example, the CYPP has been used as evidence for Joint Area Reviews (JARs) and for the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) self-evaluation.
- **Using the CYPP as a commissioning framework** helps to ensure that the plan meets the needs of a variety of service users and to ensure that all activities are contributing to the realisation of goals in the CYPP. However, the need for more guidance on the role of commissioning in the CYPPs was recognised.
- Local authority **events, workshops or conferences** help secure buy-in and facilitate the establishment of a set of commonly identified priorities. They serve to inform all agencies of the local authority's plans, to integrate other agencies into the planning process, and ensure the CYPP is responsive to service users' needs. They are an invaluable tool for ensuring a truly multi-agency approach to the CYPP.
- Embedding an **outcomes-based approach** to the CYPP, as opposed to a process-based approach, can be challenging. Encouraging all staff to think in terms of outcomes can require a cultural shift, but this ensures that plans are robust and quality performance monitoring is enhanced.
- A **greater number of benefits or positive outcomes** were identified compared to difficulties. Overlap between the benefits and the challenges was evident. For example, establishing joint ownership of priorities and engaging children and young people were each identified as benefits arising from the development of CYPPs, but as challenging to accomplish.
- Given that the CYPPs were typically planned within the CYPSP, **structuring the partnership around Every Child Matters (ECM) themes** or local priorities facilitated planning processes. Having a dedicated coordinator for the CYPP and planning a realistic timeline to develop the plan also eased planning processes.
- Central government guidance, other local authorities' CYPPs and the NFER 2006 analysis of CYPPs (Lord *et al.*, 2006) were highlighted as **useful sources of guidance** for developing the plans. Whilst the majority of interviewees felt that no additional guidance was needed, further examples of good practice from other local authorities could be helpful.



## 3 Planning structures and support

This chapter begins by setting out the planning structures that enable the development of CYPPs. It moves on to consider individual roles and responsibilities in developing the CYPP, and how staff buy-in is achieved. The final section explores the guidance available for developing CYPPs.

### 3.1 Planning structures

Planning for the CYPPs took place within the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) or Children's Trust (CT) structures in each of the six local authorities.

**CYPSPs and CTs varied in structure**, comprising a number of boards at different levels and with different titles, roles and responsibilities.

Across all case-study authorities, **boards were established that represented every stakeholder in the CYPP**. These stakeholders commonly included: all local authority services, school representatives, voluntary sector representatives, the youth service, Connexions, the police, and primary care teams.

Largely, the CYPP was overseen and **signed off by a high-level strategic group** within the structures, and its production and monitoring was the responsibility of the group below this.

The high-level strategic group was commonly comprised of first tier officers and directors. In the group below this, the same services were typically represented but by individuals with lower levels of seniority.

In some of the local authorities, **theme or priority groups** had been established within the CYPSP or CT and one of their primary functions was to develop and monitor specific parts of the CYPP.

Within each theme or priority group, a **priority 'lead'** was in place to oversee the work of the group. In some cases, these leads were provided with specific support for developing their part of the CYPP, either from individuals or from small teams. Figure 3.1 sets out one such model of responsibility for the CYPP.

Other groups were also in place to support the planning for CYPPs. For example, as shown in Figure 3.1, consultative forums feed into the planning process. Across the other authorities, similar support groups were in place, including consultative groups, participation groups, and data and analysis groups. These groups provide information to the relevant structures of the CYPSP to inform the planning processes.

In two cases, specific groups had been established to develop the CYPP, beyond the main structures of the CYPSP or CT. In one authority, a time-limited reference group currently oversaw the CYPP planning. In another, a strategic planning team took on this responsibility (see Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.1 Planning structures in Coventry

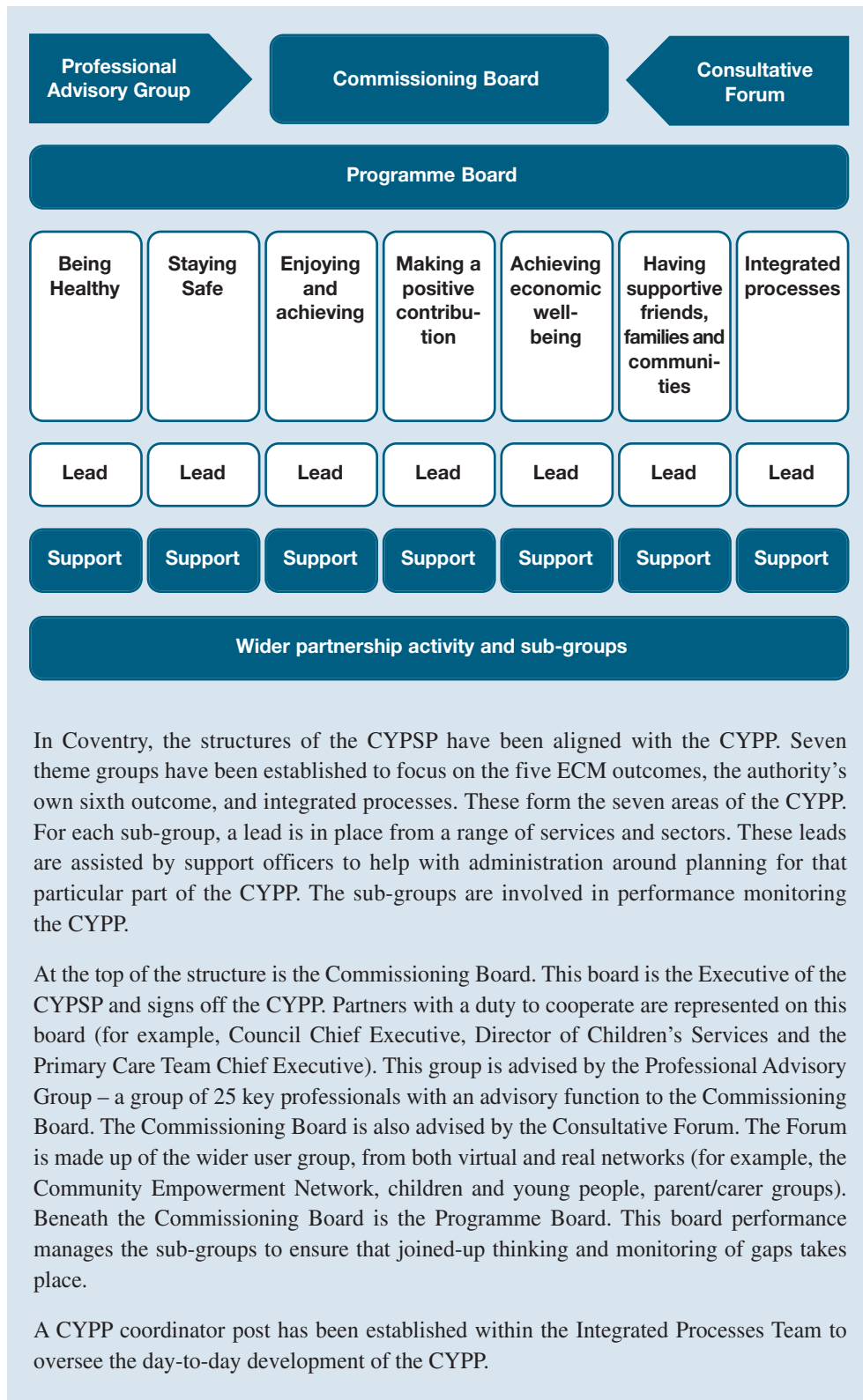
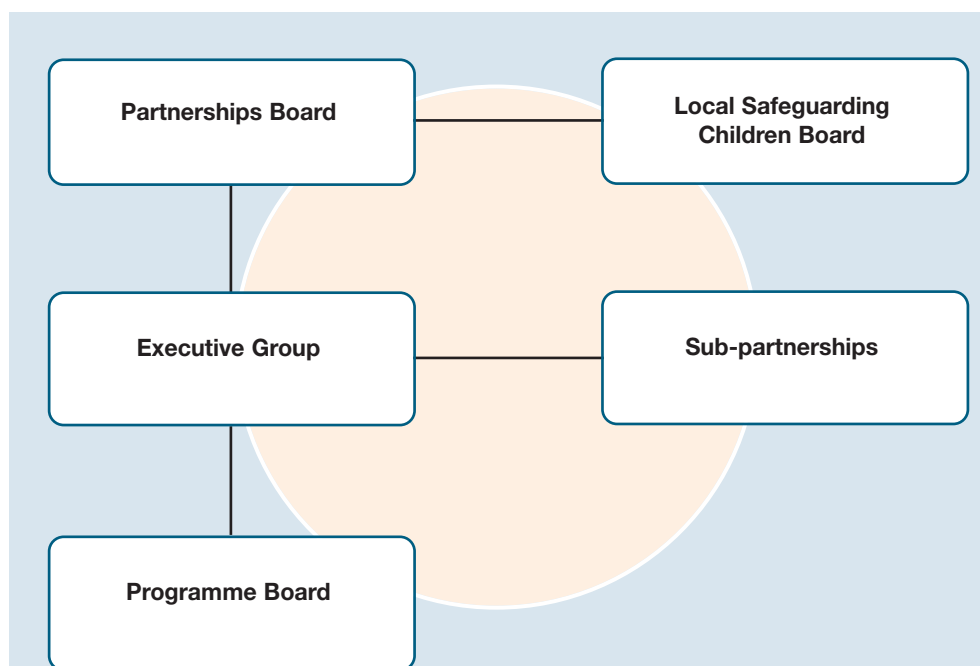


Figure 3.2 Planning structures in Gloucestershire



In Gloucestershire, planning for the CYPP takes place within the CT arrangements. The Partnership Board agrees the CYPP. This is chaired by the Lead Member and has representation from senior directors. The Executive Group implements the CYPP and monitors progress; it suggests priorities and is involved in writing and commenting on drafts of the CYPP. The Programme Board monitors any changes in services, and the Safeguarding Children’s Board and the sub-partnerships feed into the process of developing the plans.

The production of the CYPP is supported by a Strategic Planning Team (comprised of a team leader and three planning officers). They coordinate the production of the CYPP and managed its performance. An analysis team feeds into the Planning Team and this is responsible for carrying out the needs analysis to inform the CYPP. A Programme and Participation Group carry out consultation exercises and feed the findings back to the Planning Team and the CT boards.

The planning structures were supported by planning processes in each of the local authorities. These included: conference events/workshops and residentials to share data, identify priorities, review progress and highlight national agendas; and writing templates to streamline writing and the final CYPP.



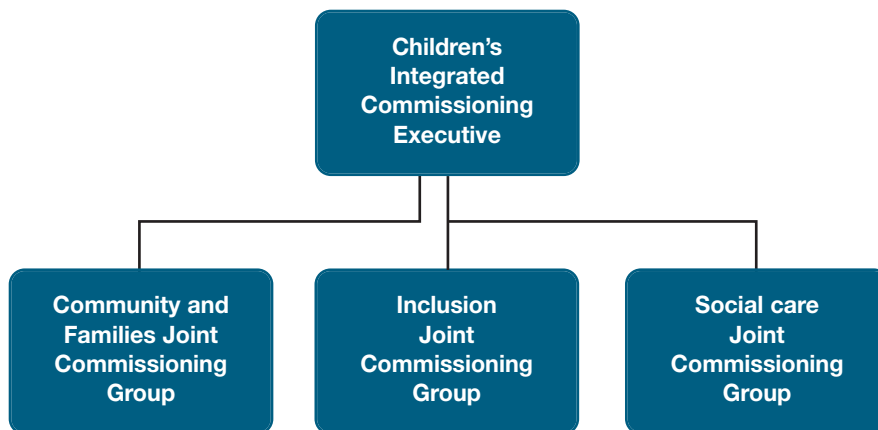


### Specific support structures for planning for LAC, safeguarding and commissioning

Some specific support structures/processes were in place to support planning for LAC, commissioning and safeguarding.

In Liverpool, planning for commissioning in the CYPP is supported by the Children's Integrated Commissioning Executive (ICE). This has Assistant Executive representation and is supported by three thematic joint groups chaired by commissioners for Children's Services (see Figure 3.3). The thematic groups make recommendations regarding commissioning and the strategic planning of commissioned services.

Figure 3.3 Specific structures in Liverpool



In Portsmouth, planning for LAC in the CYPP is largely supported by a Corporate Parenting Board. This is chaired by the leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. As such, the group deals with city-council-wide issues. However, it is also charged with monitoring the CYPP for provision for LAC and it reports to the priority lead for LAC provision. A corporate parenting officer is in place within the LAC service and he/she sits on the Corporate Parenting Board. He/she has a monitoring role and is consulted over the content of the CYPP for LAC.

In West Berkshire, planning for safeguarding in the CYPP is supported by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). The board responds to the consultation concerning safeguarding, is involved in drafting and redrafting the CYPP and is responsible for linking safeguarding in the CYPP into other planning processes. The LSCB is supported by sub-groups and has multi-agency representation.

## 3.2 Helpful planning structures and processes of support

The following structures and processes were identified as being particularly helpful in developing the CYPP.

- **Consultation processes** with service users and local authority staff

*One of the most helpful bits is the opportunity to check out our plans with young people. Young people tell it straight and that grounds us a lot. It identified what we should be doing and what we should be working towards.*

Gloucestershire

*The consultative forum is a good place for hearing voices and having a variety of voices together from the voluntary sector, children and young people, parents and carers.*

Coventry



- **Specific boards of the CYPSP** dedicated to developing the CYPP (for example, reference group, joint commissioning group or board, project board)

*The reference group was helpful as it immediately brought together key people working on the same project. As a unit it was marvellous – key partners consistently working with the DCS [Director of Children’s Services] and ADs [Assistant Directors] who could oversee the whole process of developing the plan.*

York

- **The CYPSP**

*The CYPSP is the most helpful because of the levels of people on it – they are all directors, assistant directors etc. and they carry a lot of weight so they can get things done and drive things forward.*

Liverpool

- **Internal reporting systems**

*The reporting system keeps communication brief and manageable.*

West Berkshire

*The report card structures evolved out of the outcome-based decision making – what were the outcomes they are trying to achieve, who can help them, and what are the actions?*

Coventry

- **ECM theme groups/priority areas, with dedicated leads**

*There are strategic groups for each ECM theme and a senior lead officer for each – that has made a big difference and made the reporting easier.*

Coventry

*Once we had the structure of the thematic groups in place, it was streamlined. Each of the groups began to take responsibility for doing the self-assessment, looking at the data and identifying where they were making progress or not.*

Coventry

- **Commissioning plans/commissioning groups**

*The work that goes on to get the commissioning plans right helps a lot.*

Portsmouth

*The commissioning groups allow for more detailed needs analysis of data.*

West Berkshire

### 3.3 Who leads on CYPPs?

In all of the authorities, the CYPPs are overseen by **the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership** (CYPSP) or the **Children’s Trust** (CT).

In two of the authorities, the Joint Commissioning Group (JCG), or Board, of the CYPSP are responsible for the CYPP.

In the four other authorities, the head or lead for the CYPSP or CT take overall responsibility for the plan. In one case, they are supported by a ‘reference group’ but are moving towards establishing an integrated commissioning group (like a JCG). In another, the senior management team (comprised of assistant executive directors) are responsible for the CYPP.



In each of the authorities, a day-to-day lead is in place to oversee the development of the plan and to support the strategic leads in the CYPSP or CT.

For each of our key areas (commissioning, safeguarding and LAC) the strategic lead or head of service takes responsibility for developing the commissioning, safeguarding or LAC elements in the CYPP.

### 3.4 Individual roles and responsibilities

The data revealed four key roles in developing the CYPP that operate within the support structures described in section 3.1. Figure 3.4 details how individual roles and responsibilities work together to produce the CYPP.

Figure 3.4 Four key roles in the development of CYPPs

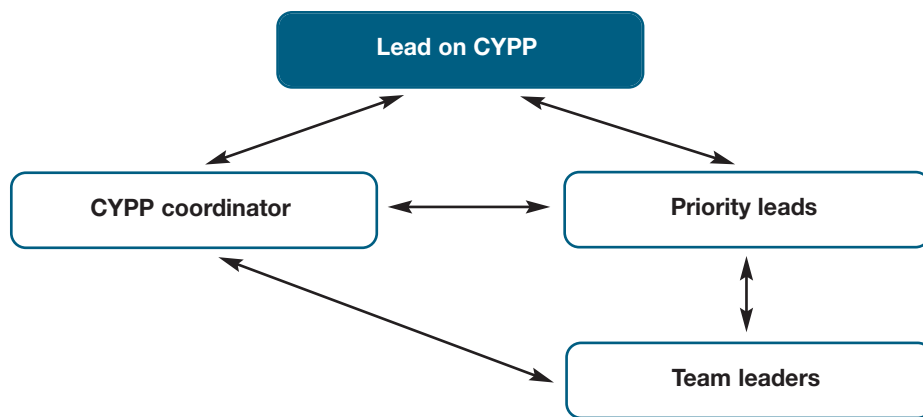


Table 3.1 sets out the responsibilities associated with each of these roles. It is evident that some of the responsibilities are interchangeable between roles, particularly between the CYPP coordinator and overall lead. The responsibilities taken within each role varied according to the level of seniority of the individual within the local authority structures. For example, in two of the case-study authorities, the CYPP coordinators had strategic and senior roles within the local authority. In the remaining four, the CYPP coordinator operated at a less senior level; in one case operating at an administrator level.



**Table 3.1 Roles and responsibilities for producing the CYPP**

Role	Responsibility
Lead on plan (typically chair or head of the CT or CYPSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall responsibility for the CYPP</li> <li>• Signs off the CYPP</li> <li>• Signs off the CYPP</li> <li>• Responsible for annual reviews</li> <li>• Responsible for timely delivery</li> <li>• Writes overall sections/contextual detail</li> <li>• Links the CYPP to other plans/arrangements (e.g. APA, Local Area Agreement (LAA))</li> <li>• Relates the CYPP to national agendas</li> <li>• Ensures consultation and need informs the CYPP</li> <li>• Edits the CYPP</li> <li>• Chairs groups set up to support the development of the CYPP</li> </ul>
CYPP coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports overall lead on the CYPP</li> <li>• Sets up consultation processes and collates findings</li> <li>• Responsible for timely delivery across services</li> <li>• Sets up review and refresh processes</li> <li>• Collates all sections of the CYPP</li> <li>• Coordinates contributors to the CYPP</li> <li>• Provides data, reports, documents and consultation findings</li> <li>• Produces the CYPP</li> <li>• Produces templates for contributors</li> <li>• Performance monitoring</li> <li>• Quality checks</li> </ul>
Priority/area leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead on priority area in CYPP</li> <li>• Develop the service plan</li> <li>• Identify performance indicators</li> <li>• Report on outcomes and actions</li> <li>• Are on the CYPSP or CT, or on their supporting sub-groups</li> <li>• Edit the priority sections of the CYPP</li> </ul>
Team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate data</li> <li>• Review and monitor progress</li> <li>• Align operational plans to the CYPP</li> <li>• Develop action plans</li> <li>• Report into the CYPSP or CT via priority leads</li> <li>• Conduct consultation</li> <li>• Deliver specific areas of the CYPP</li> </ul>

### 3.5 Achieving staff buy-in

Staff involved in planning for the CYPPs recognised that securing staff buy-in was crucial for the planning process. Engaging practitioners or those with less strategic roles was regarded as being more difficult than engaging strategic or management-level staff. To engage practitioners, the ‘golden thread’ principle of seeing how individual roles contribute to strategic objectives was most useful.

Key ways of ensuring that staff buy in to the CYPP and the development processes are as follows.



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- **Consulting with local authority staff**

*To encourage people buy in they have to feel that they own it and have a say, and are part of that direction.*

Gloucestershire

*Buy-in is about openness and ability to contribute. If people feel it is this way rather than it is already written and they're just rubber stamping it, then we're going to have buy-in.*

York

*I met staff throughout the organisation and shared what the data and inspections reports etc. said, proposed an idea for more work, asked them whether it felt right, what they need to do more of, what they should stop, what they should develop etc.*

Portsmouth

- **Using young people's views**

*It has been helpful as the vision statement for the partnership came from the involvement of children and young people from day one. On an emotive level it helps to get buy-in.*

Coventry

*It was really rooted in consultation with young people and this encouraged people to buy in – they could see that it was the genuine article.*

Liverpool

*In the planning days we always have a section which is the voice of a young person. We use DVDs put together by young people and that informs and grounds staff in hearing what young people's views are.*

Gloucestershire

- **Demonstrating how individual roles contribute to the CYPP**

*I do case-study pieces on what individuals contribute on a day-to-day basis to make it real for them and to illuminate how each person contributes to the corporate objectives. It is that sense of belonging, I know how I am contributing etc. ...*

Coventry

*Not only can they see their bit in the plan, but they can see that their service is represented in that plan. I can see what contribution I can make, there is the 'golden thread' back down into service plans. We try and do it the other way round as well so that it's not about responding to a document you have never been involved with or you can't recognise.*

York

*Part of annual appraisals and target setting is seeing how work contributes to the realisation of the bigger picture. Individuals are meant to be able to see in the high-level stuff where they fit in.*

Liverpool

- **Holding meetings/events across the authority**

*We don't just think about our staff ... we tend to run some sort of stakeholder event that is attended by a whole range of professionals and people from voluntary groups.*

Gloucestershire

*'Turning the curve' events [See section 6.3 for details] got people involved. It is important to know that what you are doing has some meaning and that you are not just working in silos.*

Coventry



- **Adopting an ‘outcomes-based’ focus**

*Rather than talking about yet another plan, a chunk of bureaucracy etc., in my view, you just focus on what the outcomes are and what you need to be doing, who will do it and how we know when we’ve got there. I’d always have engagement and discussion at that level, rather than starting off with saying we need a CYPP – that just doesn’t ring their bell. If you sit down and think about how we can make a difference to the young people on their caseload, it starts in a different place.*

Portsmouth

- **Ensuring there are open communication structures**

*People need to understand that the structural changes and different ways of working are making a difference, so communication back out to people is key. We have invested in a new communication structure behind our CYPP which means that messages get over in a creative and innovative way.*

Portsmouth

*It is about being open and transparent. They discuss where they are going and what they think will make the difference.*

Gloucestershire

Other less frequently identified ways to encourage buy-in include:

- creating opportunities for staff to contribute to, or write individual sections of the CYPP
- engaging staff at the level of their particular interests
- the authorities’ success or innovation (for example, staff recognise the success of the authority and want to be a part of it)
- producing different types of CYPP (for example, a practitioner version, a full-length version, a summary version)
- previous experience of joint working, particularly surrounding joint/pooled budgets or funds
- the promise of a more coherent central plan or a single point of reference.

### 3.6 Guidance for developing CYPPs

This section looks at the guidance material used by the case-study local authorities and identifies material considered particularly useful. It then moves on to highlight additional forms of guidance and support that interviewees felt would be helpful.

#### *Guidance material accessed*

Three main sources of guidance were accessed.

- Guidance from **central Government** was accessed by all of the case-study authorities and used by the majority of interviewees. The guidance was used to inform the first CYPP and has continued to inform subsequent plans through guidance updates.
- All of the case-study authorities looked at **CYPPs from other authorities** in seeking direction and ideas.
- Four of the local authorities drew on the NFER 2006 Analysis of CYPPs (Lord *et al.*, 2006).

Other sources of guidance included: internally produced guidance/templates, Annual Performance Assessments (APAs)/inspection reports, informal local support networks, IDEa conferences and outcomes-based accountability guidance.



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### *Most useful sources of guidance*

**Central government guidance** was felt to be the most useful form of guidance for planning for the CYPPs: 'It is concise, clear, accessible and gets updated.' It also provides a steer regarding expectations and statutory guidance.

Three authorities felt that the **NFER 2006 Analysis of CYPPs** (Lord *et al.*, 2006) was a particularly useful source of guidance. It was valued for providing comparisons with other authorities and for being structured around the ECM outcomes. Authorities used it to inform their planning around the outcomes and as a quality test in developing their own CYPP.

Two authorities reported that looking at **other authorities' CYPPs** was particularly useful for comparisons and presentation tips.

### *Additional guidance required*

Interviewees were asked whether they required any additional guidance to help them develop their CYPP. The majority of authorities felt that **no additional guidance was required**.

*It would be wonderful to let things embed down for a bit. The plea is invariably for less, not more – it's not a want for tools, it's a want for time to use the tools.*

Portsmouth

*We need to get our heads around and work with what we have at the moment. We have so much thrown at us. We have good guidance but we need to get on with that and then see where the gaps are.*

Coventry

However, the following requests were made by other interviewees.

- More material on **what other authorities were doing** would be valuable, and would enable good practice to be shared.

*It would be interesting to see if there are any variations, north to south, rural to urban etc. – are there differences or is it hugely similar? (Gloucestershire)*

Similarly, the availability of regional or national seminars to share planning processes and CYPP development would be well received.

- More guidance regarding **commissioning** across the case-study authorities was requested. Specifically, guidance on models of commissioning in the CYPPs, achieving priorities through commissioning, the role of commissioning in CYPPs and bringing partners together to develop commissioning in the CYPPs.
- **More timely** central government guidance. Interviewees expressed frustrations that the guidance arrived too late in the planning process. Interviewees also called for a clearer idea of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) view of good practice in CYPPs, and guidance as to expected levels of detail.

Less frequently suggested calls for additional guidance included: information on how the CYPP fits with the Children's Plan, centralised databases on evidence-based practice and case studies of children and young people's involvement in the development of the plan.



## 4 Alignment with other planning and inspection processes

This chapter examines how the CYPP aligns with other local authority planning processes and arrangements. It also looks at how the CYPP aligns with external inspection processes.

### 4.1 Alignment with other local authority planning processes and arrangements

This section covers alignment with the broader local authority planning cycle, and, more specifically, with the Local Area Agreement (LAA), the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the children's trust (CT) arrangements.

#### *Alignment with the broader local authority planning cycle*

- The CYPP is **one of the city council's central strategic plans** and a major part of the local authority planning cycle: 'The CYPP plays a large part in the whole planning process because it is the public face for children's services' (Liverpool).
- The CYPP is **closely aligned with the broader local authority planning cycle**. The key delivery targets in higher plans (for example, the corporate plan) are lined up with priorities in the CYPP: 'It is effectively the same planning cycle' (Coventry). 'There is a golden thread running through them all' (York).
- However, there is a **plethora of local authority plans** and it is difficult to align them completely: 'It is an ongoing process, one does not spawn the other and there are a plethora of plans that report in to the CYPP' (York). On top of this, there are organisation-specific processes which are on different cycles. Planning cycles are constantly under review and there is always scope for greater alignment.
- Responses indicated that **the priorities of the CYPP fed into higher-level plans**, that is, into directorate plans and cabinet member plans, and that there was both a top down and bottom up approach. Conversely, these all also inform the CYPP.
- Despite this, there are **tensions with the broader local authority planning cycle** in some local authorities. Marrying the city plan with the CYPP can be challenging as not all the priorities in the wider city plan are reflected in the CYPP. Reservations were expressed about using the CYPP as a review tool because some priorities do not appear in the CYPP. In addition, there are a set of planning processes taking place within other organisations which have to be acknowledged in the CYPP.

#### *Alignment with the LAA*

- In five of the authorities, **the indicators or priorities within the CYPP were the same as those in the LAA**. It was felt to be critical to 'tie these priorities up', particularly since central government funding streams are increasingly coming down through LAAs and: 'the LSP is increasingly where the money will be' (Portsmouth). According to one interviewee: 'It would be perverse for the CYPP to look at a different set of priorities from the LAA' (York).
- However, in contrast, it was noted that the LAA could be different from the CYPP because the plan is determined locally. According to one interviewee: 'It would be disingenuous to say that the LAA is local since the DCSF insist that the 16 national indicators are included' (Portsmouth).





- At the same time, **the LAA was said to be integral to the planning of the CYPP**. In this way, the higher-level indicators are used as ‘building blocks’ for the CYPP so that, when it is being performance monitored ‘you are looking at the picture across the piste’ (Gloucestershire).
- Alignment with the LAA was ensured in a number of ways: by an overlap of personnel on the groups responsible for both the CYPP and the LAA, having the same group (for example, the children’s trust) responsible for both, having the same person responsible for both (although this was said to have its own drawbacks) or by regular meetings between those responsible.

#### *Alignment with the LSP*

- In three authorities, **the LSP oversees and agrees the CYPP**: there are regular reports on the progress of the CYPP at the LSP where their views are fed into the process.
- **The LSP priorities align with the CYPP**: priority alignment was achieved through the community strategy (or equivalent): ‘Our CYPP is the LSP’s articulation of what it wants to do for children and young people’ (York).
- Alignment was facilitated by having one person with the **joint responsibility** of overseeing the LSP and the CYPP or by having common personnel on key groups.

#### *Alignment with the children’s trust arrangements*

- In four authorities, **the children’s trust and the LSP were said to be the same thing**: ‘The CYPSP is the children’s trust, they are so very closely aligned’ (Gloucestershire).
- **The CYPP is the central planning document for the children’s trust** which takes the actions from the plan and delivers them: ‘The CYPP is the supreme articulation of the children’s trust strategy and the most important document that it oversees’ (York).

## 4.2 Alignment with external inspection processes

The recommendations from **the Joint Area Review (JAR)/APA inform the priorities within the CYPP**: ‘You have to take the JAR as a barometer whenever it falls within the year’ (Gloucestershire). They are closely aligned so that the plans and action points are not replicated.

**The CYPP provides evidence for the JAR/APA**. It is the principal document used by Ofsted for the JAR/APA and forms a central part of the evidence. In some instances, the CYPP was used as the self-assessment for the JAR/APA or it was drawn on heavily for this process. Being able to use the plan to show progress against targets was felt to be ‘a good step’ as this gives the plan recognition and status. In two instances, the CYPP had been refreshed or adapted for the JAR.

**The CYPP is the single document that brings JAR and APA together** because JAR and APA issues are both included within the plan. It was considered helpful for the same person leading or coordinating the JAR/APA to lead on the CYPP, particularly in small local authorities.

However, there was a view that **the CYPP was no longer well aligned with the JAR** since there is now a narrower inspection focus and not all services are included, and because the JAR and the APA are not aligned in terms of timing. It was considered more sensible to align the CYPP with local authority plans and cycles rather than with external inspection processes (for example, APA submission deadlines).

There was a view that **the CYPP does not fit easily with the APA** as plans are not developed in relation to the 36 key judgements that are in the APA. It was felt this needed addressing within the guidance for the CYPP.



## 5 Developing and using CYPPs

This chapter covers the development and use of CYPPs. It begins by exploring the updates made to CYPPs, and the development of children and young people's versions. It also highlights ways in which the CYPPs are used in the case-study authorities.

### 5.1 Updating CYPPs

In response to statutory guidance, each of the case-study authorities reviewed their current CYPP annually. This involved a review of progress towards targets. However, each of the case-study authorities went beyond the statutory review of progress, and also refreshed their CYPP annually. This meant that they changed or added to their plan without completely rewriting it. They were also each working to three-year plans. Three of the authorities were due to fully replace their plan in 2010. The remaining three were working to different timescales as they produced their first plan earlier than most (for 2006–09).

The following comments were made about the process of refreshing, reviewing or replacing plans.

- Refreshing annually avoids a significant annual overhaul and it would be too time intensive to replace the plan annually. However, replacing the plan every three years can mean that plans feel out of date in the later years.
- In the refresh, priorities are not likely to alter, but commissioning plans around the priorities are changed. The priorities tend not to date, but progress against targets does.
- Refreshing annually allows newly emerging issues to be dealt with, prevents the plan from getting out of date too quickly, is useful for highlighting areas where progress may be slow, enhances ownership by other agencies as increasing numbers buy into the CYPP and allows greater alignment with inspection processes.

### 5.2 Children and young people's versions of the CYPP

This section explores children and young people's versions of the CYPP. It highlights what they typically include and the format they take, as well as how they are produced.

- Five out of the six local authorities had produced a children and young people's version of the CYPP. Where a children and young people's version was not in place, it was highlighted that there was no positive rationale for not having one and that the authority was planning to 'put that right'.
- Having a version for children and young people enabled them to engage with the plan and was a way of communicating to young people that they are being listened to: 'If it [the CYPP] is about them and for them, there should be a version that is accessible to them' (York).
- It was recognised that it is difficult to produce a single plan that is both a comprehensive high-level commissioning document and also a document for children and young people. One way round this is to create different versions for different audiences.
- Copies of the children and young people's version of the plan were usually sent to all children and young people in the authority, or distributed through schools, as well as being available on the website.



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### *What do they include?*

- Children and young people's versions generally contained key points or key headlines from the main plan.
- In one authority, the children and young people's version did not contain priorities but gave a list of commitments to improve the lives of children and young people.
- The children and young people's versions needed to be developed thoughtfully: 'You have to be very careful that you do not patronise young people but also, however well you write it, they are not going to read a 50-page document' (York).

### *What format do they take?*

- Children and young people's versions were generally two to four pages long, or in a booklet or leaflet format.
- One local authority (York) had produced a booklet for children and a 'concertina' version for teenagers as it was recognised that the language needed to be different.
- Another (Liverpool) had produced a widget version of the plan (using symbolic representation) for those with complex learning difficulties and for those who do not use language to communicate. They also produced a DVD summary for young people where the information was translated into British Sign Language, and are introducing a kitemark for child-friendly documentation based on the development of their refreshed CYPP.

### *How were they produced?*

- In most cases, the full CYPP was said to have been reduced or summarised to a manageable version for young people. In all instances, children and young people had been involved in this process. In some cases, a summary was produced and then further summarised in conjunction with children and young people to ensure it was relevant and appropriate to them.
- Where available, existing forums of young people (for example, school councils) had been utilised during this process. One local authority had commissioned an existing group of 'young reporters' (who monitor the quality of services) to produce their own version of the CYPP (Gloucestershire).
- One authority established a time-limited communication and engagement group to look at a child-friendly version of their CYPP. Members of the group consulted with children and young people from within their own organisations.

## 5.3 The use of CYPPs

The CYPPs were being used in a variety of ways across the case-study authorities. They were mostly being used for the following.

- **Performance management/monitoring**

The CYPPs were used for performance monitoring at both strategic and operational levels and also for feeding into individual objective setting and appraisals. The plans were also used to challenge services where improved outcomes were not forthcoming.

- **Service planning**

The CYPPs were used at operational level as the basis for service planning and to help services to produce a business plan. These needed to be grounded in the CYPP.



- **Commissioning services**

The plans were used as a framework for commissioning services and frequently referred to by the commissioning team and development team when doing so. They were also used by service providers to ensure that what they provide aligns with what is in the plan.

- **Checking work fits with the CYPP**

The CYPP is used as a baseline to enable people to see whether what they are doing fits into the plan and is contributing to outcomes – ‘If something isn’t in the plan it should not be happening.’ It is used in Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to ascertain that the service is supporting the plan and by local authority staff to check that their activities align with the plan.

- **Informing other plans**

The CYPP is used to inform other plans, particularly subordinate plans, for example, School Development Plans. It is increasingly being cross-referenced in other partners’ strategic planning processes.

- **Providing a central point of reference**

The CYPP is a working document that is frequently talked about and referred to as part of standard practice. It is particularly referenced by directors, executive members and priority leads/officers.

- **Informing people about local authority priorities**

The plan is used to inform people about local authority activities and goals, and other organisations use it to find out about local priorities and needs. It may also be used as an induction briefing and for PR purposes. The CYPP is usually available on local authority websites and is therefore readily accessible.

Fewer interviewees stated that the CYPP was used for strategy development, comparison with other authorities, workforce development and as a reference in bids.

It was noted that, because of range of different purposes of the CYPP, one of the challenges is to present it in a way that is relevant and readable for a range of audiences. One authority, for example, questioned whether the CYPP should be structured around the five outcomes or around partnership priorities as the latter should take precedence. It was also thought that new ways of presenting the plans (for example, via a DVD) were needed to ensure that engagement was maintained.



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## 6 Benefits, challenges and good practice

This chapter examines the benefits and challenges associated with planning around the CYPP. It also presents examples of good practice.

### 6.1 Benefits

Interviewees from across the six authorities identified a large number of benefits as a result of the planning processes and CYPP development. These largely related to partnership issues or to priorities. For example, with regards to partnership issues, the CYPPs were said to do several things.

- **Reinforce and strengthen relationships between partners**

*It helps to increase partnership working. People pull together around a document like this as they realise it is a joint effort with a common aim.*

Coventry

- **Result in joint ownership of priorities**

*It [the CYPP] has enabled us to get collective ownership and thinking around the issues rather than being 'Oh, teenage pregnancy, that's yours.' It has enabled us to have collective debates and to start that journey of collective ownership of some of the outcomes.*

Coventry

*It is the lever by which we are effecting real change in the way people at the front end are acting and thinking about the way that they are joining up and not working in silos.*

York

- **Lead to a better understanding of local priorities and the contribution of different agencies**

*People walked away from the experience feeling like they had an opportunity to air their worlds and to make the links between their worlds and everybody else's. It all took us in the direction of partnership working, understanding each others' agendas and making sure that bits of other people's agendas featured in our sub-plans.*

York

- **Provide the focal point for discussion between agencies/services**

*The plan becomes a focus and a description of priorities that people are carrying around. It becomes a table for people to put their priorities on and then line them up and work out the adjacent things and the overlaps ... . You get to the 'What are we going to do?' bit in a really healthy way.*

York

With regards to priorities, the CYPPs were said to do the following.

- **Provide focus and clarity around priorities**

*The plan drew together a broad range of data and information on need and set out a clear set of priorities and planned actions to tackle them. A real benefit was the clarity of all of that. That made people in the partnership able to understand and talk about all of those things.*

West Berkshire



- **Provide a framework for commissioning and a vehicle for linking money with priorities**

*It [the CYPP] provided that framework to enable us to think about how we use money, how we target money ... a bid scored more if it contributed to more than one priority.*

Portsmouth

- **Help refine the planning process and provide a flexible means of reviewing targets**

*As it is reviewed annually, it is flexible and there is scope for it to be changed. The priorities are reviewed together.*

Coventry

- **Provide a sense of direction and ensure that attention is focused in the right areas**

*You can see from the setting of the priorities in nearly all the areas, you can see a substantial shift in what we were doing two years ago and what we are doing now. It is the combination of the plan and the performance monitoring that has meant that we have had that sustained focus in particular areas.*

Gloucestershire

*Being able to say, actually, these things are poor and need acting on give you a push. Sometimes you need the senior-level documents to say we really need to act on this.*

Portsmouth

Regarding other benefits, the CYPPs were said to do the following.

- **Ensure that children and young people's voices are heard**

*Services are now driven by what young people want the money to be spent on and I think a lot of that practice has come out of the consultation on the CYPP, and I think that's now become normal and everyday.*

Liverpool

*There are a lot of examples of where what children have said directly influenced plans, and may therefore have changed what we have been focusing on strategically.*

Gloucestershire

- **Provide a working document which is used for a wide range of purposes**

*It is a useful vehicle for dialogue with external bodies, with inspection and regulatory functions.*

West Berkshire

- **Enable local authorities to focus on outcomes rather than process**

*In terms of the preparatory process that we've gone through, it has been very useful as it concentrates service managers' minds on the outcomes and on the priorities that have been set, not just internally, but by children themselves in some cases.*

Liverpool

The following were also cited as benefits: linking different agency/service objectives together, the link between the CYPP and ECM, the opportunity for all agencies/services to contribute to the plan and to challenge one another and easier access to information through the CYPP.

## 6.2 Challenges

Interviewees from the six authorities identified the following challenges in the planning process, and the ways that they are being overcome.



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- **Ensuring buy-in at all levels**

*With the voluntary sector there are over 450 voluntary groups ... there is a strategy group made up of voluntary sector representatives ... but you might have someone from a small voluntary organisation who feels they haven't been engaged in putting the plan together.*  
Gloucestershire

This can be overcome by: extensive consultation, good communication, taking a top down and a bottom up approach, ensuring the right people are involved, meeting with key groups, providing examples of outcomes for children and young people, having all the national indicator sets incorporated within service plans and government requirements for agencies to be involved.

- **Incorporating different people's views**

*If you can't see actions specifically relating to what you do, it feels like you are not a priority ... engagement is a make or break thing for a CYPP.*  
Gloucestershire

This can be overcome by: involving a wide range of people from the outset, getting people together to discuss issues openly, brokering what goes into the plan, amending the plan to incorporate people's views and allocating individuals to take responsibility for individual objectives.

- **Engaging children and families, particularly hard-to-reach groups**

*Things were sent through every door in the city asking for written feedback but you will always get those who are most articulate ... who make it their business to respond. I am not sure how you get to the harder-to-reach groups. It is always the same in consultation exercises.*  
Liverpool

This can be overcome by: good communication with children and young people, a variety of means of accessing children and young people's voice, drawing on existing forums (particularly for vulnerable groups), planning events/competitions to raise awareness about the CYPP.

- **Setting and presenting local and national priorities**

*We run the risk of having too many priorities and you need discipline to work at reducing them. It is my role to trim down the priorities and this is also a function of the consultation process.*  
West Berkshire

This can be overcome by: ensuring a balance of national and local priorities, setting limits on the number of priorities within an outcome area, understanding other agencies' priorities and having common government indicators across agencies.

- **Ensuring a focus on outcomes**

*People tend to refer to their processes and what they have focused on rather than whether or not outcomes have occurred.*  
Coventry

This can be overcome by: input focused on outcomes-based accountability (for example, workshops), strategic encouragement to focus on outcomes, the use of case studies to show how outcomes are accomplished.



- **Dealing with the scale and scope of the CYPP**

*The scale of it was a problem because it was so huge. It was covering everybody's work and it was difficult to condense it and summarise it. It is big and unwieldy ... . There were times when you thought logistically it was a bit of a nightmare.*

Liverpool

This can be overcome by: having a mechanism for the plan to go out to people electronically, consultation responses being collated through sub-groups, using annexes to condense the main plan and the use of concise language within the plan.

- **Allocating sufficient time and meeting deadlines**

*For some people, the focus on developing and monitoring the implementation of the plan probably takes up an inordinate amount of time, which they think should be spent on developing and thinking. The downside is it takes a bit to develop those things and to make changes mid-year. It is difficult to get people to say: 'You are on amber or red, rewrite your plan.' They don't have time.*

Portsmouth

This can be overcome by: having a project manager/coordinator with dedicated time who can be a single point of reference; having a clear project plan and timescale (see also section 6.3 on good practice).

It is worth noting that, overall, a greater number of benefits or positive outcomes were identified by interviewees compared to difficulties. In addition, there is an overlap between the benefits and the challenges. For example, joint ownership of priorities, the engagement of children and young people, and clarity and focus around priorities were each identified as both a benefit and a challenge.

Whilst some specific difficulties in the areas of commissioning and safeguarding were identified (see Table 6.1), planning in relation to LAC was said to have been easier because it is a clearly defined group, a lot of work has already been done in this area and information is readily available within the corporate parenting strategy.

**Table 6.1 Challenges relating to commissioning and safeguarding**

Commissioning challenges	These can be overcome by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a lack of expertise and understanding of commissioning</li> <li>• commissioning against the priorities identified</li> <li>• partners (e.g. voluntary sector) not geared up for commissioning</li> <li>• different commissioning arrangements within partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience and greater understanding of the commissioning process</li> <li>• accessing support groups and conferences for commissioning</li> <li>• involvement of non-local authority providers in the planning process</li> <li>• having an assistant executive director of health and social care commissioning</li> </ul>
Safeguarding challenges	These can be overcome by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tension between the LSCB plan and the CYPP</li> <li>• getting people to be open and honest about the real issues</li> <li>• lack of awareness or understanding of the pressures on other agencies</li> <li>• if not incorporated into the CYPP, it can become an isolated activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring that the LSCB makes a significant contribution to the CYPP</li> <li>• a willingness to locate tasks in relation to clear aspirations for young people in the city</li> <li>• the LSCB taking a broad view of safeguarding</li> <li>• team building and building on success</li> </ul>





## 6.3 Good practice

The local authorities most frequently identified the following as examples of good practice:

- children and young people's involvement in the development of the CYPP
- events for developing or reviewing priorities
- the consultation process
- engaging partners
- avoiding duplication
- the use of specific planning tools/processes
- the role of coordinator or project manager
- the structure and format of the CYPP.

### *Children and young people's involvement*

Examples of good practice around children and young people's involvement in the development of the CYPP were highlighted by a number of local authorities. These focused on the extent to which, and the variety of ways in which children and young people were consulted about the plan, for example, the production of a DVD using children and young people, a children and young people's online survey, a young people's blog on the website informing the thinking of the CYPP as well as the feedback to young people from the consultation process.



### **Examples: Children and young people's involvement**

Gloucestershire administered an online pupil survey which enabled them to consult with 18,000 children. This provided them with a rich source of information about what it is like to be a young person within the authority. They also consulted school councils through questionnaires and held an event at the local ice rink specifically to engage harder-to-reach young people. As a result, 'we spoke to lots of young people about what was important to them'. They have incorporated the children and young people's input within the plan by including 'bubbles', which say, for example, that 1,424 children were consulted and 76 per cent felt that this was one of the important outcomes for them. Whilst all the technical information that professionals need to be aware of is included within the plan, the inclusion of the children and young people's input reminds them that the plan is about children and young people.

In Liverpool, children and young people were integral to the planning processes around the CYPP. Through the participation unit, groups of children and young people were involved in producing: a paper version of the plan for children and young people, a DVD of the plan, a DVD in British Sign Language, a widget version of the plan (a symbolic representation of the plan) and they are also working on producing a kitemark for children and young people friendly documentation in the authority.

In York, there is an 'involvement strategy' which states that individual organisations need to make sure that a large number and a wide range of young people are involved (not just one group of young people). They were therefore able to put together all of the different pieces of involvement work that had been undertaken and take out the key points from this to inform the development of the plan. The third sector and other participation groups (for example, the Pupil Advocacy Service) were also actively involved in securing children and young people's involvement. Four thousand young people were involved in



one way or another, although some were more intimately involved than others. However, gauging the level of involvement that children and young people can have with such a complex process was said to be difficult, as was also taking account of the wide range of views from a diverse population of children and young people.

### *Events for developing or reviewing priorities*

Having a single event (for example, a conference day and workshops) to review the priorities for the CYPP was considered good practice in a number of authorities. This was said to facilitate the incorporation of local issues within the plan and, at the same time, to enable stakeholders to focus on the bigger picture to ensure activity is unified.

## **Examples: Events for developing or reviewing priorities**

In Coventry, a 'Data Day' is held annually to inform the planning process. Up to 80 people attend the day from across the strategic partnership. This is felt to be particularly significant for developing the priorities within the CYPP as it gives attendees an opportunity to vote during the priority-setting process. A booklet of data relating to performance is produced for the day, and this informs the priorities for the next plan. A book is also produced for children and young people, and their responses to it are filmed. This was made into a DVD which was shown at the start of the day, thereby emphasising the focus on outcomes for children and young people. Feedback from stakeholders was that incorporating the children's voice in this way resonated with people. The day provides a quick way of examining the local authority's progress. It was said to be 'extraordinarily helpful' as it allows the local authority to take stock of where they are and to look at what is coming up in the future: 'It provides a snapshot of detail to say this is where we are, this is what the self-assessment says, this is the national imperative and this is what people on the ground are saying about their experience.' The priorities for the coming year are identified and partners are then able to vote for their priorities. This ensures that those identified are important locally. The data day also facilitated the engagement of a wide range of partners, enabling the local authority to share with partners 'the big picture', 'It was fabulous for engaging partners', 'It was very productive and people were very positive about that experience.' The authority now plans to introduce mini data days focusing on the individual priorities in the CYPP and how, together with partners, they can address each priority.

Reviewing the CYPP through a conference within Portsmouth was said to have opened it up to a wider range of stakeholders and to frontline professionals, as well as helping to ensure ownership and buy-in: 'It would have been very easy to have done it through a meeting or through a questionnaire.' The conference was attended by 15 or 16 young people and a number of service managers: 'That was really good and people were really quite buzzing about that event.' It was considered to have been really useful for embedding the CYPP and for hearing the voice of young people.

### *The consultation process*

A number of local authorities indicated that their whole consultation process was a good practice model as it was thought to incorporate wide representation and to have been very



extensive and very thorough, as well as, in some instances, incorporating feedback to the groups who were consulted.

## → Examples: The consultation process

The extensive consultation and wide representation achieved by York ensured that everyone felt they had an opportunity to comment on the CYPP. Those involved included children and young people, parents, governors and headteachers, as well as those within the local authority. This was achieved to a large extent through existing mechanisms that they were able to tap into for consultation as part of their overall 'participation strategy'. This eases consultation as the existing groups or networks are used to working with one another. The local authority also ensured that they went back to all of these groups to give them feedback from the consultation process. For example, they sent briefing papers to headteachers and governors to explain the outcome of the consultation.

Overall, the consultation conducted by Liverpool was said to be 'a big piece of work', one which involved a lot of people, and one which was particularly thorough, but 'was worth it'. The authority produced a consultation DVD with a voiceover done by children and young people. Feedback from stakeholders indicated that this had resonated with people and was preferable to drier, more stereotypical forms of consultation. Interviewees also identified the local authority's children and young people's blog on their website as particularly successful. Information from this was used to inform the thinking behind the CYPP. They plan to develop this further.

### *Engaging partners*

Some local authorities nominated the way in which they had engaged partners as an area of good practice. This included: the use of existing partnerships, involving specific partnerships (for example, the CYPSP), and the effort involved in ensuring wide engagement rather than council domination.

## → Examples: Engaging partners

In Liverpool, quarterly challenges were carried out with key stakeholders in the CYPP. These are quarterly meetings where performance is reviewed against the plan. These were felt to be an 'excellent' multi-agency forum. One local authority representative stated that this enabled him to challenge 'people from across the board', for example, health, the voluntary sector and the police: 'I think that is really useful and healthy in multi-agency work.' It was thought that challenging internal people in front of health partners made them realise what was happening within the local authority. It was considered to be good for communication because it pulls everyone together and develops teamwork. According to the interviewee, 'We are going through a cultural change and it is helping us to do that.'

The effort to engage a wide range of partners in West Berkshire had ensured that planning and development for the CYPP had not been a council dominated process, but 'a proper joint effort across all partners'. It was considered important that those leading on producing the plan incorporate diversity and variety so that all groups, and the full range of people in the trust (for example, elected members, parish and town council, health, police and so on) have an opportunity to take part.



Engaging partners in Gloucestershire is done in a variety of ways: 'We don't just think about our staff.' They run stakeholder events across the county and local events that are attended by a range of professionals and people from voluntary groups. For example, the local authority held six multi-agency district workshops where people from the local community came along and talked about the 'big picture' within the local authority, but also discussed what needed to happen within their particular locality. This was said to have encouraged ownership of the plan by partners.

### *Avoiding duplication*

Some local authorities, when asked to identify examples of good practice, stressed the importance of making the best use of information already available for the development of the CYPP, the use of existing groups for consultation and limiting duplication by replacing other internal documents and processes with the plan.



### **Examples: Avoiding duplication**

The consultation process for the CYPP in Gloucestershire is not the same each year, so that the process is varied and because they learn more each year. However, in the first year they did not consider it necessary to do face-to-face engagement with children and young people because they were able to examine information that was already available. They were able to pull together consultations from the last five years so they could see patterns and priorities and identify issues which had not been addressed. However, in the last two years fresh consultation was carried out, and further engagement activities have been different each year, particularly with hard-to-reach groups.

The CYPP in York is 'the LSP's articulation of what it wants to do for children and young people'. The local authority recognised that it would not be a good idea for the LSP to set up discrete processes that took no account of what was already going on with the local authority. According to one interviewee, 'We have not done what a lot of local authorities have done, which is spawn a whole other set of initiatives and plans that are parallel that don't sit comfortably with the CYPP.' Thus, the LSP and the CYPP 'is one and the same thing'. In addition, existing consultation groups from their 'participation strategy' are used for consultation on the CYPP and their CYPP is used as their self-evaluation for the inspection process, thereby illustrating the ways in which they have tried to avoid duplication.

### *The use of specific planning tools/processes*

A few local authorities nominated the way in which they had used specific tools or planning processes for the development of the CYPP as areas of good practice.





## Examples: Use of specific planning tools/processes

Coventry used 'Turning the curve', which centres on outcomes-based practice, as a tool for the planning process. It focuses people on outcomes from the start and takes them through a series of questions: What are we trying to achieve? What outcomes do we want? What is the population we are addressing? How will we know when we have got there? What are the indicators of success? What does the trend data say now? Where do we want to get to? What is the authority's position on that? What is the story about it? What do we know? What else do we need to find out? Who has a role to play? What do we know about what works elsewhere? This then leads to specific action planning. According to one interviewee: 'It is good to have a new idea and a new way of thinking' because this 'changes thinking'.

West Berkshire used structured and creative workshops as a way of engaging people in the process of planning for the CYPP. The use of creative group work processes was said to have engaged people's attention and energy compared to the 'dry' process of asking them to look at documents. They used a range of group work process to tap into the underlying experiences, aspirations and thoughts of people who would be using the plan. According to one interviewee, the added benefit of this approach was that buy-in to the plan was achieved.

### *The role of coordinator or project manager*

Having someone in the role of coordinator or an assigned 'project manager', whose role it is to plan and map out the process for CYPP development and ensure deadlines are met, was considered good practice in a number of authorities.



## Examples: The role of coordinator or project manager

In Portsmouth, it is part of the Partnerships and Commissioning Manager's role to coordinate the plan. He was given the time to undertake this role and this was considered 'absolutely fundamental' as this gave the local authority the central capacity to produce the plan. The single point of reference was said to be useful for people, particularly as the individual identified had worked within the local authority for a number of years and was well known by others. In addition, he was given the time to sit down with people and to help them learn planning skills as part of this role.

The project planning for the CYPP in Gloucestershire was highlighted as good practice. This was considered essential because there are so many meetings the plan has to go through in order to be signed off and, to engage partners properly, it is important to have a proper project plan. This involves looking at when specific meetings are throughout the year and when certain things are happening, for example, when the needs analysis is undertaken and when the APA is, and constructing project time lines around this. This was considered beneficial even where there is a single person in the local authority overseeing the production of the plan.



In York, a local authority administrator effectively undertakes the role of project manager of the CYPP and this was said to be 'very useful'. Because she coordinates the reference group and takes the minutes, she is 'immersed in it' and has a good working knowledge of what is required for the plan. This means that she is able to amend some things herself and also able to liaise effectively with all those inputting to the plan. She chases people up for their contributions and ensures that deadlines are met. In this way, as project manager, she is able to move things forward. She also undertakes a number of other tasks associated with the final production of the CYPP, for example, proofreading the document and obtaining suitable photographs to include. She is able to do this in an informed way because of her involvement throughout the process.

In Coventry, the coordinator for the CYPP is based within Strategic Services. He is responsible for pulling information together to inform the CYPP, as well as ensuring the plan is delivered to timescales. He puts together information packs for each of the lead officers on the sub-groups of the CYPSP that oversee particular priorities in the CYPP. The packs set out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the planning process, and contain previous CYPPs and key information relating to their area. Results from consultation exercises are included, as are key dates, contextual information and previous APA letters. The coordinator also holds one-to-one sessions with the strategic leads in terms of their responsibility in the plan. He attends consultative groups, asks for their views on the priorities and coordinates a booklet of data for the authority's annual planning event.

#### *The structure and format of the CYPP*

Some local authorities nominated particular aspects of the way in which they had written or structured their CYPP as good practice.

### **Examples: The structure and format of the CYPP**

A number of local authority staff within York nominated their 'formula' for the CYPP as an example of good practice and, because it was a straightforward, simple formula, it was said to 'have a lot going for it'. The local authority recognised that they needed to make the plan readable and accessible for a wide range of audiences and, as such, they had given a lot of attention to the presentation of the plan. The tone and style of the plan were considered 'more lively' than other plans. It was felt to be important to concentrate on key things to include within the plan rather than to try and get everything in: 'There is a balance to be struck.' At the same time, 'coming at it from a few different angles' was also said to be helpful. They had developed a poster and separate children's and young people's plans in the form of small booklets, as well as having a conference to launch the plan, rather than relying on people just reading it.

In Gloucestershire, having a simple framework for the plan which fits on to one side of A4 was thought to be easy for anyone to understand. The authority's plan was divided into two parts, with the second part comprising the business plan. This was felt to be 'a good way of doing it'. It was said to be good discipline to follow the format 'outcomes, targets and activities' rather than starting with the activities as it 'ensures you are doing things that are likely to improve the activity'. Encouraging local districts to have their own CYPP was also said to have been useful as this had taken some of the detailed operational information out of the main plan.



Other good practice points raised by interviewees included: having a lead and support officer for each ECM theme, the interlinking of plans, the ability to challenge peers, involvement of particular professionals (for example, lead members and frontline workers), clear activity targets, use of needs analysis and use of the NFER impact model as a framework (Lord *et al.*, 2008).

Some specific good practice points were raised in relation to commissioning, safeguarding and LAC and these are summarised in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2 Good practice in relation to commissioning and safeguarding**

Commissioning	Safeguarding	LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>joint commissioning structures</li> <li>use of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioning cycle</li> <li>having a joint commissioning board</li> <li>involvement of decision makers for buy-in at the highest level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cohesion between the Local Safeguarding Board (LSB) plan and the CYPP</li> <li>the LSCB embracing the safeguarding agenda more broadly</li> <li>relationship development</li> <li>bringing the board into the CYPP process so they have ownership and are able to showcase what they do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hard and soft outcomes</li> <li>involving someone who is not a social worker</li> <li>getting the needs analysis right to understand the issues</li> <li>thread the needs of LAC throughout the plan</li> <li>bring LAC into the process earlier</li> <li>work with other agencies to convince them that LAC are important</li> </ul>

## 6.4 Advice for other local authorities

When asked what advice they would give other local authorities about the CYPP planning process, interviewees often stressed previous points which were made. They are worth reiterating here.

- **Make the CYPP accessible:** ensure that the language is understood by all, distil the important elements so that it is ‘palatable’, be concise or ‘less wordy’ and ‘less dense’, include case studies and photographs, make key points stand out. Ensure that it is readable, celebratory and inspiring (for example, a glossy brochure). Do not be constrained by structuring the plan according to the five outcomes.
- **Ensure that all staff have a role:** make sure all staff know how they can contribute to the plan, keep everyone on board, ensure that people are consulted, produce a plan that individual people recognise by explicitly incorporating their contributions within it.
- **Take a strategic approach:** keep action plans to a minimum, approach it as a high-level strategic commissioning plan. Provide less detail on activity so there is more focus on outcomes. Make sure that it is a strategic document and, as such, relatively thin. Use research to inform priorities.
- **Allow sufficient time and plan the whole cycle:** ensure there is sufficient time for multi-agency discussion, allow time for real consultation and do not underestimate the time it takes. Plan the whole cycle and start early, plan events at an early stage, allow time for the final production of the plan and a launch event. Provide leadership and allocate someone to do first drafts: ‘nothing is ever written by committee’.
- **Increase engagement as far as possible:** involve as many people as possible and engage them from the start, include the views of children, young people and parents in priority setting. Set up a large number of small focus groups for consultation, engage partners more in the design of the plan, ensure that it is a partnership and there is joint ownership.
- **Focus on delivering outcomes:** use outcomes-based accountability to ensure a focus on outcomes within the plan. Provide less detail about actions or activity so that there is more focus on outcomes.



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