

About YorOK – York's Children's Trust

York has had a strong set of Children's Trust arrangements since 2003. Locally we call our Children's Trust 'YorOK' and its members come from all of the key organisations that work with children and young people in York: you can see the full list at Appendix A. The YorOK Board meets every two months and its meetings are open to the public. You can find out more about its work on our website at www.yor-ok.org.uk. When we say 'we' in this Plan, we are referring to all of the organisations which are represented on the YorOK Board.

YorOK is the most senior partnership of everybody who works with children and young people in York, including schools and colleges. The YorOK Board makes sure that all of its members really are working together in the best interests of families and children. An independent external inspection (Ofsted) in 2008 found that our Children's Trust arrangements are 'well-established and effective' and we were proud to be invited to take part in a national Children's Trust review. However, we know that more needs doing and we are not complacent.

We also work with the other senior partnerships in the city that can help make a difference to children's lives – especially those bodies responsible for the city's economy and its environment, and those whose responsibility it is to tackle homelessness. In preparing this Plan, we have been careful to take account of these other partnerships' priorities. We have a seat on the overarching 'Local Strategic Partnership' for York (known as 'Without Walls') to ensure that the needs of children and young people are taken into account when big decisions are taken about the future of the city. There are more details about this in Appendix B.

One of our most important responsibilities is spending wisely all of the public money we are given for children and young people's services in York. Between us it amounts to in excess of £170 million a year, and we need to make sure every penny of that is spent on the priorities that we all agree are important, and without any unnecessary overlaps. We have therefore introduced new arrangements for this, which we call 'integrated commissioning': developing this will be at the heart of our work for the period covered by this Plan.

YorOK is supported by a small Children's Trust Unit, which services the YorOK Board and manages a number of key programmes. Appendix B shows how it all fits together. The Children's Trust Unit acts as a resource and central contact point on all aspects of partnership working, early intervention and prevention. It is also responsible for some of the important mechanisms that make integrated working a reality, such as the 'Common Assessment Framework' and the 'YorOK Child Index', and for the policies that will make sure all of the staff who work for us are clear about what they need to do and confident that they have the skills and knowledge to do it.

These are exciting times for the Children's Trust. We are all passionate about what we do because we know from what you tell us that it makes a real difference to the lives of children and families in York.