



# Newcastle Children's Trust: Equality and Diversity Strategy 2011-14



**Newcastle Children's Trust**

[www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk](http://www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk)

# Newcastle Children's Trust

## Equality Strategy 2011 - 2014

### Our strategic vision

As a Children's Trust our vision is that every child and young person:

- Is safe and loved, healthy and happy, and free from harm
- Has the chance to make the most of their talents and fulfil their potential

### Our Equality strategy

Our Equality strategy is an overarching framework that partners have signed up to in order to promote Equality and reduce the gap in outcomes between different groups of children and young people.

Equality is core to everything we stand for.

'Reducing inequalities and promoting Equality' is one of our three overarching strategic priorities for the city for the next three years.

Our underpinning outcomes within this priority are:

- The impact of poverty on children and young people is reduced
- Children and young people who are vulnerable or have additional needs achieve the best possible outcomes
- Health inequalities are reduced, particularly child obesity and teenage pregnancy

### What we mean by Equality

To us Equality means treating every child and young person as an individual with equal dignity and worth, valuing and meeting the needs of their individual characteristics such as age, disability, gender, ethnicity religion or belief, sexual orientation, vulnerable status or social background.

We recognise that while children and young people often have many similarities and shared cultures, they also have different needs, situations and goals.

To achieve Equality requires the removal of discriminatory and limiting barriers that affect what they can do and what they can achieve. It helps build aspirations and allows them to fulfil their true potential in what and who they can be.

We acknowledge that children and young people can experience inequality when accessing services; in the outcomes they experience; and also in the degree of independence they have to make decisions affecting their lives. This can occur through direct or indirect discrimination or disadvantage imposed by other individuals, groups, society in general, institutions or systems intentionally or inadvertently.

While we recognise that those children and young people who are vulnerable or from minority groups may require specific support, we also believe that Equality is for all.

We understand and acknowledge that one of the biggest issues of discrimination is often society's view of children and young people and simply the fact that they are young.

As a result of these complex issues we will work hard to promote and ensure Equality for **all** our children and young people ensuring access to the services and opportunities they need.

## **Equality, Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion**

The Equality Act 2010 formally recognises 'protected characteristics' of race, disability, gender including gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

It places wide-ranging legal duties on public sector organisations in respect of people with one or more of the protected characteristics including to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote Equality, and to promote good race relations.

Social inclusion is shorthand for assessing the wider potential issues that may affect people's access to services, resources and opportunities. Some examples include

- unemployment or low income
- low education or skill levels
- living in deprived areas or poor housing
- poor access to transport
- lack of access to information technology

With one in three children and young people in Newcastle living in poverty, this is a critical outcome we want to see improvement in. Social inclusion is therefore part of our Equality agenda.

As with inclusion, there is no direct duty to promote community cohesion, but there is a strong business case. As a Trust we need to promote positive relations between groups and minimise tensions associated with any aspect of our services. We also therefore include community cohesion as part of our Equality agenda.

## **Profile of children and young people in Newcastle**

In summary:

- There are approximately 64,100 children and young people aged 0-19 living in Newcastle
- 20% of the school population are of black or minority ethnic origin (BME)
- 16.8% have a first language other than English
- 22.9% are identified as having special educational needs (SEN)
- Each year about 250 young women in the city under the age of 18 become pregnant. Numbers of teenage fathers are unknown.
- Data on refugees and asylum seekers is unreliable – we know that 1,843 children and young people aged 0-18 arrived in the city between 2001 and 2007 but it isn't known how many moved away
- Extrapolating national data suggests there may be between 1,200 and 2,000 young carers in Newcastle
- There is no data on numbers of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people
- One third of children and young people in the city are living in poverty

We know that outcomes for children and young people with additional needs or from vulnerable groups are often poorer than those for other children and young people.

More information is available in the full analysis of need published alongside our Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

## **Equality statement**

All members of the Children's Trust will actively ensure an appropriate response with regard to safeguarding all children and young people, whilst recognising and supporting issues of Equality and diversity.

We recognise that discrimination and barriers do exist, and as a Trust we need to engage and understand the experiences of our children, young people and their families and carers in accessing services.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination (including harassment of any kind) and will take appropriate action wherever instances of discrimination and harassment occur.

Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, pregnancy or any other unjustifiable criterion will not be tolerated.

We will also be proactive and work hard to eliminate discrimination in other areas including stigma around mental health issues and social or economic status.

We will work with our partners to develop effective procedures and policies to combat intentional and unintentional discrimination and to share good practice.

We will work together on shaping services that are needs based, accessible and delivered in such a way that children and young people experience Equality and fairness at all times.

We are committed to helping our children and young people grow and develop their potential and identity in a way which helps them understand, respect and embrace being part of Newcastle as a City and be the best they can be.

## **Children's Rights Charter**

Groups of children and young people have worked with us to develop a Children's Rights Charter, which explains their rights and responsibilities in their own words. This includes the following statements (draft as of July 2011):

### **When adults and services are working with you have the right to be treated with respect. This means**

- Be talked with and listened to;
- Have things to be explained in a way that you understand;
- Be treated like a unique individual;
- Have your concerns taken seriously;
- Ask questions.

### **When using our services, they should respect your right to:**

- Be safe and feel safe;
- Be provided information about the services we offer and how to access them;
- Be welcomed in a friendly environment that is clean and well kept.

**You have the right to be and to feel safe:**

- You have the right to talk to people and get help from people within our services when you need them;
- You have the right to information when you need it;
- You have a right to be part of the community;
- You have a right to meet with your friends in a safe public place;
- You have a right to be treated with respect and dignity.

**You have the right to be treated equally:**

- You have the right to access and use services and support regardless of where you live, your ethnicity, your sexuality, your religion or your abilities;
- You have the right to be recognised as a unique individual, yet still be given the same opportunities and chances as others;
- You have the right to be provided with opportunities to meet people from different backgrounds;
- You have the right to an environment that challenges ignorance, intolerance and supports constructive debate and discussion.

**You have the right to achieve your best in life:**

- You have the right to ask for the best support we can offer you when you need it;
- You have the right to be treated as an individual who learns in their own way;
- You have the right to take part in cultural, leisure and personal development opportunities.

We developed this Charter from the issues and ideas which are important to children and young people living in Newcastle. It is reflected in our Equality pledges and commitments.

**Our Equality pledges**

We will treat children and young people fairly by:

- Not just talking with service users, providers and stakeholders, but actively engaging and involving them in developing services and plans.
- Ensuring our workforce (paid and voluntary) understands and is committed and competent in fulfilling their requirements in relation to promoting Equality and challenging inequality.
- Fully integrating Equality in all that we do through monitoring and reviewing data. This will enable us to quality assure services and thus ensure equality of services for all.
- Recognising good Equality practices in all areas of provision and taking action on negative Equality practices.
- Making sure that children and young people are at the very heart of everything we do and that we remove personal and institutional barriers.

- Providing a joined up approach to delivering Equality in all our services ensuring that we are meeting the diverse needs of all children and young people.

## Equality actions 2011 - 2014

1. We will monitor and ensure that services to children, young people and families are accessible, provided fairly and without discrimination.
2. We will monitor outcomes for different groups. The information collected will be used to inform service planning and future commissioning.
3. Any planning for improved outcomes for children, young people and families will be based on a thorough analysis of need that establishes possible areas of inequality.
4. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be carried out on our functions to gauge how effectively they meet the needs of different sections of our community.
5. We will ensure that all providers are signed up to the same high standard of commitment to Equality and diversity through the commissioning framework.
6. We will monitor the impact of the Children's Rights Charter on improving the experiences of children and young people.

## Governance

Equality is everyone's responsibility within the Children's Trust.

However, the **'Equal' Outcomes Sub-group** will have operational responsibility for assuring and challenging that partners deliver against this Equality strategy and its actions.

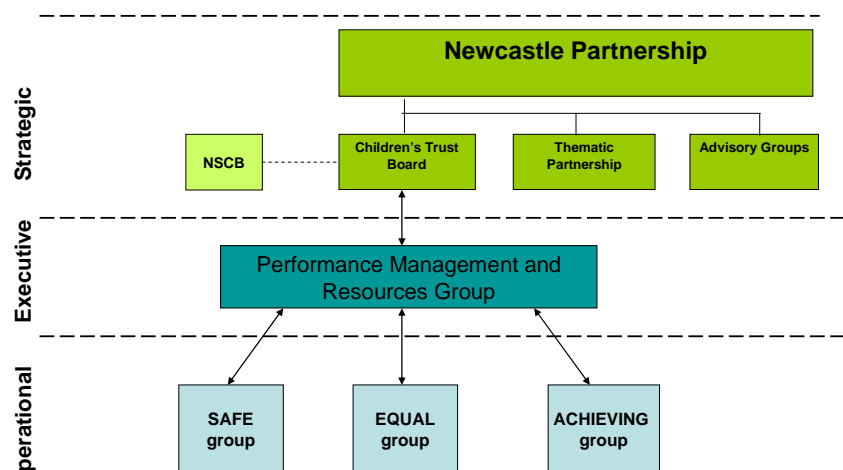
This Sub group is led by a Children's Trust Board Lead supported by representatives from relevant partnerships for example the Be Healthy Partnership.

This Sub-group reports into the Performance Management and Resources Group (PMRG) which in turn directs and manages resources and overall performance on behalf of the Children's Trust. PMRG's remit includes:

- Further develop and streamline the performance management arrangements for the CTB including identifying areas of strong and under performance that need to be escalated to the wider CTB.
- Ensure that the CTB reviews and influences the allocation of resources to:
  - reduce the gap in outcomes between the most vulnerable, and the majority of children and young people
  - have most impact on achieving CYPP objectives.

PMRG will ensure that Equality is central to all performance management arrangements and resource allocation.

## Children's Trust Partnership Structure



For more information on the Children's Trust and its governance arrangements, see the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

### **Broader partnership influence**

The Children's Trust informs and influences the work of the city's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as it relates to children, young people and families.

The LSP brings together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors in Newcastle and is responsible for establishing a vision for the area – the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and for agreeing priorities for improvement.

Two members of Newcastle Children's Trust Board sit on the LSP's 'Inclusion, Cohesion, Equalities and Empowerment' (ICEE) Advisory Group.

ICEE's remit is:

- To advise and assist the Partnership and its members on matters concerning Inclusion, Cohesion, Equalities and Empowerment
- To ensure these issues have a high profile in the Partnership, that agreed strategies are implemented effectively, and that the work is effectively mainstreamed.
- To be responsible for key indicators
- To promote the engagement, development and empowerment of communities and individuals so that they make a significant contribution to achieving the SCS outcomes.

Through this forum, the Children's Trust Board will ensure that children and young people's rights and Equality issues are championed.

For further information or queries about this strategy, please contact Lorraine Griffin, Business Improvement and Communication Manager

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