Every Child Matters
Change For Children

CWDC
Part of the Sector Skills Council,
Skills for Care and Development

multi-agency working

Fact sheet

Multi-agency working is about different services joining forces in order to prevent problems from occurring in the first place.

It is an effective way of supporting children and families with additional needs and helping to secure real improvements in their life outcomes.

Background

Since the publication of the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (Sept 2003), health, youth justice, social care, youth work, voluntary and community sector and other children's services have been joining forces to work more collaboratively around a preventative and early intervention agenda.

Multi-agency working has been shown to be an effective way of addressing the wide range of cross-cutting risk factors that contribute to poorer outcomes for children and young people.

Local areas are undertaking an extensive reconfiguration of services, to offer earlier, more coherent support, which meets the needs of children and families in convenient locations and in a more streamlined way.

Different models of multi-agency working

There is no one, correct way of multi-agency working. However, a review of practice shows that it is possible to group multi-agency working into three very broad models. These are intended to assist local areas in thinking through the different structures and issues, but there are no hard and fast rules about how multi-agency services should be set up:

1. Multi-agency panel

- Practitioners remain employed by their home agency.

- They meet as a panel or network on a regular basis to discuss children with additional needs who would benefit from multi-agency input.

- In some panels, case work is carried out by panel members. Other panels take a more strategic role, employing key workers to lead on case work.

An example of this type of working arrangement is a Youth Inclusion and Support Panel.

2. Multi-agency team

- A more formal configuration than a panel, with practitioners seconded or recruited into the team.

- Team has a leader and works to a common purpose and common goals.

- Practitioners may maintain links with their home agencies through supervision and training.

- Scope to engage in work with universal services and at a range of levels – not just with individual children and young people, but also small group, family and whole school work.

Examples include Behaviour & Education Support Teams and Youth Offending Teams.

3. Integrated service

- A range of separate services share a common location, and work together.
- A visible service hub for the community.
- Has a management structure that facilitates integrated working.
- Commitment by partner providers to fund/facilitate integrated service delivery.
- Usually delivered from school/early years settings.

Examples include Sure Start children's centres and extended schools that offer access to a range of integrated, multi-agency services.

Getting started in multi-agency working

A web-based resource to support managers and practitioners is now available. It describes features of the three service delivery models, providing working solutions and good practice examples.

The resource addresses:

- The benefits of multi-agency working.
- Success factors for effective multi-agency working.
- Toolkits for managers and practitioners.
- Case study examples
- A common language glossary.
- The roles and responsibilities of different agencies.

The Children's Workforce Development Council has now developed a framework called *Championing Children*. It establishes a common understanding about the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed by leaders and managers of integrated or multi-agency children's services.

For more resources and information: visit the Children's Workforce Development Council website: **www.cwdcouncil.org.uk**, or the Every Child Matters website: **www.ecm.gov.uk**.