December 2003
Consultation response to the Green Paper: 'Every child matters'
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Introduction

JRF is one of the UK's largest charity funders of policy focused research and development projects. We have undertaken a range of research and development programmes that link to many of the issues and points touched on in the Government's Green Paper. The Foundation welcomes the publication of the Green Paper and many of the proposals it contains. It is clear that the Government has listened to practitioners and taken on messages arising from research, and that Government intends to organise services to be better places for children. It is in a spirit of broad acceptance that we comment on the emphasis and the specific proposals contained within 'Every Child Matters'.

Before commenting on individual sections, there is a range of lessons that arise from our programmes of research and development which impinge on the overall thrust of the consultation document. We would like to make three principle observations.

1. Listening to children

i) The first relates to the very few references within the document to listening to children. Two programmes of research focusing on children in general, as well as on disabled children, emphasise this as a key issue in developing services for children. This should permeate through the proposals relating to practitioner skills, as well as the structures within which these practitioners will function. Talking to and listening to children must be a cornerstone of any government reforms in this area. *Listening to Young Children: The Mosaic approach* (Clark and Moss 2001) and JRF discussion papers by Perpetua Kirby, and Ruth Marchant, and Carolyne Willow, which either are available now or will be published in 2004 with an introduction and conclusion by Bren Neale, may be particularly helpful in taking forward the Green Paper proposals.

ii) In addition, a review completed for the JRF by Sarah Thomas (in press) found that children's experiences of professionals were poor, with them often failing to communicate with children, or communicating in ways that children found difficult to understand. The need to include talking and listening to children in the core training of all childcare professionals is clear from these projects.

In a paper looking at the situation of *Children on the Edge of Care* (Jenny Morris, in press), Jenny Morris stresses the pressing need to consult with groups of children and young people who are particularly marginalised:

"None of these groups of children and young people, for varying reasons, are likely to be involved in more general consultations with children and while their voices remain unheard they are not only being denied their human right to be consulted but their missing experiences allow ill informed assumptions to dominate policy and practice."

2. Inclusion

The second point relates to how the Green Paper will integrate structures, and also links to the ethos underpinning it. The Green Paper gives a headline message that all children 'matter', however, this does not seem to comprehensively apply to those children subject to anti-social behaviour policies. In many ways, the Green Paper seems to be framed in terms of protecting the victims within society: our research indicates that there are often not hard and fast divisions here. Children with behavioural difficulties and who 'act out', and those who are vulnerable by other standards or are victims, are often the same children. Therefore, we would counsel the Government to consider how policies currently in development on anti-social behaviour can better integrate with the new structures outlined in the Green Paper. Linked to this, we would heartily endorse the inclusion of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and youth justice within Children's Trusts, and would hope to see further integration of these services within the proposals.

3. Transition and resources

The third point we would like to make links to the process of transition from the current set of structures to the new proposals. It is vital that resources for these proposals and adequate resources for the transition are put in place. Government should not underestimate the processes and length of time that will be necessary to ensure that they work well. This is particularly true in terms of leadership at both central government and local levels. Work we have undertaken on leadership and service-change reinforces these points. The following studies may be useful:

Percy-Smith, J., with Burden, T., Darlow, A., Dawson, L., Hawtin, M., and Ladi, S. (2002) *Promoting Change Through Research. The impact of research in local government*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/YPS.

http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/government/922.asp

Wilkinson, M. and Craig G. (2002) *New Roles for Old — Local authority members and partnership working*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/YPS.

http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/government/n52.asp

Chesterman, D. (2002) *Local Authority? How to develop leadership for better public services*, London: Demos.

Wigfall, V. and Moss, P. *More than the Sum of its Parts? A study of a multi-agency child care network*. London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/National Children's Bureau.

http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/391.asp

As an organisation that played a significant role in introducing the concept of prevention based on risk and protective factors into UK policy making, JRF welcomes the general approach set out in Chapter One of the Green Paper. Specialist and individually targeted services are rightly presented as the apex of a preventive pyramid whose substantial base is made up of universal services and those like Sure Start that are universal within geographically targeted areas. The Government's intention to reach out to the majority of disadvantaged children who live outside 'deprived' neighbourhoods, by 'mainstreaming' approaches from Sure Start and other special initiatives is a particularly promising aspect of the Green Paper proposals. As a fourth principle, however, we would urge the Government to be clear about the appropriate use of current knowledge about risk and protective factors when planning and delivering services for children and their families. In our view, their particular value (as with other public health approaches based on reducing risk and enhancing protection) is as a tool for planning and implementing preventive strategies at 'population' level (neighbourhoods, districts etc.), rather than targeting individual children. Their use in individual assessment instruments is more problematic and, even in the context of young offenders, more potentially useful as a guide to the different types of support service that should be considered than as a dependable predictor of future behaviour.

We especially hope that as the Government develops its proposals, it will continue to resist any suggestion that it plans to target individual children below the age of criminal responsibility as 'potential offenders'. The chart provided by Stephen Scott (Figure 4 in the Green Paper), shows there is great potential value in offering timely support to children exhibiting diagnosable conduct problems, but carries no matching implication that even a majority of those children will grow into severely antisocial adults. Stigmatising children (and families) with identified needs and more complex problems would be counter-productive in terms of their willingness to accept preventive services, as well as statistically and ethically unjustifiable. Relevant JRF-funded publications include:

Farrington, D (1996) *Understanding and Preventing Youth Crime*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/YPS

Communities That Care (1997) *Communities That Care: A new kind of prevention programme*

London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/CtC.

Utting, D. (1999) *A Guide To Promising Approaches* London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/ CtC.

Beinart, S., Anderson, B., Lee, S., Utting, D. (2002) *Youth At Risk? A national survey of risk factors, protective factors and problem behaviour among young people in England, Scotland and Wales* London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/CtC.

Chapter 2

i) The consultation paper requests guidance on how services to unaccompanied asylum seeking children might be improved. We undertook a small study entitled *Working with refugee children*, to examine this issue. An important point is that, under current UK legislation and policy, asylum-seeking and refugee children are treated as asylum seekers and refugees first, rather than as children. Consequently, these children face restrictions on their rights and entitlements. Much of the wider research relating to the quality of support offered to unaccompanied children (for example, *I did not choose to come here: listening to refugee children*, Russell, 1999; Kidane, S, 2001 London: BAAF; Stanley, K. (2001) *Cold comfort: Young separated refugees in England*. London: Save the Children; focuses on the experiences of older unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The Rutter report, Rutter, J. (2003) *Working with refugee children*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, raises concerns relating to younger children that include:

- A significant minority of unaccompanied children have no contact with people from their own community, particularly outside London.
- Local authorities often place children under age 8 with close relatives if possible. Such placements are rarely monitored as private foster-care placements.
- A similar situation exists with unaccompanied children placed with siblings. Often older siblings do not gain access to support for young carers that may be available.

A policy solution to the issues outlined would therefore be the relaxation of legislation and law deriving from the UK Government's reservations to the Convention on the Right of the Child, which is the primary mechanism for restricting the rights and entitlements of asylum-seeking children. The triggering of child protection and support mechanisms on arrival by the immigration services is clearly the only way that some semblance of consistency and common practice might be achieved.

ii) The emphasis in this chapter (2.8 to 2.41) on sport and other recreational activities for children and young people, along with the proposals to provide play schemes etc would clearly be valuable. However, we would like to see a concern with children's wellbeing

extended to other, perhaps less obvious areas of planning and development, such as traffic and transport schemes, and the design of buildings, residential areas and other public spaces. For example, our work on Home Zones offers practical suggestions on how streets can be made safer for children (Biddulph 2001).

iii) In taking forward proposals to tackle bullying in schools the following research reports may be helpful:

Osler, A., Street, C., Lall, M. and Vincent K. (2002) *Not a Problem? Girls and school exclusion* London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/National Children's Bureau.

http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/112.asp

iv) The JRF has supported a number of studies in recent years that have considered the wider role of schools or early years settings in families and communities (for example by Mog Ball: Ball, M. (1988) *School inclusion: The school, the family and the community* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Wigfal, V. and Moss, P. (2001) *More than the sum of its parts? A study of a multi-agency child care network* London: National Children's Bureau in association with Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Dyson, A. and Robson, E. (1999) *School, family, community: Mapping school inclusion in the UK* Leicester: Youth Work Press/Joseph Rowntree Foundation). These projects would support a move towards extended and full service schools, and report a wide range of different activities that are currently underway. The work by Alan Dyson brings together research evidence for the different services offered by schools, and may therefore be particularly helpful in developing this initiative. This research also considers the literature in relation to parental involvement in schools. The research supports the view that links with parents can produce beneficial effects but 'there is evidence that the development of partnerships imposes strains on schools, which have to manage such initiatives alongside their other priorities'. Good management in schools is therefore an important consideration in taking this initiative forward.

The literature also shows that partnerships with parents are generally on the professional's terms, which can have a marginalising effect, especially for some groups, such as ethnic minority families. We would suggest that government looks at models where groups function outside the control of the professionals.

The work by Tisdall *et al*. compared New Community Schools and Family Centres in Scotland. Although this is a relatively small-scale project, we hope that the findings will raise some important issues in relation to the different roles that these services play in supporting families, and the implications of the different organisational structures. This report will be available in draft form in early 2004.

v) Finally, research that we have funded on children's experience of divorce and separation suggests that not all children are happy to seek or receive support for family difficulties at school. This may be because of the stigma involved, or because school offers an opportunity to get away from or forget difficulties at home. Whilst this is not necessarily an argument against developing this wider role in schools, the needs and wishes of this particular group of children do need to be taken into account. This is likely to have implications for how services are organised and delivered, and may suggest the need for alternative provision.

Chapter 3

i) In commenting on the proposals contained in Chapter 3, we are aware that there were a number of gaps in the analysis. In particular, we have undertaken a small cluster of projects relating to kinship care. It is clear from this work (see Broad et al. 2001, Richards and Tapsfield 2003) that the present lack of support for private fostering arrangements persists within the current proposals.

ii) Reviewing the chapter as a whole gave rise to questions about the balance of resources between the range of services available to meet different levels of need. For example, what is the appropriate balance between providing relatively low levels of support, as opposed to more investment in basic statutory provision? Although we would fully support investment in preventive services, we would suggest that this should not be at the expense of investment in and the development of mainstream provision, but rather should be seen as an additional or extra cost (Holterman 1998). The Government should consider whether further research and/ or consultation on the appropriate types and levels of provision to support children and families might be appropriate.

iii) In relation to specific proposals on childrens' services, under the guidance of Sir William Utting we have been conducting a review of his 1998 report People Like Us. The report of the review of the safeguards for children living away from home. The review has established that welcome improvements have been made in many areas, however, lack of progress with regard to some of the key recommendations remains a cause of concern, which it is hoped the Green Paper could address.

In particular:

- Looked-after children are still not accessing mainstream health services, but the real weakness remains the inadequacy of CAMHS. The proposals to combine CAMHS with other childrens' services at local level is greatly welcomed. This increased co-ordination will not, however, substitute for the long-term under-funding that means CAMHS is unable to respond to the increasing numbers of children and young people needing this service. This is particularly important for children who have been abused

and/or are looked-after. The promise of further resources is very positive, but concerted efforts will be needed, and it will take years for appropriate staffing levels and expertise to be built up. We would support challenging targets being set for this area of development, to ensure that the previous lack of prioritisation does not reoccur.

- Private fostering remains a huge cause for concern, and it is disappointing that the proposals in 'Every Child Matters' appear to lack the force and clarity required to tackle this issue. It is unlikely that 'a more proactive approach' will have the desired impact, or identify those private fostering arrangements that would cause most worry. Despite estimates of several thousand children being privately fostered, Social Services inspections have been unable to identify councils with a sufficient number of cases to undertake a meaningful inspection. There are questions about the effectiveness of new minimum standards and revised regulations in a context where there is such a clear failure to apply the existing regulations, and where there are no reliable figures about the scale of the task.

A publicity campaign to make parents and carers more aware of regulations and safeguards would assist councils, and incentives are needed to encourage parents and carers to comply with registration, bringing benefits of support and training for carers. Legislation making it a criminal offence to place a child in an unregistered placement should also be considered.

- There is ample evidence that children and young people in prison settings are not being safeguarded. On the whole, the situation is worse for these children than when Prisons Link Unit (PLU) was published. Concerns have been expressed by the Howard League for Penal Reform, The Children's Rights Alliance, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, and in the 2002 UN report on UK children's rights, which criticised the UK record in this area. More children are held in custody here than in any other country in Western Europe, and that process also starts at an earlier age. If these policies are to continue, it is vital that these children are accorded the full protection of the Children Act and included within all the provisions of 'Every Child Matters'. In particular, children and young people in prison should have the same entitlement to education as other young people, and this should be the responsibility of the DfES. Welfare agencies should be supported and resourced to ensure that children in prison have the same welfare safeguards as others, as a result of the High Court ruling in November 2002.

- Currently, some agencies do not give a high enough priority to safeguarding children across the range of their activities and services. Recruitment practices in the NHS, for example, are not as rigorous as those within the voluntary and local government sectors for staff who may have access to vulnerable children. This may cause difficulties in the initial creation of multi-disciplinary teams, but it is hoped that it will also act as a pressure to improve practice in line with other partner agencies.

iv) Work commissioned by JRF to examine some of the 'wicked issues' within the childcare system has highlighted the need to support foster carers to better prepare young people for independence

> "Specialist leaving care teams have colonised leaving care. This means that many young people may move on to accommodation provided by such schemes at 15 or 16 years of age…Leaving care should be reclaimed by carers. For as the research evidence clearly shows it is they who can provide the stability and continuity young people need during their journey to adulthood" (Mike Stein in press)

Promoting resilience for care-leavers requires a challenge to the current separation between 'caring for leaving' and 'leaving care' within policy and practice. The situation of care-leavers also highlights the need to ensure strong links between Children's Trusts and adult services. A young person's needs do not change on their eighteenth birthday, and continuity is a vital component of service delivery for vulnerable young people.

v) *'Children on the Edge of Care'* (Jenny Morris, in press), emphasises that the current rationing process leads to some of our most vulnerable children – unaccompanied asylum seekers, disabled children at residential schools, and children in private foster-care – being denied services. This is due to a complicated mix of custom and practice that has grown up over the years, and a continuing emphasis on linking interpretation of 'need' with restrictive eligibility criteria. The reconfiguration of services under Children's Trusts offers a new opportunity to address the needs of these children, based on a more holistic response to their human rights and the provisions of the Children Act.

vi) It is unclear within the document whether any home visits that were envisaged would be targeted or untargeted, or whether they would be carried out by professionals or volunteers. Our evaluation of Home Start contains some valuable lessons about the effectiveness of such an intervention (McAuley et al. in press).

vii) With regard to direct payments and families in receipt of direct payments, our research programme on disabled children, young people and their families suggests that the choice, control and flexibility offered by direct payments will be well received by some (maybe many) families with disabled children. Whilst we have not researched the take-up of direct payments among this group, our extensive programme on independent living for disabled adults, including adults with learning difficulties, yields some valuable lessons on how to promote take-up of direct payments (Dawson 2000, Abbott 2003). Also available from this project are the Living it up! magazine and CD written with and for young disabled people about using personal assistance and direct payments. (Copies from the Norah Fry Research Centre at 3

Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TX, Tel: 0117 923 8137.)

Key messages include:

- Introducing direct payments is complex. It requires practical operational changes, a shift in approach to 'risk' and 'control', and a challenge to direct service provision.
- Involving parents and young disabled people in introducing and designing the direct payments scheme will be essential.
- Lack of information (accessible, encouraging, face to face) is a major barrier to take-up, particularly for black and minority ethnic families.
- Families and young people will need practical support schemes in place, so they feel confident about using direct payments: e.g. payroll services, and advice on tax, insurance and employer liability, police checks, recruitment and retention. Some families will require ongoing support. Many families will benefit from 'peer support', i.e. chances to meet other families using direct payments.
- Social workers and managers are the main gatekeepers for direct payments – so they too need to feel knowledgeable, enthusiastic and reassured about the potential of direct payments for families with disabled children and for young disabled people aged 16 upwards. If middle and senior managers are sceptical, it will be difficult to increase take-up by all but the most determined parent. The existence of a good and well-resourced support scheme will reassure workers as well as families.
- Research suggests that direct payments are cost-effective, but there are also resource implications for support schemes and initial development work to increase awareness among professionals and families alike.

Finally, our research suggests that a key element of the success of direct payment schemes is access to advocacy and (peer) support services. For take-up of direct payments to improve, it is vital that access to such services is ensured for every parent and young disabled person who wants it. The response from the National Working Group on Child Protection and Disability submitted to the Department for Education and Skills makes this point strongly.

viii) Research recently completed by Sarah Thomas for JRF on children's experiences of living in a family where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, or disability looks at the roles that children play in family life and their needs for support. The research shows a clear need for appropriate information to help children understand what is going on in their families. Children also want "someone to talk to, who they trust, who will listen to them and provide reassurance and confidentiality" (Sarah Thomas, as above).

Chapter 4

i) With regard to the substantial proposals contained in this Chapter, we noted the need for

greater clarity about whether the multi-agency teams contained within the document are intended to be targeted provision or a universal service. A range of our research projects indicate that the resource implications of universal provision of this sort are not to be underestimated.

The recent report of the Foundation's Task Force on Supporting Disabled Adults in their Parenting Role (Morris 2003)http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/963.asp highlighted the fact that 'universal' or 'mainstream' services have a long way to go before they are genuinely accessible to all parents – including parents with physical or sensory impairments, learning difficulties, mental health difficulties, or chronic illnesses. Some disabled parents may require specialist targeted support; but many more require access to services and supports that are supposedly there for all parents, for example, ante-natal classes, parenting helplines, parenting programmes, government initiatives such as Sure Start, family centres; etc. Making universal services truly universal will have resource implications, though clearly we would support such an endeavour.

ii) In relation to proposals relating to the Information Hub; information sharing does not necessarily lead to better services for children. The main objective of the information sharing must be integrated throughout the exercise; otherwise information sharing becomes an end in itself.

The thresholds and triggers used for the system should be consistent with the Human Rights Act and the UK Convention on the Rights of the Child. Research across all of our programmes supports the idea that children and parents should be involved in the process of drawing up the protocols. We would urge the DfES to consider the inclusion of children and parents at an early stage.

iii) As emphasised in our response to Chapter One of the Green Paper, we hope that the Government will continue to share our concern that targeted, specialist services should be provided in ways that avoid stigmatising children and their families. Stigma has frequently been raised by disabled parents, including black and minority ethnic disabled parents, parents with learning difficulties and mental health difficulties, as a major barrier in approaching statutory (or even voluntary sector) services for assistance. Parents are fearful that they will be viewed as incapable of being a parent, and that their children will be removed into public care. Unfortunately, the evidence is that many disabled parents are seriously let down by services once they summon up the courage to ask for support with parenting tasks. For example, see:

Morris, J. (2003) *The Right Support: Report of the Task Force on Supporting Disabled Adults on their Parenting Role*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/YPS

Jones, A., Jeyasingham D. and Rajasooriya S. (2001) *Invisible Families: The strengths and needs of black families in which young people have caring responsibilities*, Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Bristol Policy Press

Wates, M. (2001) *Supporting Disabled Adults in their Parenting Role*, York York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/YPS.

vi) In relation to multi-disciplinary teams: research across a whole range of programmes suggests that this must not be optional. Work we have conducted on policing, co-ordinating care amongst a range of providers, and parenting and family support suggests that the key to making these processes work is that the core responsibilities of the professionals involved must reflect the work of the multi-disciplinary teams, rather than allowing for the possibility of them being pulled off the multi-agency work to attend to core duties. For details of these processes see:

Crawford, A., Lister, S. and Wall, D. (2003) *Great Expectations: Contracted community policing in New Earswick*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/023.asp

Bell M. and Fisher, T. (2003) *The Family Foundation's Parenting Project: A study of the implementation and impact*: York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

v) In addition, research suggests that joint training may be particularly helpful in developing inter-agency teams, as is a common purpose or vision. However, different views about 'who is the client' can be a significant barrier. In relation to preventive work, some agencies may not see the benefits if their involvement is short-term, or limited. See for example:

Bell, M. and Fisher, T. (2003) *The Family Foundations Parenting Project: A study of the implementation and impact*

Biehal, N., Clayden, J. and Byford, S. (2000) *Home or Away: Supporting young people and families* London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/National Children's Bureau
http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/650.asp

Wigfall, V. and Moss, P. (2001) *More Than the Sum of its Parts: A study of a multi-agency child care network*, London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation/National Children's Bureau
http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/391.asp

vi) Power relations, accountability and management are all important considerations. Establishing a lead organisation may influence the approach of the team and the extent to

which the other agencies can contribute. However, there is a need to establish clear lines of management for team members. This may be an issue that would benefit from further research and development work, rather than the implementation of a single model.

JRF research on Care Co-ordination echoes this point, and *Implementing key worker services: a case study of promoting evidence-based practice* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation Findings December 1999)http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/D39.asp summarises the findings from:

Sloper, P., Mukherjee, S., Beresford, B., Lightfoot, J. and Norris P. (1999) *Real Change Not Rhetoric: Putting research into practice in multi-agency services*, Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation /The Policy Press

Mukherjee, S., Beresford, B. and Sloper, P. (1999) *Unlocking Key Working: An analysis and evaluation of key worker services for families with disabled children*, Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation /The Policy Press

vii) Recent work on supporting disabled adults in their parenting role has highlighted the need for multi-agency working, but also a specific and pressing need for improved joint-working, joint training, and clear protocols across adults and children's divisions of social care services, including where child protection teams become involved. The shift of responsibility for children's social care from the Department of Health to the Department for Education, combined with the development of Children's Trusts, increases further the risks that families with a disabled parent may continue to fall (or be passed) between adults and children's teams (Morris 2003 and Wates 2001).

Chapter 5

i) The intention to provide improved integration and clearer leadership and accountability in children's services is welcomed. However, the need to resource these new structures adequately cannot be overstated if the problems of the past are to be avoided.

> "There are not sufficient resources to provide an adequate response to all children in need, to ensure that all children are protected from harm, to provide a high quality of care for those children removed from home, and to meet Lord Seebohm's aspirations of an agency responsive to its local communities. A balance has to be struck between these four major roles, and Government must acknowledge that, in achieving certain priorities, others will be neglected until sufficient resources are provided. A clear national statement of order in which these tasks should be prioritised would sharpen strategic planning."
> (Ian Sinclair and John Corden, in press).

The authors also point out that teachers, nursery staff, child minders, and primary healthcare workers are all well placed to identify and support children in difficulty. The proposed 'Local Safeguarding Children's Boards' offer an opportunity to widen the responsibility for safeguarding children across agencies in a meaningful way, with links to frontline staff as well as senior managers.

ii) In relation to the proposal for the integration of funding, we would urge the Department to refocus its efforts to look at the integration of resources, not simply funding. The whole thrust of the Green Paper would support the integration of expertise, information, service delivery approaches, staffing etc. We would urge the Government to move toward a single framework and single sets of targets for children's services. The Children's Fund and other funding streams currently provided via GRO's should also be included in this framework. This would provide greater consistency and maximise co-ordination at local level. The framework would need to be flexible to incorporate sub-regional partnerships, such as Connexions, where there are real benefits in services crossing traditional local authority boundaries.

iii) We believe that great progress has been made over the last few years in involving young people in local decision-making. In 2002 the JRF study *Up for it; Getting young people involved in local government*, found that nine out of ten councils responding to the survey had young people's participation as a high priority (Combe 2002)

The National Youth Agency, Children's Rights Alliance and LGA have done excellent work on standards for participation, which could be built upon to drive up the quality of participation activity. However, there remain significant gaps in the involvement of younger children, and in participation activity within certain settings, including Youth Offender institutions, the NHS, and in education. In addition, policymakers at local level are struggling to incorporate the results of good frontline participation activities in strategy and policy development outcomes (see Kirby and Marchant; Willow, page 1). Training is required for senior managers, elected members and those sitting on governing bodies if participation is to have the maximum impact, and this may be a helpful addition to the recommendations in Chapter 6 on workforce development.

iv) In relation to inspections, research we have done on inspections and interventions suggests that it is important to match the kind of inspection regime to the particular services under scrutiny. If OFSTED is to take on this role, it will be important to ensure that all inspectors have the appropriate skills and experience to both understand and provide constructive support to the new service structures, particularly those outside the education sphere. The principle of identifying core skills for those working with children is an important one, and should be extended to the inspectors themselves. (Davis, Downe and Martin 2001)

Chapter 6

In general, JRF welcomes the proposals contained in this chapter, which will be vital in developing inter-agency working. The development of core training could offer a valuable opportunity to ensure practitioners are skilled in talking and listening to children. Current research suggests that this is important for ensuring children receive the help they need, when they need it. Research also suggests that, although there is much good practice available, many practitioners fall short of this (Thomas S; Kirby and Marchant; Willow).

One of our reports also suggests the need for greater training on assessment practice, so that existing frameworks can be used to good effect. This may be particularly important if joint assessments are to be developed (MacDonald and Williamson 2002).

Finally, Peter Moss and colleagues have for some time now been exploring different models of childcare provision and childcare workers, taking examples from different countries. Peter Moss and Pat Petrie for the JRF, looked at the way education and childcare is organised in the USA, Sweden and France. In thinking through a strategy for the UK this report may be of interest: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/N29.asp.

Conclusion

The JRF broadly welcomes the approach of 'Every Child Matters' and would urge Government to involve all stakeholders, including children, young people and parents in the process of moving towards detailed implementation.

Our final comment concerns the lack of reference to the voluntary and community sectors with the paper. Studies across many JRF programmes have shown the importance of voluntary and community groups to the wellbeing of children, older people, and other vulnerable sections of the community. Services provided by projects rooted in their communities are often best placed to provide both preventative work and support to families. These organisations, including faith groups, community centres, residents' organisations and the children's voluntary sector should not be marginalised in the moves to improve the co-ordination of statutory services. The majority of families in need do not approach statutory services, and the underpinning of the system provided by community-based organisations is vital to the protection and development of children in all communities, but especially in the most disadvantaged. It would be beneficial to both the scope and impact of subsequent legislation, and to the effective implementation of the Green Paper, if greater recognition were to be given to community-based, non-statutory provision.

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Chesterman, D. (2002) **Local Authority? How to develop leadership for better public services**, London: Demos

Clark, A. and Moss, P. (2001) *Listening to Young Children: The Mosaic approach*, London: National Children's Bureau/ Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Combe, V. (2002) *Up for it: Getting young people involved in local government* London: National Youth Agency/Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

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