Evaluation of the Blandford Local Area Agreement 11-19 Pathfinder Project

Christos Apostolakis
Researcher
Partnerships Access and Community Engagement
Bournemouth University

October 2006

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Executive Summary – Key Findings

This document reports on monitoring and evaluation of the Blandford Local Area Agreement 11-19 Pathfinder project. The project started in September 2005 and it aimed to develop and provide youth support services to all 11-19 young people in the catchment area of the Blandford School. It was anticipated at the start of the project that these services would be delivered by a core team of professionals drawn from local and county agencies such as Behaviour Support, Education Social Work, Youth and Community Service, Connexions, Social Care and Health as well as staff from the voluntary sector and the Blanford School itself. The primary aim was that once established, the core team of professionals would develop and implement an approach of working with young people based on early intervention and close linkages with both universal services and those delivering specialist intensive supports. Thus, a form of multi agency working was established in order to achieve the project's objectives. Partnerships Action and Community Engagement (PACE), at Bournemouth University has commissioned the task to monitor and evaluate the project in consultation with the Dorset 13-19 Strategy Group as well as compiling the report on the project's progress.

This initial report provides an account of the process the pathfinder group followed and their achievements up to August 2006. It reflects on the partnership group's work of identifying young people's needs and the required outcomes in making the remits of the programme achievable. On the second phase of the project a new report will evaluate the processes of planning, commissioning and delivering of services to young people in Blandford. It has been anticipated that these processes will be put in place in the autumn of 2006. In terms of methodology there was a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods used for this evaluation. To this extent, data from four surveys was used. All of them examined the research questions about the identification of the envisaged outcomes for young people in Blandford as well as the degree to which multi-agency working has been established. In addition, semi-structured interviews with key participants in the project were conducted and secondary data was also examined.

The Blandford Local Area Agreement 11-19 Pathfinder group has achieved its aims regarding identification of needs and required outcomes for young people in Blandford. They have also worked out a plan of action that informs the identified outcomes. The outcomes under consideration are that:

1. Young people contribute positively in the Blandford Community;
2. Young people have good mental and emotional health;
3. Young people are able to remain in learning and fulfil their potential in employment;
4. Young people are sexually healthy.

On the basis of the monitoring and evaluation to date the pathfinder group has achieved the following so far:

- To set out a more needs-led approach for young people;
- To improve communication within the participating agencies and resulting in a commonly shared view and common language;
- To establish multi-agency working as a 'must do' approach which can guarantee an effective way of supporting young people and their families;
- To understand that based on the multi-agency working a delivery of integrated services through a preventative approach is achievable;
- To offer some positive outcomes for its participants' own work.

However, some issues have been encountered through the evaluation process:

- Certain participating organisations have been under pressure to deliver more than others because of funding or job continuation. This would potentially be an area of conflict and stress amongst the different agencies;
- There is a perception of not having a consistent message across all services as to the importance and the status of the multi-agency working;
- The 'one-to-one' work with young people and the consequent adoption of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and lead professionals approach has not progressed as smoothly or as quickly as some participants would have anticipated. This was because resistance to it was more than expected;
- The involvement of young people in the project itself and its development has not been easily achievable;
- There should be a clearer way of promoting the pathfinder group's work especially amongst young people. This could increase the involvement by young people.

1.   Introduction

This research report outlines the findings of the evaluation of the Blandford Local Area Agreement 11-19 pathfinder project. Since it began in September 2005 the project has aimed to develop integrated youth support services to all 11-19 young people in the catchment area of Blandford School. It was anticipated that these services will centre on a core team of professionals drawn from agencies including Behaviour Support, Education Social Work, Youth and Community Service, Connexions, School Nurse, Social Care and Health as well as staff from the voluntary sector and the Branford School itself. The primary aim for the project was that once established the core team of professionals will develop and implement a new approach of working with young people based on early intervention and close linkages with both universal services and those delivering specialist intensive support. It has been anticipated that the pathfinder's objectives could achieved through certain forms of multi agency working. The project was overseen and coordinated by Simon Thomas to work under the Dorset County Council's Youth and Community Service, as the pathfinder coordinator for the initial 12 months. In addition, Partnerships Action and Community Engagement (PACE), Bournemouth University has undertaken the monitoring and evaluation in consultation with the Dorset 13-19 Strategy Group as well as writing the report on the project's progress (From the project's proposal).

The report offers an up-to-date account of how the project has progressed over in its first year of action. It reflects on process of how the group went on identifying needs and required outcomes in making the remits of the programme possible. It has been agreed between the pathfinder group and PACE that an additional report will describe the second part of the project's initial plan that is the planning, commissioning and delivering of services to young people in Blandford. It has been anticipated that monitoring and evaluation for this phase of the project will be put in place in the spring of 2007.

This report is divided into the following sections: the Policy Context on Youth Support; Research Methodology; Evaluation findings; and Conclusions. References and Appendices complete the report.

2.   The Policy Context on Youth Support

2.1   Every Child and Young Person Matters – The Context

In 2003, the Government published the Green Paper Every Child Matters: Change for Children. This was published alongside the formal response to the report into the death of Victoria Climbié, the young girl who was abused, tortured, and eventually killed by her great aunt and the man with whom they lived. The Green Paper built on existing plans to strengthen preventative services by focusing on four key themes. These were:

1. Increasing the focus on supporting families and carers - the most critical influence on children's lives;
2. Ensuring that necessary intervention takes place before children reach crisis point and protecting children from falling through the net;
3. Addressing the underlying problems identified in the report into the death of Victoria Climbié - weak accountability and poor integration;
4. Ensuring that the people working with children are valued, rewarded and trained (HM Government, 2004).

Following the consultation, the Government published Every Child Matters: the Next

Steps, and passed the Children Act 2004, which was published in November 2004, providing the legislative spine for developing more effective and accessible services focused around the needs of children, young people and families. There was broad agreement that five key outcomes matter the most for children and young people's well-being.

Box 1 Some indicative information on the usefulness of the 'Being healthy' and 'Staying safe' outcomes

Being healthy
Regular smoking by 11-15 year olds in England has decreased since 1996 from 13 to 10 percent. But levels of obesity are rising. Between 1996 and 2001 the proportion of obese children aged 6-15 years in England rose by 4 percent.

Teenage conception rates were 10 percent lower in 2001 than they were in 1998. But the UK still has the highest rate of teenage births within Western Europe.

Staying safe
There were 59,700 children in care in England in March 2002, an increase of 22 percent since March 1994. However, numbers on child protection registers in England have been falling. At 31 March 2002 there were 25,700. Ten years previously, the number was 38,600.

Between 1981 and 2001 the proportion of juvenile males in England and Wales cautioned or convicted of an offence fell from 70 per 1,000 juvenile males in the population to 51 per 1,000. However, the equivalent rate for females rose from 13 to 14 per 1,000.

A study of offending and victimisation amongst 11 to 16 year olds in mainstream schools found that almost half (46 percent) reported being the victim of some kind of offence in the last 12 months.

(HM Government, 2004: 16, 17)

Source: HM Government, 2004: 19

They were:

1. **Being healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle;
2. **Staying safe:** being protected from harm and neglect and growing up able to look after themselves;
3. **Enjoying and achieving:** getting the most out of life and developing broad skills for adulthood;
4. **Making a positive contribution:** to the community and to society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour;
5. **Economic well-being:** overcoming socio-economic disadvantages to achieve their full potential in life (HM Government, 2004: 19)

Some indicative information regarding some of those five key outcomes is given in Box 1. It was identified through a consulation process that improved outcomes for all children and young people depend on particular actions. These actions would be taken in about 150 cases of local programmes around the country. This could be driven by an analysis of local priorities, and secured through more integrated frontline delivery, processes, strategy and governance.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for children and young people is

considered as a key part of the strategy to shift the focus from dealing with the consequences of difficulties in children's lives towards preventing crisis in the first place (Every Child Matters, 2006b). 12 local areas have been piloting the CAF and the role of lead professional in 2005-06 and the University of East Anglia (UEA) were commissioned to undertake a formal evaluation within the 12 trial areas (Dorset being one of these 12 local areas). Each local area has decided whether, and how to implement CAF for this first year. The CAF is a new, standardised approach to assessing children's needs for services. It has been designed for practitioners in all agencies to help them to communicate and work together more effectively. It is particularly suitable for use in universal services such as health and education, so as to identify and tackle problems before they become serious. The CAF consists of:

- A simple pre-assessment checklist to help practitioners identify children who would benefit from a common assessment;
- A process for undertaking a common assessment, to help practitioners gather and understand information about the needs and strengths of the child, based on discussions with the child, their family and other practitioners as appropriate;
- A standard form to help practitioners record, and, where appropriate, share with others, the findings from the assessment (Department for Education and Skills, 2006: 1).

Along with the implementation of the CAF the introduction of lead profesionals approach has been considered as a key element of offering integrated support. A lead professional is someone who acts as a single point of contact the child or young person and their family can trust. Additionally, they ensure that the child or the young person gets appropriate interventions when needed. The work by the lead professionals, multi-agency working can then be developed. According to the proposed agenda multi-agency working would deliver a range of early intervention and preventative work in and close to schools (Every Child Matters, 2006).

2.2 Supporting Children and Young People in Dorset

In response to the Green Paper Every Child Matters: Change for Children, Dorset County Council created a Change for Children Board in 2004. The purpose of the Board has been to oversee, direct, manage and monitor the activity required by the local authority in order to develop and implement a strategy which will deliver the key objectives of the Green Paper. The Board has been supported on its responsibilities by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (Dorset County Council, 2006).

Government guidance specifies that partners in the delivery of children's services are required to produce a Strategic Plan, which incorporates the objectives and priorities for each Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership area. Dorset decided to 'take the leap' by using the Plan for 2004/05 as a first opportunity to produce a more joined up and coherent document which demonstrates the strategy and service activities which will make a difference to the children and young people in Dorset. These services should particularly acknowledge the diverse needs of children and young people, including those who find it harder to access services through their vulnerability, additional needs, or through being located within marginalised communities. This includes children from black and minority ethnic communities and from traveller and Gypsy families, young people excluded from school and children and young people who are looked after by the local authority (Dorset County Council, 2004).

Dorset, along with Bournemouth and Poole, has been chosen for a national evaluation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the Lead Practitioner (LP) role (Figure 1). Training is also being offered to practitioners who work with children, young

people and families in both the voluntary and statutory sectors in Dorset. The CAF Lead Officers Group has been responsible for making recommendations about implementing the CAF to the Children and Young People Strategic Partnerships/Children's Trust Board. They are also responsible for devising a code of practice for Dorset that covers: thresholds, tiers, interventions, the CAF processes, referral routes and processes, operational protocols for joint working, information sharing, expectations, culture, and terminology.

Figure 1 The Dorset Common Assessment Framework Structure

COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK - DORSET PILOT PROJECT STRUCTURE
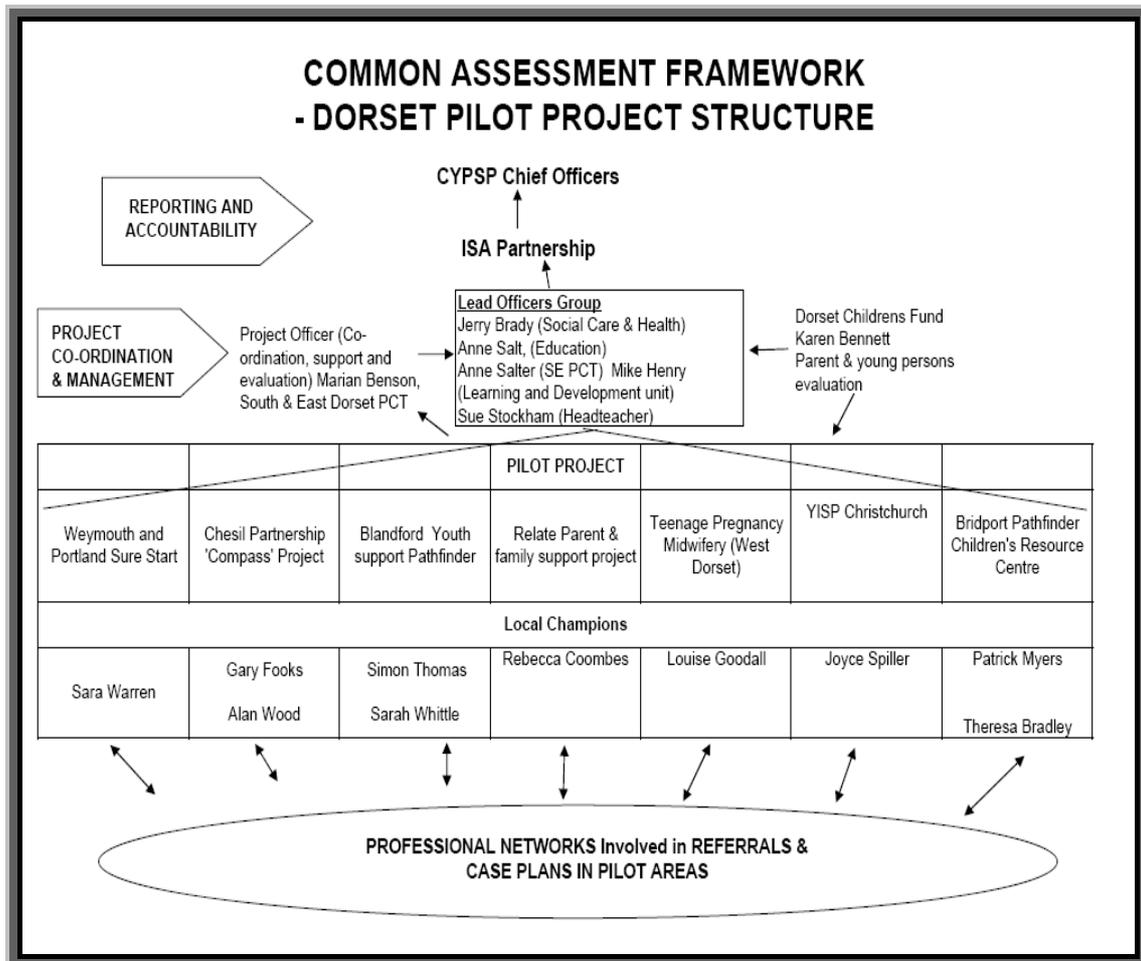
Source: Dorset Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, 2006: 2

As will be seen in section 4 the Blandford Pathfinder group has opted for not implementing the Common Assessment Framework as yet. What follows is the research methodology used for the case of the Blandford Pathfinder.

3. Research Methodology

There was a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods used for this evaluation. This was because the combination of the two approaches would produce an accurate account of how multiple- agency working and a preventative policy approach could work in the Blandford case. As Bryman (1988) states such integration of research approaches is clearly possible in order to support generalisation of research findings. In this respect, case study has been the research strategy.

As Table 1 shows the research methodology of the evaluation was designed to produce data which would measure the initial research objectives. This report refers to the first year of the pathfinder's activities thus the research process has not been completed as yet. The project met its objectives of designing and finalising the envisaged outcomes for 11-19 year old people in Blandford. It is anticipated that the research methods which will examine parts 5-7 will be used for the second phase of the project in 2007 (see Table 1).

Data from four surveys were used in this evaluation. All of them offered responses to the research questions about the identification of envisaged outcomes for young people in Blandford as well as the degree of multi-agency working (see Table 1 research questions 1 and 2). Specifically:

1. The first survey consisted of 232 responses to questionnaires by young people in Blandford and it was conducted between October and November 2005 by the pathfinder group;
2. The second survey was conducted by Connexions in Blandford on the 29th November 2005 and had as a focus the Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) young people. 13 people completed the relevant questionnaires;
3. The third survey was conducted again through questionnaire by PACE, Bournemouth University between April and June 2006. It aimed at collecting the first reactions of the pathfinder participants to the project and in particular with regard to the examination of the outcomes that were set for Blandford. In addition, the survey sought responses from key staff – potential lead professionals on the ways that would promote the pathfinders aims and objectives. As with the previous survey 13 people responded to the survey;
4. The fourth survey was conducted in June 2006 by the pathfinder group. It targeted year 7, 8, 9 and 10 students from the Blandford School. They were 170 responses received. The focus of the survey was the emotional well being of the students.

The qualitative research method that was used for this evaluation was semi-structured interviewing. The reason for this was the capacity of this particular method to back up the survey findings through the points of view of pathfinder participants. Three interviews as such were conducted with key staff-potential lead professionals or coordinators of the project. In addition, observations from two pathfinder meetings (on the 29th March and 29th June 2006) proved to be a very useful research method of reflecting on how the pathfinder members reacted on joining in the development of the project.

Table 1 The research methodology of the evaluation as it was initially designed

Main research questions	Examples of supplementary questions/issues	Research Methodology
1. To what degree are agencies working together, i.e. the baseline?	Examine the baseline PIs. What are the working structures currently in place?	Examination of PIs, data and gathering initial views of staff and young people
2. What are the outcomes for 11-19 year old in terms of the 5 key objectives (page 3)?	How many are NEET? How many go on to further or higher education? What are the barriers/opportunities available to young people? Does early intervention work in improving outcomes?	Case study of young people, their parents and staff. PI analysis
3. How and to what extent does the integration of services affect service delivery and outcomes for young people and their parents?	Do young people and parents see a difference in the service they receive? If so, what differences have they noted? What differences has staff noticed in the new arrangements?	Interviews with young people, parents and staff. A small scale case study with a selected group of young people and parents
4. What works, what does not and why?	What processes, mechanisms and structures help bring about positive change? To what extent does working together work for young people, parents and staff?	Service and structural change analysis
5. What are the costs and benefits of working more closely together? (for young people, parents and staff)	Is working together financially efficient? Does it result in improved outcomes? Does it work?	Cost benefit analysis of partnership development
6. What are the costs and benefits of adopting an early intervention approach and the CAF?	Does early intervention work in practice? What do staff and young people notice about the new working arrangements? Make links with national evaluation of DCF University of East Anglia/National Children's' Bureau	Cost-benefit analysis and interviews with staff and young people. Examination of financial and PI data
7. What are the outcomes of the Pathfinder project?	What are the key advantages/disadvantages/ accelerators and obstacles service staff perceive	Impact analysis or CAF and working together

Moreover, secondary data was used including data on South West, Dorset, and Blandford taken from national statistics sources. In terms of limitations, time proved to be an obstacle for the pathfinder's work. Theoretically partners spent more time than necessary in forming the pathfinder, identifying needs and required outcomes for young people in Blandford. However, this spent time was arguably useful in the consolidation of relationships within the pathfinder.

Finally, regarding the Outcome Approach the pathfinder chose to follow in identifying the needs of young people in Blandford, it could be argued that from a research point of view it worked fairly well. This approach is based on the 'Turn the Curve' model. It consists of the following steps:

1. What do we want for young people in Blandford? Defining Outcomes;
2. How will we recognise this in measurable terms? Defining Indicators;
3. How are we doing on the indicator for a particular outcome? (baseline or 'curve');
4. What is the story behind the 'curve'?
5. Who are the partners that can help 'turn the curve'? Defining best ideas;
6. What would work to 'turn the curve'?
7. Action Plan

(Meeting observations of 29th March and 29th June 2006)

According to the research findings the pathfinder has reached the point of: defining the outcomes; defining the indicators; identifying how well the pathfinder group has been doing on indicators of each particular outcome; and what is the 'story' behind each indicator. It is anticipated that answers to questions 5, 6, and 7 will be sought in the forthcoming months when the developed action plan will be implemented. The research findings follow in the next section.

4. Multi-agency Youth Support in Blandford: Monitoring and Evaluation of Findings

4.1 About Blandford

The Blandford Forum Town Council is the parish authority for the town of Blandford Forum and has an estimated population of 8,910, is 349 hectares in length and has approximately 4,434 dwellings (The Dorset Data Book 2006). The Town Council supplements the provision of local government services in Blandford Forum and provides a range of social and recreational facilities, while promoting and representing the town with other national and statutory bodies. Dorset County Council, which covers the whole of the county except Bournemouth and Poole consult with the Town Council on such subjects as the County Structure Plan, the Local Transport Plan and the Mineral and Waste Local Plan. North Dorset District Council also consults with the Town Council on such matters as the District Wide Local Plan, planning applications within Blandford Forum, and the economic development strategy (Blandford Forum Town Council, 2006). Statistical data about Blandford is further presented below.

Table 2 Blandford Forum: Parish profile – Work and qualifications

All people aged 16 to 74 (Persons)	6,243
All people aged 16 to 74: Economically active : Employed (Persons)	4,279
All people aged 16 to 74: Economically active : Unemployed (Persons)'	127
All people aged 16 to 74 : Economically inactive (Persons)[1]	1,695
All males aged 16-74 in employment: Average (mean) hours worked (Persons)	42.89
All females aged 16 to 74 in employment: Average (mean) hours worked (Persons)	30.15
All people aged 16 to 74 in employment: Extractive and Manufacturing Industries (Persons)	1,165
All people aged 16 to 74 in employment: Service Industries (Persons)	3,240
All people aged 16 to 74: No qualifications or ... level 1 or other qualifications / level unknown (Persons)[1]	3,425
All people aged 16 to 74: Highest qualification at level 2 (Persons)	1,330
All people aged 16 to 74: Highest qualification at level 3; 4 or 5 (Persons)	1,488

Source: National Statistics (2001)

In Table 2 an overview on work and qualifications within the jurisdiction of the parish council is presented.

Table 3 Blandford Old Town: Economic Activity – Full time students

	Blandford Old Town	North Dorset	South West	England
All Full-Time Students (Persons)	41	2,027	222,826	2,498,728
Full-Time Students: Economically active (Persons)	20	700	90,022	917,582
Full-Time Students: Economically active: In employment (Persons)	20	639	80,667	791,228
Full-Time Students: Economically active: Unemployed (Persons)	0	61	9,355	126,354
Full-Time Students: Economically inactive (Persons)	21	1,327	132,804	1,581,146

Source: National Statistics (2001)

Moreover, in Table 3 an overview of how full time students are divided in relation to their economic classification is presented. It must be noted that the information refers to Blandford Old Town ward only.

Table 4 Blandford Old Town: Further Education Success, Retention and Achievement Rates

	Blandford Old Town	North Dorset	South West	England
Success Rate for Persons Aged 16-18 (Persons)[1]	~	68%	72%	69%
Retention Rate for Persons Aged 16-18 (Persons)[1]	~	84%	86%	83%
Achievement Rate for Persons Aged 16-18 (Persons)[1]	~	81%	83%	83%
Success Rate for Persons Aged 19+ (Persons)[1]	77%	72%	77%	72%
Retention Rate for Persons Aged 19+ (Persons)[1]	91%	86%	89%	85%
Achievement Rate for Persons Aged 19+ (Persons)[1]	84%	84%	87%	85%

[1. Not National Statistics taken in July 2003 – August 2004]

Source: National Statistics (2001)

In Table 4 figures on further education success, retention and achievement rates are described. As in the case of Table 3, it must be noted that the information refers to Blandford Old Town ward only.

Table 5 Blandford Old Town: Children Benefits

	Blandford Old Town	North Dorset	South West	England
Total Number of Children (Persons)[1]	290	12,920	1,040,780	10,988,765
Children Aged Under 5 (Persons)[1]	90	3,035	253,825	2,823,290
Children Aged 5-10 (Persons)[1]	85	4,195	338,125	3,559,925
Children Aged 11-15 (Persons)[1]	85	3,985	310,145	3,197,930
Children Aged 16-19 (Persons)[1]	35	1,700	138,685	1,407,625
Boys (Persons)[1]	155	6,660	529,415	5,585,405
Girls (Persons)[1]	135	6,225	509,610	5,378,685
Gender Not Specified (Persons)[1]	0	30	1,750	24,675
Total Number of Families Claiming Benefit (Persons)[1]	170	7,050	578,015	6,110,190
Families with One Child (Persons)[1]	80	2,795	241,370	2,641,870
Families with Two Children (Persons)[1]	60	3,010	240,415	2,427,500
Families with Three or More Children (Persons)[1]	25	1,245	96,230	1,040,820

[1 Not National Statistics]

Source: National Statistics (2001)

Finally, an overview about children benefits in Blandford is presented in Table 5.

4.2 The Developing Action Plan for the Blandford Youth Support Pathfinder

The Blandford Youth Support Pathfinder group has extensively explored the needs of local young people in its first year of operation. As mentioned in section 3, the outcome approach was used in order to support the assessment of local needs-based data. This needs analysis has formed the basis for partnership decisions on priorities for young people. This will lead to a shared action plan that it is anticipated to bring on changes to delivery arrangements (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006). In Blandford four key outcomes have been identified each one corresponding to action plan (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006). They are presented below in Boxes 2-5 along with information on progress up to date.

4.2.1 About Outcome 1

Box 2: Indicators and initial actions of Outcome 1

OUTCOME 1

Young people contribute positively in the Blandford Community

INDICATOR 1.1: VOLUNTEERING
Increase the number of young people taking up volunteering activities.

INITIAL ACTIONS
Establish young people's "volunteering bureau", develop new schemes and extend volunteering opportunities such as Millennium Volunteers, Duke of Edinburgh and the school-based Peer Mentoring Scheme. These will be communicated and marketed to young people through the publishing of opportunities locally via the "volunteering bureau" (establishing this will require new resources or redeployment of existing resources).

INDICATOR 1.2: INFLUENCING DECISIONS
Establish a Blandford Youth Forum and local mechanisms to give young people more say in local decision-making.

INITIAL ACTIONS
A Blandford Youth Forum will be developed alongside a range of mechanisms for the involvement of and consultation with young people. Communication will be developed with local media to encourage positive reporting of young people's achievements.

INDICATOR 1.3: AGENCY CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
Create a range of awards that can be used to recognise the success organisations have in involving young people.

INITIAL ACTIONS
Local organisations will be supported to adopt the Hear By Right standards to inform the development of local participation and involvement. These standards will form the basis for organisations receiving awards from the Children's Partnership Board in recognition of the standard they have achieved.

Source: (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006)

Regarding indicator 1.1 on volunteering no data has been gathered as yet about how many 11-19 young people in Blandford do volunteering. However, the pathfinder's initial estimation has been that 10% of those young people could/should do some sort of 'formal' volunteering i.e. for young people to participate regularly in voluntary organisation's activities. In addition, it is estimated that between 25% and 35% of those young people could/should do 'informal' volunteering on an occasional and regular basis respectively (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006).

Graph 1 Response to the question 'Do you enjoy living in Blandford?'
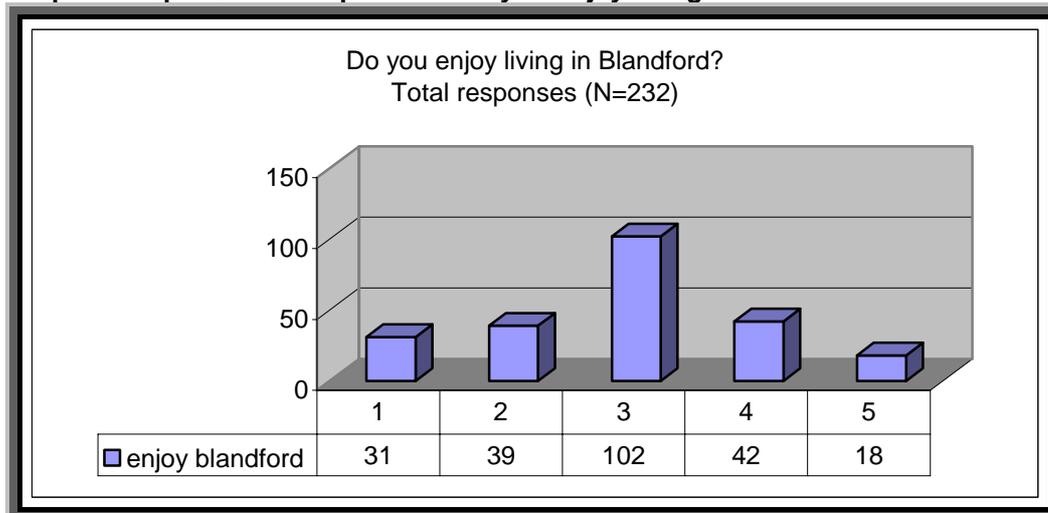
Do you enjoy living in Blandford?
Total responses (N=232)

	1	2	3	4	5
enjoy blandford	31	39	102	42	18

[Responses given on a scale 1-5, 1 being the lower possible and 5 the highest possible result]

Source: Survey of 232 responses by young people conducted in Blandford between October and November 2005

Indicator 1.2 identified the need for 11-19 young people in Blandford to influence local decision making. The partnership estimated that young people should be expressing views on issues that affect them. These could/should be expressed in the following forums:

- At their school   5%
- At their club/society   20%
- At their immediate family   70%
- At their community   4%
- At their Youth forum/School Council   5%

However, it has been estimated that the percentage of young people who have a chance to make decisions on important issues that affect them could/should be according to the area of activity:

- At their school   3%
- At their club/society   25%
- At their immediate family   25%
- At their community   1%
- At their Youth forum/School Council   2%

(Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006)

Regarding the third indicator of Outcome 1 on the need for agencies to consult with 11-19 young people in Blandford, it has been estimated by the pathfinder that 6 partner agencies in Blandford: have a clear policy in involving young people in decision making; have clear systems in involving young people; have a clear practice in involving young people. Furthermore, 4 partner agencies have a framework of developing their practice in involving young people and 2 involve young people for evaluating their effectiveness (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006).

Graph 2 Response to the question 'Do you have a say in what happens in Blandford?'
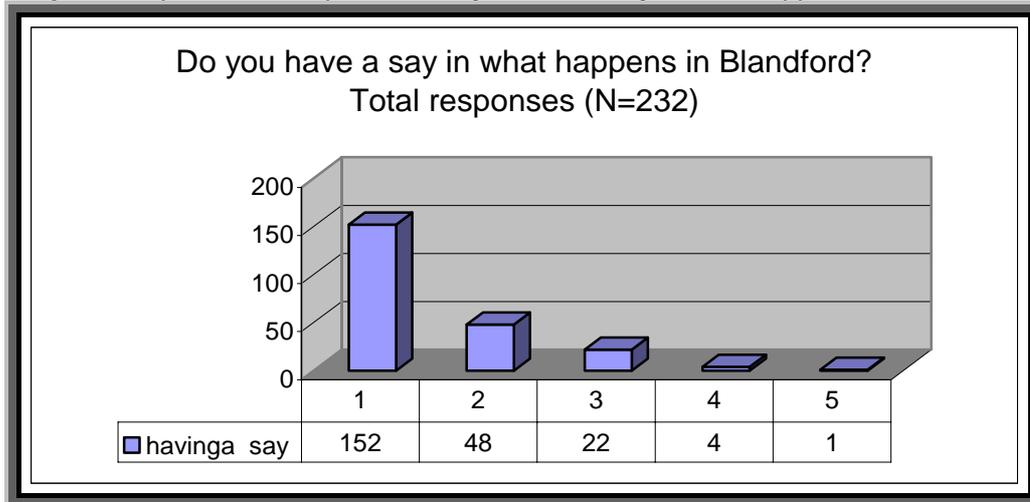
Do you have a say in what happens in Blandford? Total responses (N=232)

	1	2	3	4	5
havinga say	152	48	22	4	1

[Responses given on a scale 1-5, 1 being the lower possible and 5 the highest possible result]

Source: Survey of 232 responses by young people conducted in Blandford between October and November 2005

However, it is interesting to note that at the moment young people in Blandford think that they do not have a say in what happens in the town (200 out of 232 responded with 1 or 2 – see Graph 2). This is the case despite the fact that the same survey participants stated they are on average happy living in Blandford (172 out of 232 responses 1, 2 or 3 – see Graph 1). What can be deduced from these responses is the willingness of young people in Blandford to contribute towards decisions that can be beneficial for their area in which they live.

4.2.2 About Outcome 2

Outcome 2 has aimed at improving young people's mental and emotional health. Three indicators were identified: positive self-image; positive family environments; positive school environment; and positive peer relationships (Box 3).

Box 3: Indicators and initial actions of Outcome 2

OUTCOME 2

Young people have good mental & emotional health

INDICATOR 2.1: POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE
Increase the number of confidence-building activities available for young people in Blandford and the take-up of these activities.

INITIAL ACTIONS
The opportunities for young people to participate in activities and attend co-ordinated activities will be developed so that more young people access 'things to do and places to go'. This will be developed alongside the participatory mechanisms (1.2 & 1.3 above) to ensure that young people have a say in the local provision and to work with the media to develop positive images and role models.

INDICATOR 2.2: POSITIVE FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS
Create programmes to ensure that parents, guardians and carers be fully involved in processes that affect their young peoples lives.
Develop a programme of work that helps parents, guardians and carers to increase their understanding and skills.

INITIAL ACTIONS
Support agencies will develop their strategies to involve parents, guardians and carers in work with young people to develop stronger family communication and support mechanisms. Parenting support programmes will be developed locally and offered to a wide range of parents.

INDICATOR 2.3: POSITIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
Develop a multi-agency school drop-in service.
Extend the development of the peer mentoring system.

INITIAL ACTIONS
Multi-agency approaches to supporting individual young people at an early stage will continue to be developed through mechanisms including a school and multi-agency panel, peer mentoring and a confidential drop-in service staffed by a range of partners and offered in a range of locations.

INDICATOR 2.4: POSITIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS
Increase the number of opportunities available to young people in Blandford to engage in positive activities.

INITIAL ACTIONS
In line with the Extended Schools initiative, access to activities will be increased in a range of locations during non-school hours, weekends and holidays for individuals and groups of local young people. Young people will be supported through the continued multi-agency approach and the peer mentoring programme (2.3 above).

Source: (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006)

The importance of this particular outcome for young people in Blandford was identified by one of the lead professionals when the pathfinder group began to work on the project:

> 'For meeting their [young people in Blandford] emotional needs to start with we had to identify what the level of need was. And also the different agencies sitting out there who are able to support young people. And it's not just agencies within school but also agencies outside of the school. So that was I think a try to sort of meet with those different partners and to engage with them and start working alongside them and improve our links as professionals. So I think there is a real will to want to move this process forward.'
>
> (Lead professional participating to the pathfinder)

Table 6 Survey responses regarding Outcome 2 indicators

INDICATOR 2.1: POSITIVE SELF IMAGE				
	NEVER	**SOMETIMES**	**OFTEN**	**ALL THE TIME**
Do you feel good about yourself?	4 [2.4 %]	85 [50%]	60 [35.3%]	21 [12.4%]
Are you good at coping with problems?	6 [3.5%]	72 [42.3%]	83 [48.8%]	9 [5.3%]
INDICATOR 2.2: POSTIVE FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS				
Is your home life ok?	6 [3.5%]	32 [18.8%]	81 [47.6%]	51 [30%]
Can you talk to your family if things are worrying you?	16 [9.4%]	47 [27.6%]	46 [27.1%]	61 [35.9%]
INDICATOR 2.3: POSITIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT				
Do you enjoy your time at school?	10 [5.9%]	84 [49.4%]	66 [38.8%]	10 [5.9%]
Do you worry about doing well at school?	20 [11.8%]	83 [48.8%]	52 [30.6%]	15 [8.8%]
INDICATOR 2.4: POSTIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS				
Can you talk to friends if things are worrying you?	11 [6.5%]	47 [27.6%]	53 [31.2%]	59 [34.7%]
Is life with your friends ok?	2 [1.2%]	18 [10.6%]	72 [42.4%]	78 [45.9%]
Have you been bullied in the last two years?	86 [50.6%]	58 [34.1%]	22 [12.9%]	4 [2.4%]
Do you see other people being bullied?	28 [16.5%]	96 [56.5%]	34 [20%]	12 [7.1%]

Source: Survey questionnaire responses (170 students from Blandford School year 7-10, June 2006)

The results of a research conducted in June 2006 on acquiring baseline information from students at the Blandford School are displayed in Table 6. The responses have informed the indicators of Outcome 2. Additionally, the research pointed out the following findings:

- School log records of 'self-image' incidences Year 7-10, 29 May -16 June 06: 0 recorded incidents.
- School log records of 'home-life' incidences Year 7-10, 29 May -16 June 06: 5 recorded incidents – Year 7: 4 incidents, Year 9 : 1 incident.
- School log records of 'bullying' incidences Year 7-10, 29 May -16 June 06: 10 recorded bullying incidents – Year 7: 8 incidents, Year 9: 1 incident, Year 10: 1 incident

**Table 7** School Year * Good in coping with problems? Cross tabulation

| | | | Good in coping with problems | | | | |
			Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time	Total
School year	7	Count	2	20	21	2	45
		% within school year	4.4%	44.4%	46.7%	4.4%	100.0%
		% within Good in coping with problems	33.3%	27.8%	25.3%	22.2%	26.5%
	8	Count	3	17	24	2	46
		% within school year	6.5%	37.0%	52.2%	4.3%	100.0%
		% within Good in coping with problems	50.0%	23.6%	28.9%	22.2%	27.1%
	9	Count	1	20	15	2	38
		% within school year	2.6%	52.6%	39.5%	5.3%	100.0%
		% within Good in coping with problems	16.7%	27.8%	18.1%	22.2%	22.4%
	10	Count	0	15	23	3	41
		% within school year	.0%	36.6%	56.1%	7.3%	100.0%
		% within Good in coping with problems	.0%	20.8%	27.7%	33.3%	24.1%

Source: Survey questionnaire responses (170 students from Blandford School year 7-10, June 2006)

Statistical analysis on some of the responses students gave regarding Outcome 2 is presented in the next paragraphs. Examining responses to indicator 2.1 on the positive self-image and responses to the question about how well students cope with problems, it could be argued that all year students are in position to cope with problems and therefore their age have does not significantly affect their ability to cope. The only difference was that students of year 9 thought that 'sometimes' is an

answer more preferable to 'often' (20 and 15 respectively). This came as opposite to what students of years 7, 8 and 10 thought (Table 7).

Graph 3 Responses to question 'Are you good at coping with problems?'
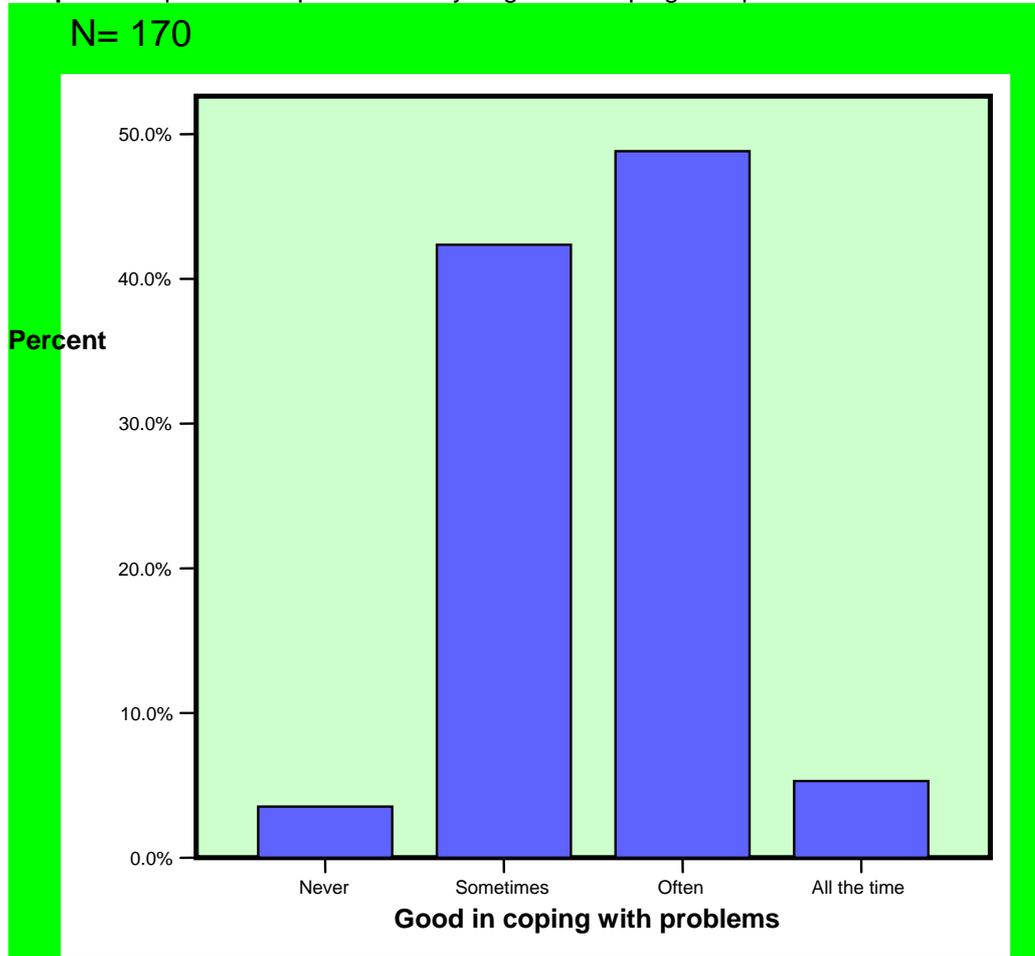
Source: Survey questionnaire responses (170 students from Blandford School year 7-10, June 2006)

Regarding the indicator 2.2 about creating positive family environment responses to the question 'can you talk to your family if things are worrying you' gave useful indications on relationships within families. It is noticeable that male students talk more easily to their families (60 of them gave an 'often' or 'all the time' response) compared to their female colleagues (41 of them gave an 'often' or 'all the time' response) as it can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8 Gender * Can you talk to your family? Cross tabulation

			Can you talk to your family?				Total
			Never	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**All the time**	
Gender	Female	Count	10	24	17	30	81
		% within gender	12.3%	29.6%	21.0%	37.0%	100.0%
		% within Can you talk to your family?	62.5%	51.1%	37.0%	49.2%	47.6%
	Male	Count	6	23	29	31	89
		% within gender	6.7%	25.8%	32.6%	34.8%	100.0%
		% within Can you talk to your family?	37.5%	48.9%	63.0%	50.8%	52.4%

Source: Survey questionnaire responses (170 students from Blandford School year 7-10, June 2006)

Graph 4 Responses to question 'Can you talk to your family?'
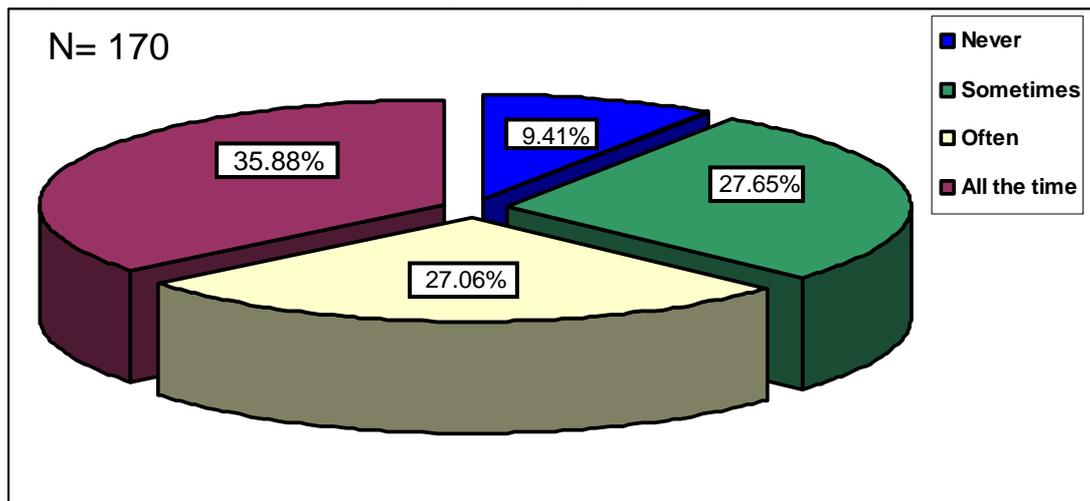
**Source:** Survey questionnaire responses (170 students from Blandford School year 7-10, June 2006)

In addition, the vast majority of students thought that they can normally talk to their parents (35.88% gave an 'all the time' and 27.06% an 'often' response). It is noteworthy that only 9.41% thought that they can 'never' talk to their parents if something worries them.

Table 9 School year * Worry on how well doing at school Cross tabulation

			Worry on how well doing at school				
			Never	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**All the time**	**Total**
School year	7	Count	7	22	12	4	45
		% within school year	15.6%	48.9%	26.7%	8.9%	100.0%
		% within Worry on how well doing at school	35.0%	26.5%	23.1%	26.7%	26.5%
	8	Count	7	22	14	3	46
		% within school year	15.2%	47.8%	30.4%	6.5%	100.0%
		% within Worry on how well doing at school	35.0%	26.5%	26.9%	20.0%	27.1%
	9	Count	3	19	12	4	38
		% within school year	7.9%	50.0%	31.6%	10.5%	100.0%
		% within Worry on how well doing at school	15.0%	22.9%	23.1%	26.7%	22.4%
	10	Count	3	20	14	4	41
		% within school year	7.3%	48.8%	34.1%	9.8%	100.0%
		% within Worry on how well doing at school	15.0%	24.1%	26.9%	26.7%	24.1%

Source: Survey questionnaire responses (170 students from Blandford School year 7-10, June 2006)

Indicator 2.3 refers to the development of a positive school environment. One of the questions that were asked in order to identify baseline information was 'do you worry about doing well at school?'. As it can be seen in Table 9 there is no significant fluctuation in the answers that were given in terms of what year students are in. Students of all years tend to worry more rather than not worry (around 60% and 40% respectively).

With regard to indicator 2.4, the development of positive peer relationships, the question 'have you been bullied in the last two years?' is important because of its impact on the lives of students. Comparing the responses by male and female students it can be noted that less female students declared that they have 'never' been bullied compared to their male counterparts (39 to 47 respectively).

Table 10 Gender * Bullied in the last two years Cross tabulation

			Bullied in the last two years				
			Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time	Total
Gender	Female	Count	39	29	12	1	81
		% within gender	48.1%	35.8%	14.8%	1.2%	100.0%
		% within Bullied in the last two years	45.3%	50.0%	54.5%	25.0%	47.6%
	Male	Count	47	29	10	3	89
		% within gender	52.8%	32.6%	11.2%	3.4%	100.0%
		% within Bullied in the last two years	54.7%	50.0%	45.5%	75.0%	52.4%

Source: Survey questionnaire responses (170 students from Blandford School year 7-10, June 2006)

Graph 5 Responses to question 'Have you been bullied in the last two years?'
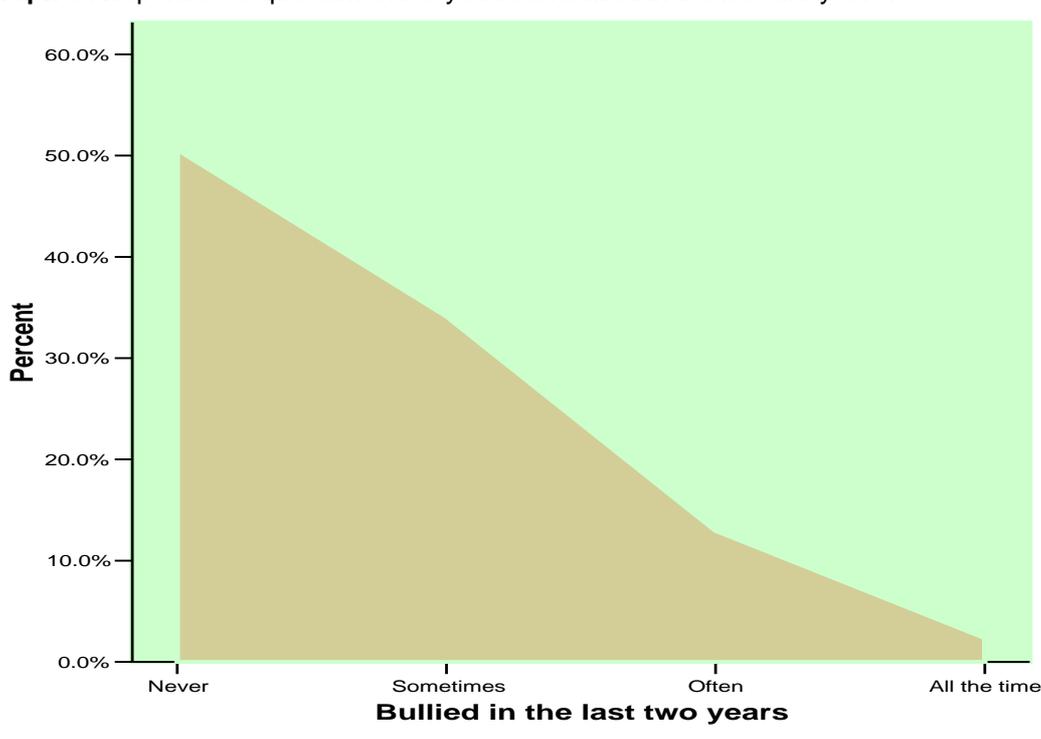
Source: Survey questionnaire responses (170 students from Blandford School year 7-10, June 2006)

4.2.3 About Outcome 3

Box 4: Indicators and initial actions of Outcome 3

OUTCOME 3

Young people are able to remain in learning & fulfil their potential in employment

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INDICATOR 3.1: ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

Establish a school-based Inclusion Unit.
Implement a multi-agency assessment and support panel for young people targeted towards those at risk

INITIAL ACTIONS
The school will develop a distinct on-site Inclusion Unit. Where young people are showing early signs of disaffection in the learning environment a multi-agency assessment and support panel will jointly assess and plan individual support. This panel will link closely with specialist agencies including CAMHS and Social Care to ensure an integrated and sustained approach to early intervention.

INDICATOR 3.2: ACCESS TO ADVICE AT KEY TRANSITIONS

Improve access to impartial information, advice and guidance.

INITIAL ACTIONS
All students will be able to access up-to-date impartial information, advice and guidance prior to key transitions. This will be actively marketed to them and will be co-ordinated alongside work-related activities.

INDICATOR 3.3: ENGAGEMENT IN POST-16 OPPORTUNITIES

Deliver projects targeted at those at risk to help keep them involved in Education, employment or training. These will take place at key transition times and involve employers.

INITIAL ACTIONS
Young people will be able to access specific targeted activities such as U-Project and Jump Start to support their transition into post-16 opportunities. Activities will be held at key times of the year and will be planned jointly by multi-agency groups. Links with employers will be developed to ensure accurate local labour market information and allow for the development of joint projects with employer input.

Source: (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006)

Outcome 3 has been linked with young people being able to remain in learning and fulfil their potential in employment. Three indicators were identified: engagement in learning; access to advice at key transitions; and engagement in post-16 opportunities (Box 4). No baseline data has been collected on engagement in learning (indicator 3.1). However research has been planned and will focus on: the number of those young people who refuse to go to school; and the number of those who participate on un-monitored/un-accredited programmes or those with extended work experience (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006).

Indicator 3.2 about young people to have access to advice at key transitions the pathfinder group gathered that:

- <u>Year 9 students in Blandford School:</u> The percentage of learners who receive information about options prior to making decisions is 50%;
- <u>Year 10 students in Blandford School:</u> The percentage of learners who say that work experience helped them to refine their education/work options goes as high as 80%;
- <u>Year 11 students in Blandford School:</u> The percentage of young people who are able to be contacted and who respond to questions about their final destination is as high as 90%;
- <u>Year 11 students in Blandford School:</u> The percentage of young people who are able to identify an intended destination is 90%

(Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006)

Baseline information has been gathered on the third indicator on young people's engagement in post-16 opportunities (see Table 11).

Table 11 Baseline information on indicator 3.3 about engagement in post-16 opportunities

% of Young people in work who are receiving ongoing NVQ (or equivalent) training	10%
% of young people who are in recognised government training + completion rate	3%
% of young people who are in Further Education + completion rate	50%
% of young people who go on to Higher Education	8%
Number of young people who are in employment without training	15%
Number of opportunities for work that include government recognised training (E2E, Pre E2E etc) within realistic travel distance	Baseline data to be gathered
% of young people who are NEET	5%
Number of young people who report that they are using less formal training opportunities (e.g. Millennium volunteers. Princes Trust etc)	9%

Source: (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006)

Connexions in Blandford conducted a small-scale research project in November 2005. It aimed to identify explanations about the current situation of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or training (NEET) – 5% according to the data gathered by the pathfinder group. Responses to the question 'what are the main barriers to finding education, employment and/or training?' included:

- No jobs;
- Age;
- Lack of apprenticeships;
- Lack of qualifications in school;
- Past convictions/criminal record;
- Lack of skills.

Subsequently, responses to the question 'what skills and knowledge would help you into EET?' included:

- Basic skills/good maths skills/any skills;
- Interview practice;
- GCSEs;
- Money;
- Knowledge of all agencies and help centres;
- Experience on life skills e.g. volunteering.

Consequently, respondents pointed out that issues such as boredom, anger, stress, low self esteem and confusion arise as a result of not being in Education, Employment or Training. They suggested that this would change by;

- Going to the gym;
- Getting out of the house; or even
- Getting pills for depression.

Reflecting on the difficulties NEET young people face one of the participants in the project pointed out - echoing also their organisation's work – that:

'What are trying to do in our outcome [Outcome 3] is to focus at those that are in school but also at those they are out of school. And with that we are looking at the opportunity for young people to remain in education employment training. That's looking at what training providers are in the area, what employers are doing and to encourage young people to stay in the area and work. Also [we encourage them] to continue training. But I think our outcome also does address the more wide issues that a young person might have such as health and transport, housing and put the link with those young people that aren't working'.

The same interviewee also suggested that the identification of these outcomes by the pathfinder group reflects on the needs of young people in Blandford:

'If you look at the research that was actually done with young people, the questionnaire that went out locally … [this means that] those issues that came out are really important to young people. It was also something that was highlighted by professionals. We did an exercise [in which] we looked at what we are all actually doing and what we aren't doing [at their organisation]. And again those issues [they mean issues of youth support] were quite high. We have been quite consistent all the way through in our research and meetings. So our outcomes are quite true to what needs to be provided and approved upon'.

Recognition of the importance of having specific outcomes to aim for was evident through the partnership's work thus this interviewee's remarks above.

4.2.4. About Outcome 4

Box 5: Indicators and initial actions of Outcome 4

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OUTCOME 4

Young people are sexually healthy

INDICATOR 4.1: DEVELOPING SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION
Further develop school-based group work and 1:1 inputs on Sex and Relationship Education.

INITIAL ACTIONS
The SRE programme in the school will be reviewed and best practice examples from elsewhere will be considered, particularly peer education aspects. The aim of the programme will be to educate young people as to the facts whilst also ensuring that they are empowered to make informed decisions regarding their sex and relationships. Delivery will be via group sessions but will also involve staff from a range of agencies being trained by specialists to deliver 1:1 support as appropriate.

INDICATOR 4.2 ACCESS TO SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES
Create a range of sexual health drop-in services within a range of young person friendly venues.

INITIAL ACTIONS
Access to specialist services will be developed and extended to ensure that all young people can access advice, treatment and support in a range of locations (youth clubs, IAG centres, school etc), at a range of times (lunch times, after school, weekends and holidays) and in a confidential and non-stigmatising manner. Agencies, including the school, will develop joint protocols and referral arrangements to ensure consistency of approach that meets young people's needs and respects their rights.

INDICATOR 4.3. CHLAMYDIA RATES
Develop multi-agency early intervention services which will deliver programmes targeted at higher risk young people in order to reduce the rate of Chlamydia infection.

INITIAL ACTIONS
In line with 4.2 above, partners will work together to ensure that confidential advice, testing and treatment is available to young people in non-stigmatised venues and with appropriate access arrangements. The emphasis will be on early intervention and prevention with a joint strategy developed by specialist sexual health workers alongside other partners with an educative role.

</div>

**Source:** (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006)

Finally, Outcome 4 has considered the ability by young people to be sexually healthy. Again three indicators were identified: developing sex and relationship education; having access to sexual health services; and identify Chlamydia rates (Box 5). Data has been acquired regarding all three indicators. According to the partnership data has been difficult to gather due to recording issues. In addition, they have declared inconsistency between the Primary Care Trust in Blandford and other health recording. The gathered data is presented in Table 12.

Table 12 Baseline data regarding Outcome 4 about young people being sexually healthy

INDICATOR 4.1: DEVELOPING SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION	
Teenage pregnancies DT11 – 05 06 rates	8 cases
Sexually Transmitted Infection rates Chlamydia testing rates/positive tests – Sept-Nov 05 :	98 samples 7 positive = 7.1%
Sexually Transmitted Infection rates Chlamydia testing rates/positive tests – Feb-Apr 06 :	178 Samples 14 positive = 7.9%

INDICATOR 4.2: ACCESS TO SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES	
Blandford Clinic Sexual Health Service attendances Oct 05- end March 06 (GUM service) Under 16 –	16 (14 male, 2 female)
Blandford Clinic Sexual Health Service attendances Oct 05- end March 06 (GUM service) 16-19	91 (62 male, 29 female)

INDICATOR 4.3: CHLAMYDIA RATES	
Chlamydia testing rates/positive tests Sept-Nov 05 :	98 samples 7 positive = 7.1%
Chlamydia testing rates/positive tests Feb-Apr 06 :	178 Samples 14 positive = 7.9%
Blandford Clinic Sexual Health Service attendances Oct 05- end March 06 (GUM service) Under 16	16 (14 male, 2 female)
Blandford Clinic Sexual Health Service attendances Oct 05- end March 06 (GUM service) 16-19	91 (62 male, 29 female)

Source: (Blandford LAA Pathfinder, 2006)

Graph 6 Response to the question 'Sex/Relationships – Is this an area where you take risks?'
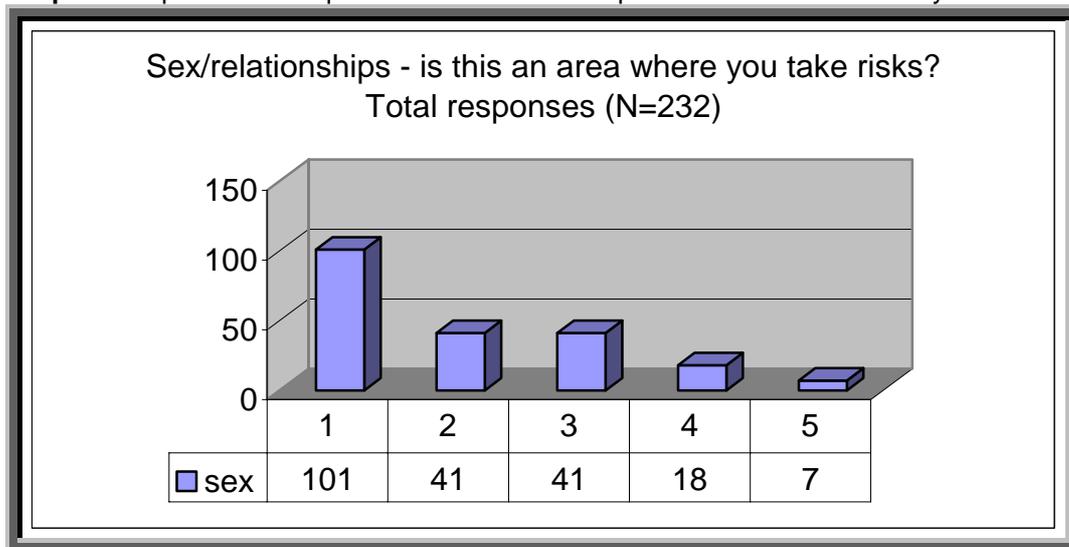
Sex/relationships - is this an area where you take risks?
Total responses (N=232)

	1	2	3	4	5
sex	101	41	41	18	7

[Responses given on a scale 1-5, 1 being the lower possible and 5 the highest possible result]

Source: Survey of 232 responses by young people conducted in Blandford between October and November 2005

All indicators of outcome 4 suggest particular improvements that need to take place with regard to Blandford young people's sexual health. This matches with young people's attitude on the matter. As it can be seen in graph 6, young people suggest that they don't take [unnecessary] risks on sexual issues (152 out of 232 responded with 1 or 2).

4.3   Assessing the Blandford Approach

4.3.1 Multi-agency working in Blandford

The youth support pathfinder group in Blandford followed multi-agency working as a means of an effective way to support young people and their families. In order to meet this aim a number of agencies were brought into the partnership and responded to offer their skills, knowledge and expertise. The perceived organisational aspects of multi-agency working in Blandford were:
1. Apart from the coordinator's post there were no recruitments or Human Resource issues to resolve as participating practitioners remained employed by their own home agency;
2. Practitioners/lead professionals remained fully involved in their home agency and had access to its training and development opportunities;
3. There was no need to find a permanent base e.g. offices or IT infrastructure

As one interviewee argued about multi-agency working:
I don't think it's optional. I think it's something we have to do. I think one of the challenges is that we don't have a consistent message across all services as to the importance and the status of the multi-agency working. For instance, schools get quite a different message from all those who work with a quite different agenda…[such as] youth service, Connexions, education and social workers and so on. So for me the agencies working together [need] to look at what are the bits of work that remain specifically to the organisation, perhaps statutory duties. Nobody else can do that even

if they wanted to as things stand. For example, the community mental health teams have the statutory duty to deal with mental health issues. I think it's about looking what bits agencies have to keep themselves and what other bits we can work better and smarter together in a multi-agency integrated way. And it's around that core of what we all can do better and there is a lot of shared stuff in Blandford. I think it's a good example if you ask agencies around the room: Who supports young people if there is a risk of them excluded from school? Ten agencies could put their hands up. But there could have been very little communication as to who does what, why, when, how.

(Participant of the pathfinder group)

Pathfinder group members included staff from the following agencies: Behaviour Support, Education Social Work, Youth and Community Service, Connexions, School Nurse, Social Care and Health as well as staff from the voluntary sector and the Branford School. Enthusiasm and positive feelings towards achieving the partnership aims were most evident in the pathfinder group's meetings. There was a range of techniques used in the meetings in order to support a spirit of collaboration amongst the participants e.g. the 'mix and match option' that was used in the first pathfinder meeting in March 2006 (From the pathfinder group meeting observations). The viewpoint below reflects on this:

'I think certainly there is the enthusiasm and the belief that it can work and something will change. I know it seems that for the last six months we have just been attending meetings and talking but there has been so much work gone into it by people that do believe that something can come out with it. And they believe that they will eventually infect young people and provide better services for them.'

(Lead professional and participant of the pathfinder group).

The following points reflect the multi-agency working in Blandford:

- Although not always available good quality information has been provided to the group as an essential element to the development of the partnership process;
- The meetings have been a useful way to share information on outcomes amongst the partnership members;
- The Outcome approach that has been used has encouraged the partners to examine the situation further to data collection;
- Also, the Outcome approach has enabled partners to focus on particular issues and therefore to be specific on how the pathfinder aims can be achieved;
- All partners have contributed to the group according to their capabilities and the inclusive nature of the process has been undoubtedly a strength

However, despite good signs of collaborative work participants indicated that the euphoria of 'working together' was not necessarily been shared from people's line managers and senior managers within the represented organisations. As a result this created 'frustrations in Blandford where the local practitioners want to change and do something different but they haven't necessarily had the support by their organisation' (from the interviewee of one of the participants).

4.3.2 Integration of services for Young People in Blandford

Integration of services for young people has been the core of the pathfinder group work in Blandford. This has been based on the governmental guidance that followed the Green Paper Every Child Matters: Change for Children. The focus of the pathfinder group work has focused on enabling and encouraging professionals to work together and to adopt common processes to deliver frontline services, coordinated and built around the needs of children and young people. To this extent although not very evident as yet, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for children and young people has been considered as a key part of the strategy to shift the focus from dealing with the consequences of difficulties in children's lives to preventing things from going wrong in the first place. The LAA 11-19 pathfinder group in Blandford has developed an approach that suits the local needs of Blandford. This approach has taken into account the needs and peculiarities of the area and based of this it has constructed a plan of action for the pathfinder group. The research has shown that the group have reached the stage of identifying the needs and required outcomes for young people in the area. In addition, they have developed plans of actions they intend to follow in order to deliver integrated services to young people. It is anticipated that the stage of delivering integrated services can be reached in early 2007.

A survey was conducted in April-May 2006 aiming to identify viewpoints by key participants to the partnership on how they regard specific aspects of integrating provision of services. According to research findings lead professionals have felt that improving of multi-agency working is the prominent aspect that needs to be considered with 'having a simpler service for families to access' being the aspect that needs less attention (Table 13). However, there were comments following their particular choices which clearly indicated that participants at this particular point of time (April –June 2006) had concerns of how far the group could achieve their aims.

Table 13 Achieving integration of services for young people in Blandford

To what extent integration of services for young people in Blandford should be based on the following aspects?					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Improving multi-agency working	2		2		8
Improving help for children and families at an earlier stage – the preventative approach	3	-	-	2	6
Having a simpler service for families to access	2	1	4	1	3
Reducing separate, repeated or parallel assessments for families	-	2	-	4	5
Reducing inappropriate inter-agency referrals	-	1	4	1	5
Having a better quality of referrals for specialist assessments	-	2	-	4	5

[Responses given on a scale 1-5, 1= Not at all, 3= To some extent and 5= To the best possible level]

Source: Survey conducted by PACE, Bournemouth University with key people and lead professionals of the Blandford LAA Pathfinder group between April and June 2006.

For example:

- Improving multi-agency working: '[Multi-agency working can succeed] but only if agencies develop trust in one another and share information' OR 'Only if the service is there to meet the need';
- Reducing separate, repeated or parallel assessments for families: '[This aspect will not be achieved] if 'access' etc are kept separate – needs commitment from all';
- Reducing inappropriate inter-agency referrals: [This aspect is doable] providing that all people who do the assessment have a common approach'
- Having a better quality of referrals for specialist assessment: 'This needs to be balanced against the time it takes to complete a CAF'

It addition there was one response without answers at all and another one approving the use of multi-agency working but answering 'I don't know' on the usefulness of the rest of the aspects. Those responses could be interpreted as a reaction on how difficult the work of the group appeared to be at this particular point of time.

Table 14 Initial assessment of the four outcomes

The outcomes below have been proposed as key objectives to be achieved in Blandford. To what extent these outcomes have been achieved so far?					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Young people to contribute positively in the Blandford community	5		1		
Young people to be sexually healthy	2	3			
Young people to remain in learning and fulfil their potential in employment	4		1		
Young people to have good mental and emotional health	3	2			

[Responses given on a scale 1-5, 1= Not at all, 3= To some extent and 5= To the best possible level]

Source: Survey conducted by PACE, Bournemouth University with key people and lead professionals of the Blandford LAA Pathfinder group between April and June 2006.

The same indications reached regarding the question about the extent the identified outcomes for Blandford have been achieved. The vast majority of answers were '1' or '2' which clearly stated no outcomes were achieved at this particular point of time (Table 14). In addition, indicative comments to these responses were:
- 'There is no enough information to be able to comment';
- 'We haven't even completed the planning stage – It's far too early to see benefits for young people!'

In request to how participants have seen the project establishing and implementing integrated services an interviewee pointed out that it is a priority to:
'[To] develop young people, to develop a representative youth forum that can have input from the school, the council, the youth services and so on. It's about getting that balance right. And you've got to develop an action plan for that. And the action plan sound that it is the case of making it reality. [Also] if multi-agency working is to roll out I think people need to

acknowledge that their hearts and minds aspect of bringing people together. Needs analysis and jointed planning could be achieved to give you a structure but unless you do the hearts and minds bit and get people have coffees together I think it will always be a struggle. Because personalities and professional issues are very strong and it's only through getting people to respect and understand each other that then people be able to sit down and talk'.

Regarding CAF the same participant suggested:

'I think also that the CAF and lead professionals approach need a lot more support and training than perhaps has been put in terms of the …work force development plan. I think it's been a sort of approach as if we train people to fill in the CAF paper work they'll do it and then adopt it and everything will change. The reality is that they might have finished the paper work but they haven't really accepted the principles of lead professionals and working together'.

5.   Conclusions

The Blandford Local Area Agreement 11-19 Pathfinder project achieved its initial aims to identify the needs and required outcomes for young people in Blandford. They also developed a plan of action that informs the implementation of these outcomes. These outcomes were:

1. Young people contribute positively in the Blandford Community;
2. Young people have good mental and emotional health;
3. Young people are able to remain in learning and fulfil their potential in employment;
4. Young people are sexually healthy.

The pathfinder group will then proceed to the development and implementation of an integrated approach of service delivery taking into account important issues for both NEET and EET young people. Some of these issues as they were identified through the surveys conducted for the project are:

- To provide more job opportunities/vacancies/apprenticeships along with support in job search skills and confidence building;
- To provide a fuller programme in schools aimed at finding more about jobs;
- To focus on more vocational/practical education so that everyone leaves with a qualification;
- To provide more funding for education.

The partnership has achieved so far to set out a more needs-led approach for young people. It is also evident that communication channels have been improved within the participating agencies and use of a commonly shared view and common language has emerged. As an interviewee put it the pathfinder project has offered some very positive outcomes for the participants' own work. Moreover, the establishment of multi-agency working has been regarded as a 'must do' approach which can guarantee an effective way of supporting young people and their families. It has also been well understood by the partnership that based on the multi-agency working delivery of integrated services through a preventative approach is achievable.

However, some issues have been encountered regarding the partnership's operational capabilities:

- Certain participating organisations have been under pressure to deliver more than others because of particular issues of funding or job continuation. This might be an area of potential conflict and stress within the different agencies (according to an interviewee);
- There is a perception of not having consistent messages across all services as to the importance and the status of the multi-agency working. It is hoped that as the work by the pathfinder group progresses this will be significantly eliminated;
- The 'one-to-one' work with young people and the consequent adoption of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and lead professionals approach has not been implemented as quickly as some participants would have anticipated. This was due to institutional resistance. For example, professionals on the ground in some cases have been keen to promote the CAF approach but their organisations have not been giving them necessarily the support and encouragement they need;
- The involvement of young people in the project itself and its development has been according to some participants much more 'political' than anticipated. For

example, it has been difficult to collect the views from young people not necessarily from the Blandford school but also from minority and excluded groups;

- There should be a clearer way of promoting the pathfinder group's work especially for the young people. This could increase the involvement by young people;

As pointed out in the introduction there will be an additional report on the actual delivery of support services to young people in Blandford. Mechanisms for this operation will be in place in the autumn of 2006 along with some particular research measurements that will inform the implementation of the four identified outcomes for the Blandford young people. It is anticipated that integrated services will begin to be delivered in 2007.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Dorset Common Assessment Framework Form

DORSET County Council

**department for
education and skills**
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

**Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
Pre-Assessment Checklist**
Please ✓ all appropriate boxes

Dorset children and young people's strategic partnership

Identifying Details

Name of baby, child or young person:

Address:

| | Postcode: |

Date of Birth:

Contact Name:

Contact Tel No. (inc. code):

Does the baby, child or young person appear to be: -

- Healthy?　　　Yes ☐　　No ☐　　Not sure ☐

Evidence/Comment:

- Safe from harm?　　　Yes ☐　　No ☐　　Not sure ☐

Evidence/Comment:

- Learning and developing?　　　Yes ☐　　No ☐　　Not sure ☐

Evidence/Comment:

- Having a positive impact on others?　　　Yes ☐　　No ☐　　Not sure ☐

Evidence/Comment:

- Free from the negative impact of poverty?　　　Yes ☐　　No ☐　　Not sure ☐

Evidence/Comment:

If you answered **No**, what additional services are needed for the baby, child or young person or their parent(s), carer(s) or families?

CC 2001 (01/06) C
DL

Can you provide the additional services needed?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Not sure ☐

If you answered **No** or **Not sure**, or it is not clear what support is needed, would an assessment under the Common Assessment Framework help?

	Yes ☐	No ☐

Who will do this assessment?	I will ☐	Another practitioner will ☐

Name of practitioner/agency:

Date completed form: /   /

Five Priority Outcomes

The Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters', proposed the introduction of a national common assessment framework as an important part of a strategy for helping babies, children and young people and their families to achieve the five priority outcomes:

- **Be healthy** ~ This means babies, children and young people are physically healthy, mentally and emotionally healthy, sexually healthy, living healthy lifestyles, and choosing not to take illegal drugs. We also want to help parents, carers and families to promote healthy choices.

- **Stay safe** ~ This means babies, children and young people are safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, safe from accidental injury and death, safe from bullying and discrimination, safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school, and have security, stability and are cared for. We also want to help parents, carers and families to provide safe homes and stability, to support learning and to develop independent living skills for their children.

- **Enjoy and achieve** ~ This means young children are ready for school, school-age children attend and enjoy school, children achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school, children and young people achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation, and children and young people achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school. We also want to help parents, carers and families to support learning.

- **Make a positive contribution** ~ This means children and young people engage in decision making and support the community and environment, engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school, develop positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate, develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges and develop enterprising behaviour. We also want to help parents, carers and families to promote positive behaviour.

- **Achieve economic well-being** ~ This means young people engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school, and are ready for employment; babies, children and young people live in decent homes and sustainable communities, have access to transport and material goods and live in households free from low income. We also want to help parents, carers and families to be economically active.

You may wish to consider the Dorset Service Directory for information and referral criteria for agencies that may support the child/young person and family. http://www.dorsetcis.org.uk/main.aspx

Exceptional circumstances ~ Significant harm and putting others at risk of harm

If at any time during the course of this assessment you feel that a baby, child or young person is "a child in need", which includes being at risk of significant harm, you must follow your local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC)/Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures in the normal way and as set out in the booklet **What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused**. Similarly, children or young people putting others at risk of harm, for example, by their threatening behaviour, should be dealt with immediately using established procedures operated locally.