



## **West Midlands Regional Partnership (WMRP) Strategic Plan 2006 - 2008**

### **Revised, January 2007**

#### ***National context***

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has sponsored Regional Partnerships (RPs), covering all the local authorities in England, since April 2000. The role of these partnerships has been to bring together groups of local authorities, health, social services, the private and voluntary sectors to improve the quality and consistency of provision for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN)

The Regional Partnerships have continued to develop both locally and at national level. The University of Manchester and, more recently, NfER Nelson have evaluated the Partnerships' work (further information is available at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/regional/evaluation](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/regional/evaluation)). Following two positive reports, the Regional Partnerships have further funding until March 2008. During this time there will be increasing alignment with the work of regional government offices (GOs).

Key Government initiatives that now impact on the work of the Regional Partnerships include:

- DfES Five Year Strategy
- Removing Barriers to Achievement; the Government's Strategy for SEN (RBA)
- Every Child Matters (ECM)
- Children's National Service Framework (NSF)
- Improving Life Chances for Disabled People
- The 10 year Childcare Strategy
- Sure Start
- Care Matters

- The Government's Response to the Education and Skills Select Committee Report

As Local Authorities (LAs) further develop fully integrated Children's Services, the core remit for the Regional Partnerships over the remaining year of this strategic action plan will continue to be to:

***Promote inclusion and positive outcomes  
for children with SEN and/or disabilities and looked after children through  
voluntary collaborative effort***

Regional Partnership Action Plans for 2007 – 2008 will be informed by:

- The DfES priorities framework document
- Regional priorities arising from Local Authorities' Annual Performance Assessments (APAs), Joint Area Reviews (JARs) and Children and Young Peoples Plans
- Regional priorities arising from regional action planning meetings involving key local and regional stakeholders
- The SEN Adviser's regional and national reports
- Government Office (GO) business plans

***DfES priorities and structures for Regional Partnerships in 2007 - 2008:***

**Core Funding** -: Core funding is provided to enhance strategic capacity to commission, plan and improve service delivery for children with priority and low incidence needs, including children who are looked after.

To deliver against this remit RPs must bring together the commitment and resources of Local Authorities, Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and voluntary sector partners.

RPs are expected to use their core funding to develop appropriate structures to:

- ensure - together with their GO Deputy Regional Directors for Children and Learners - that there is a strong and effective partnership at the strategic level, linking Directors of Children's Services, Strategic Health Authorities Chief Executives, PCTs and providers of specialised support for children with SEN and
- disabilities, such as special schools and resourced provision/units in mainstream schools;
- enhance understanding of commissioning, planning and delivery of services across the region for children with priority and low incidence needs for the benefit of all the region's providers and users;
- underpin the drive to bring greater coherence to the support provided to Local Authorities, including, where appropriate, helping LAs to exploit existing effective practice from elsewhere;
- be the lead nationally on at least two areas of policy;
- work with national strategies colleagues at regional level to progress the inclusion development programme develop, with GOs, rigorous monitoring and evaluation strategies in order to ensure that their work is evidence based, adds value and improves outcomes for children in priority and low incidence groups;
- explicitly address the issue of sustainability of work strands beyond end March 08.

### **Additional Funding – innovation**

Additional funding will be made available to each region to commission, develop and deliver specific programmes and initiatives to improve outcomes for children and young people in priority and low incidence groups.

The Department expects RPs to build upon the work started in 2006 - 2007 (regional centres of expertise) as well as other effective projects they have run which are securing better outcomes for children in priority and low incidence groups. The funding available

can support either or both of: development and expansion of existing projects; and the development and introduction of new ones.

There is an expectation that, wherever possible, proposed programmes and initiatives complement existing regional commissioning structures and processes in order to maximise coherence and impact. Programmes and initiatives may be at a regional, cross-regional or sub-regional basis

### ***Vision Statement for the West Midlands Regional Partnership***

The WMRP aspires to facilitate and research effective and efficient SEN, Disability and Looked After Children processes and services which lead to inclusive policies and practice through:

- building and facilitating regional inter-agency and local authority networks
- improving the capacity of Local Authorities to meet the needs of vulnerable children , children with SEN and Looked after children within the region
- creating opportunities to share effective and innovative practice to redress regional variations
- empowering parents/carers and families of children with SEN and/or disabilities and those looked after, through providing information, facilitating consultation and promoting their involvement.

This vision underpins the choice of key priorities for the period from April, 2007 – March, 2008 which have been chosen with consideration of the following:

- A summary made by the WMRP of areas for improvement for each Local Authority as described in the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) letters to West Midlands Local Authorities, December 2006 or Joint Area Review (JAR) reports 2006.
- The outcome of consultation with key stakeholders including the WMRP Management Consortium and existing working groups.
- Development and expansion of work strands previously identified in the WMRP's Strategic and Action Plans 2006 – 2007 which are securing better outcomes for children in priority and low incidence groups
- National priorities from the DfES.

The table below summarises broad and specific areas of focus from the APA/JAR summary carried out by WMRP in January, 2006 and how they relate to ECM outcomes for the period of this strategic action plan:

<b>ECM Outcome</b>	<b>APA/JAR</b>	<b>Regional Priority Area</b>	<b>Working Group</b>
<b>Being Healthy</b>	Assessment and monitoring of health needs of LAC	Looked After Children	New working group to be established Healthy Care Network
	Access to mental health services for children and young people	Workforce Development Early Years/Timely Intervention	ASD Identification Working Party; ADHD Identification Working Party
<b>Staying Safe</b>	Increase the range of placements	Commissioning	West Midlands Children's Commissioning Partnership
	Effective range of preventative services	Early Years/ Timely intervention Looked After Children	Family Placements; Early Support; ASD Research and Development Group
	Strategies to implement the CAF and associated referral, review and risk analysis, and performance management	Looked After Children Early Years/ Timely intervention	Early Support; Safeguarding Group Children with Disabilities Group (new group to be established)
	Timescales of initial and core assessments	Looked After Children Statutory Processes	Integrated Children's Systems New group to be established
<b>Enjoying and Achieving</b>	Levels of attainment for LAC	Looked After Children	Education Protects
	Monitoring and evaluation of attainment in schools	Looked After Children Workforce Development	SEN Advisers/ Monitoring Officers
	Improving levels of attainment especially around KS4	Workforce Development	Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Networking Group
	Improve opportunities for leisure and recreation	Commissioning	West Midlands Children's Commissioning Partnership

<b><i>Making a Positive Contribution</i></b>	Involvement of children and young people Looked After and/or with LDD in reviews	Empowering	New Working Group to be established
<b><i>Achieving economic well-being</i></b>	Increase the proportion of young people in education, training or employment	Transition	Leaving Care Group; BESD Creative Solutions Group Transitions Group
	Reduce the level of offending in young people with a particular focus on LAC	Children in Public Care Workforce Development	BESD Creative Solutions Group; PRU Networking Group
<b><i>Management of Children's Services</i></b>	Improved co-ordination between YOT , Police, education , social care, youth services	Workforce Development	BESD Creative Solutions Group; PRU Networking Group
	Improve the collection of info on training for staff working within the children's services to support the integrated workforce strategies	Workforce Development	Early Support; Forum for Regional Educational Development (FREDA)
	Further development of information and performance management systems	Early Years/Timely Intervention	Integrated Children's Systems; Performance and Benchmarking

NB. Monitoring Provision and Benchmarking (RPA 9), will cut across all work completed and provide data for monitoring and evaluating the activities of the Regional Partnership.

Development and expansion of work strands previously identified in the WMRP's Strategic and Action Plans 2006 – 2007 which are securing better outcomes for children in priority and low incidence groups

Area	Development/expansion	Broad area of focus	Specific focus
Parent Partnership	Development	Empowering families	Regional collaboration
Mediation			

**Regional priorities-**

The WMRP regional priorities are:

- Capacity building and networking
- Children in Care
- Early Years/ Timely Intervention
- Workforce Development (Autism Spectrum Disorders, BESD/ADHD, CAMHS)
- Commissioning
- Empowering Children, Young People and their Families
- Statutory processes
- Transition
- Monitoring provision/Benchmarking

## ***Management arrangements***

### ***Principles, Terms of Reference and Accountability Structures for the WMRP***

#### ***Principles***

- There will be one set of working groups that are signed up to and owned by the stakeholders and commissioners of the WMRP to ensure the co-ordination of regional activity concerning inclusion, ensuring positive outcomes and facilitating good practice in the provision of services and support for children with SEN and/or disabilities, looked after children or children leaving care, children in need and other vulnerable children.
- The WMRP will be a voluntary partnership.

#### ***West Midlands Regional Partnership Management Consortium (WMRPMC)***

#### ***Terms of Reference***

#### **1.0 Accountability**

The West Midlands Regional Partnership is accountable to the 14 West Midlands Local Authorities through the Directors of Children's Services. The Partnership is funded by grant monies from the DfES and is supported by the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM). It is steered by a multi-agency Management Consortium (WMRPMC).

#### **2.0 Objectives**

- 2.1 To promote inclusion, positive outcomes and facilitate good practice in the provision of services and support for children with SEN and/or disabilities, looked after children or children leaving care, children in need and other vulnerable children by:

- Co-ordinating activity where the opportunity for the regional joint commissioning of services has been identified
- Bringing partners together on a voluntary basis to enable the sharing of best practice regionally and nationally
- Supporting the development and delivery of key areas of national policy
- Working in partnership with ADECS, DfES and GOWM on the delivery of regional policies
- Helping to co-ordinate local authority children's services across the West Midlands region
- Providing regional oversight and support for authorities in their performance management responsibilities
- Supporting the development of more inclusive policies and practices

2.2 To liaise with other significant outside bodies and promote partnership working in the best interests of children.

### **3.0 Membership**

The membership will comprise:

- At least one Director of Children's Services nominated by the West Midlands ADECS (recommended chair)
- The Assistant Director/Head of Service with strategic and financial responsibility for vulnerable children from each of the 14 constituent Local Authorities
- The Regional Facilitators

- One representative from each of the following (nominated by);

Government Office for the West Midlands

The WM Strategic Health Authority

WM Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Voluntary sector (NCH)

West Midlands Parent Partnership Network

Higher Education (University of Birmingham)

West Midlands Regional Learning and Skills Council

Regional Lead for the Youth Justice Board

National Association of Special Schools (NASS)

Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP)

The Management Consortium may from time to time co-opt additional members e.g. Inspectorate, DfES SEN Adviser to reflect the requirements of national and local agendas.

The Management Consortium will be supported by the DfES, through the National Adviser to the Regional Partnerships.

#### **4.0 Working Arrangements**

The Management Consortium will:

- establish regional groups on specific areas of work which will report no less than 6 monthly to the Management Consortium on their work programme
- additionally commission time limited task groups as appropriate
- plan an annual standing conference to which all stakeholders are invited
- meet at least quarterly

Non-confidential notes of the Management Consortium meetings will be copied to the chairs of the regional groups.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND LINKS

Government Office for the West Midlands

West Midlands Directors of Education and Children's Services Group

DfES National Steering Group

DfES – RP National Adviser and National SEN Adviser HMI

Support

WMRP Management Consortium

Collaborative Working

Other Regional Partnerships

Progress reports

Commission work

Be Healthy

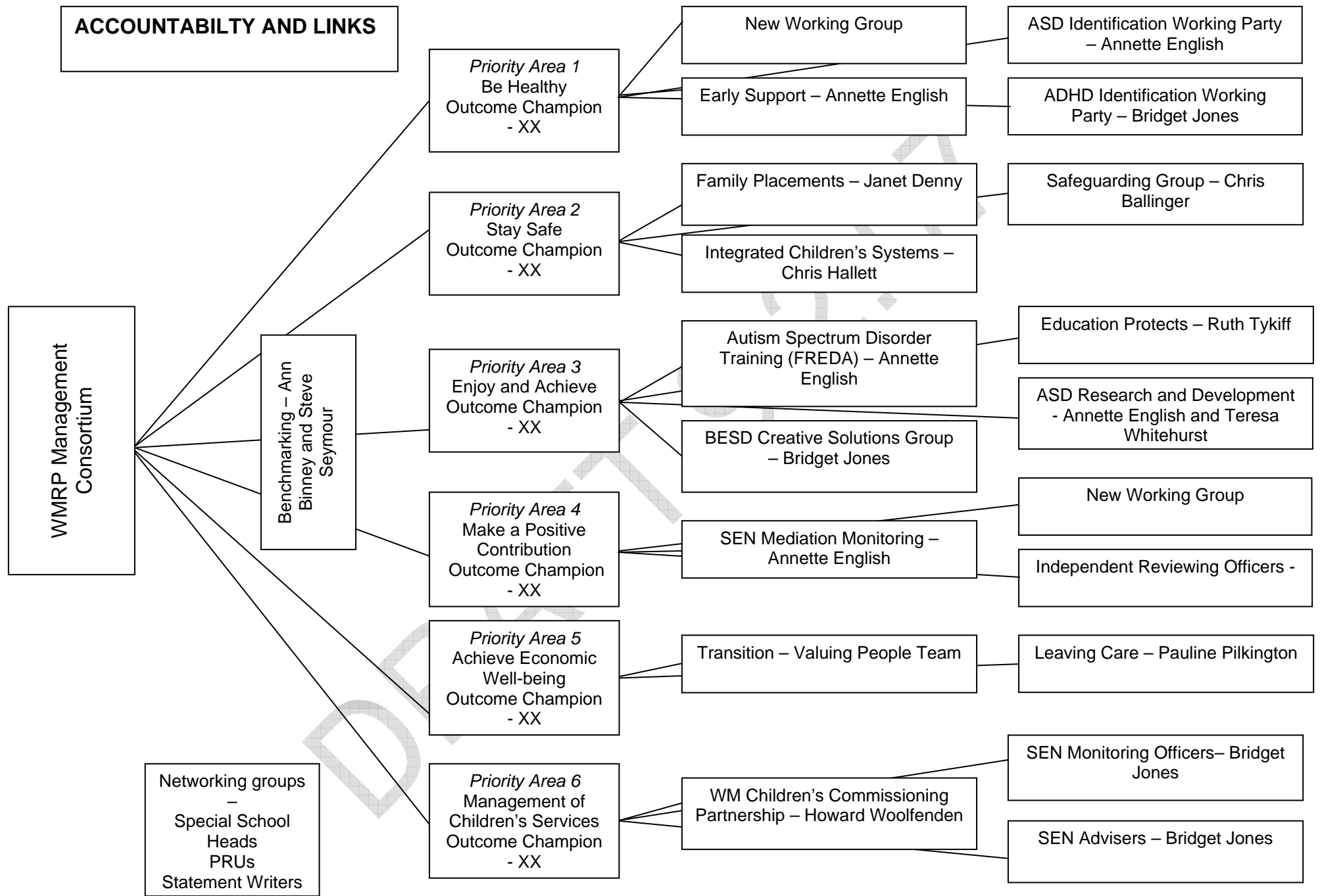
Stay Safe

Enjoy and Achieve

Make a Positive Contribution

Achieve Economic Well-being

Management of Children's Services



## ***Collaboration***

The WMRP will continue to collaborate with other Regional Partnerships as appropriate. Current collaboration that is ongoing includes;

The WMRP also has good links with the Government Office for the West Midlands and appropriate DfES policy teams concerned with implementation of major policy initiatives such as Every Child Matters, Change for Children and the Children's National Framework.

## ***Lead Regions***

The WMRP is lead region for work being progressed across the Partnerships on Autism spectrum disorders, and Early Years. We will

- provide a national overview of relevant work being progressed by the RPs
- support national developments
- support other RPs

## ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

Working Groups are either in place, or will need to be formed, to take forward work in key areas during 2007- 2008. Each Working Group is affiliated to one of the eight key WMRP Priority Areas as described in the WMRP Action Plan. Each Priority Area has a member of the Management Consortium who acts as an 'ECM Outcome Champion' for one or more of the Priority Areas. The Priority Areas are clustered around the five ECM Outcomes.

The Working Groups are formed and monitored as follows:

- Advice is sought from Management Consortium as to key colleagues to participate to represent the local authority and/or organisation.
- Membership and function of the groups is regularly reviewed and working groups have specific tasks.
- Chairs of each working group are asked to send an electronic report to their Management Consortium 'ECM Outcome Champion' and Regional Facilitator no less than 2 weeks before every Management Consortium meeting.
- The 'ECM Outcome Champion' feeds back progress at each Management Consortium meeting.

- Some work may be taken forward with consultants who develop a brief in consultation with the appropriate working groups and Management Consortium. They also report regularly to working groups and to Management Consortium through attendance at meetings and updates in electronic and hard copy.
- Products are presented in draft to Management Consortium and time is devoted to evaluation of impact and the use made of products at meetings. Working groups also report back at their meetings on impact and changes to practice as a result of their work and participation.
- An annual report is submitted to NSG.

### ***Communications Strategy***

The WMRP has a web-site: [www.westmidlandsrp.org.uk](http://www.westmidlandsrp.org.uk) which includes details of all the RP activities as well as products.

Each regional priority area has its own web page which contains information pertinent to the priority area, its workstreams and working groups.

Several email networks have been set up across the region to facilitate communication on a 2-way basis –both ‘from’ the WMRP and ‘to’ the WMRP. The email networks are managed through Becta.

‘Lea-link’ is a link for senior education officers in the region

‘wmsenrp-link’ is an email link for anyone interested in the work of the WMRP

‘wm-ppo’ is a regional email link for the West Midlands Parent Partnership Officers

‘wm-provider-link’ is an email link for providers and commissioners of placements for children and young people from the West Midlands

In addition the WMRP manages (through Becta) a national email link for specialist Educational Psychologists who work with children with an ASD and their families – ‘ep-asds’