

The Children's Commissioner Annual Report 2005/06 Briefing Note

1 Introduction

The Children's Commissioner, Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green, was appointed in April 2005, a statutory role created under the Children Act 2004. The Commissioner is responsible for overseeing and reporting on the wellbeing of children and young people in England.

The Children's Commissioner's function is to promote awareness of the needs, rights and interests of children and young people, particularly in relation to the five Every Child Matters outcomes. He will do this by listening to the views of children and young people, producing reports, conducting research and advising Government.

2 The Annual Report

This first annual report fulfils three main functions:

- i. To account for the functions and finances of the office of the Children's Commissioner, a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB)
- ii. To report on progress within the first year of establishment
- iii. To highlight plans for 2006/07

3 Progress in the 2005/06

In the first year of office the Commissioner has established his office, (including the recruitment of his management team and the establishment of the Strategic Board).

Eight key themes were prioritised:

- Children and young people in society
- Tackling discrimination
- Youth justice and anti-social behaviour
- Bullying
- Asylum seeking
- Vulnerable children
- Disabled children
- The health and wellbeing of children and young people

The report outlines progress under each of these themes, which includes consultation with young people, lobbying, policy development, media campaigns, production of guidance and, at Yarl's Wood, invoking the right of the Commissioner to enter premises for the purposes of interviewing a child.

4 Plans for 2006/07

The planned outputs for the Commissioner are grouped in five areas:

- Participation Strategy
- Communications with stakeholders
- Influencing Government policy
- Undertaking research and publishing reports
- Improving public understanding of the key issues facing children and young people today

In addition the Commissioner will expand the programme of activities under the eight themes prioritised in 2005/06, with the aim of:

- spreading good practice
- developing effective links between the centre and local areas
- publishing reports (eg on asylum) and guides (eg for parents)
- widening consultation with children and young people
- scrutinising and challenging inappropriate policy or practice
- publishing research (eg on treatment of 14+ year olds by local authorities)
- Influencing policy development

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