

# **BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES**



**a YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE CHILDREN'S PLAN**

## introduction

The Government has just made some pretty big decisions about how to make sure every young person enjoys their childhood and teenage years.

You have told us that England in 2007 is a great place to grow up. Young people today have opportunities that their grandparents didn't. But that doesn't mean there aren't serious issues to address.

This Plan sets out changes that will take place over the next 10 years that will help all young people, whatever their circumstances, to get on in life.

It talks about how we will support your family and community, so that they can support you.

This magazine will tell you how this is going to affect you.



### Listening to you...

If you're going to put a plan together for young people, it makes sense to ask them what should go in it. The Children's Plan has been written with the input and ideas of young people, as well as those of parents, teachers and others working in health and education. You'll notice that many of the improvements in the Plan involve trials or pilots. That's because the Children's Plan is just the first step. We want to try these ideas to find out what works best.

**PLACES to go...**

Outdoor space and a healthy lifestyle

**...and things to do**

Lots more opportunities

**4**

**improving YOUR safety**

Making public places safer

The Staying Safe Action Plan

Help if you're in danger

Tackling bullying

**6**

**Education and training**

Making progress

Taking the right decisions

Helping you stay in education or training to 18

Giving you more choices

**8**

**CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES**

What if...

**12**

**KEEPING OUT OF TROUBLE**

Tackling drugs and alcohol

A new approach for young offenders

**14**

**PARENTS AND CARERS**

Helping parents to support you

**15**

# OUTDOOR SPACE AND a HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

## Get Active!

You told us that you enjoy playing and taking part in activities outside school, but that there weren't enough places for you to go to meet friends and do the things you enjoy. The skills you pick up will be valued when you grow up and get a job. Getting active can also keep you out of trouble and help you earn the respect of the people in your community.

To make sure there are plenty of things for you to do, we are spending enough money either to build 50 new youth centres, do up 500 youth clubs, or create 2000 small centres – and we want you to have a say about what should be provided in your area and how it should be designed.

We'll also build 30 new outdoor adventure play parks. And because you told us that you wanted to feel safe when you were hanging out with your friends, we'll make sure that there's an adult there in case you need them.

We will also ensure that there is money to improve places to go in parks and other public spaces.

## Body matters

England is in danger of becoming a fat nation. In 2005, one in five people between the ages of two and fifteen years old were obese. The Government is encouraging active healthy lifestyles by:

- schools offering more PE and sport
- creating more safe routes for walking and cycling to school
- teaching young people how to cook healthy meals and offering better school lunches
- launching a national action plan on obesity in 2008.

Help will be offered to young people who are already overweight.

## Peace of mind

How you get on with other people, and feeling good about yourself, are as important as your education if you're going to get the most out of life. To help, the Government will:

- look into improving sex and relationship education
- encourage schools to talk to young people who might need help but don't want to ask for it
- make sure help's at hand to support young people's emotional wellbeing and address mental health problems.

# lots more opportunities

## What's on offer?

Over the next couple of years every school will be opening its doors for longer.

You'll be able to use their sports facilities, catch up on your school work and do other things you enjoy, like drama and music. We want schools to get your help deciding what activities to offer.

We will be testing out whether young people could have the chance to do five hours of arts and cultural activities a week – from going to see dance to making films – to match the five hours of sport you will be entitled to by 2010.

## What if I'm disabled?

Disability should never be a barrier to you. We will make projects more accessible to disabled children and boost support for you and your family to have short breaks.

## Making you aware of what's out there

You told us that you find it hard to know what's going on in your area. We are working with local councils to test new, easy to use ways to give you better information online.



# making PUBLIC PLACES SAFER

## Managing risks

Protecting young people from harm and abuse doesn't mean wrapping you up in cotton wool. But you shouldn't have to face unnecessary risks. To help make sure that doesn't happen, we are launching a new campaign to:

- make you more aware of risks and how to deal with them, through your school
- help your parents understand the real risks young people face
- encourage the public to do more to keep young people safe.

Young people and parents have told us they want to know more about how to be safe online and avoid risks from video games. We have asked Tanya Byron, who you might know from TV, to look into this.

## Being careful about who works with you

Anyone who gets a job in a school has to go through an extremely thorough check first. This means checking whether they have a criminal record or have been banned from working with children. That goes for everyone who comes into contact with children through working in a school. And we are going to tighten up the system so that anyone who wants to work with children and young people anywhere – including volunteers – have to register first with a new scheme which will check to make sure they are not unsuitable.

If you are concerned about someone that works with you, you should talk about this with an adult you trust.



## Reducing crime

One thing that comes through loud and clear when we talk with young people is your concern about safety on the streets, on public transport and in public spaces. Most crime against young people is committed by other young people. We are publishing a strategy on youth crime in 2008 to help young people feel safer, give them better support when they are a victim and keep them out of trouble.



# THE STAYING SAFE ACTION PLAN

Earlier this year, the Government asked you what you thought affected young people's safety. Based on what you said, it's going to publish the Staying Safe Action Plan, in early 2008.

## HELP IF YOU'RE IN DANGER

The NSPCC will get more money for ChildLine and its other helplines so that young people have somewhere to turn if they are being harmed or fear they are at risk.

The money will help expand and improve services, such as the NSPCC's 'there4me' service, which offers one-to-one counselling with an online adviser.

You can call ChildLine **for free** on 0800 1111 – and it won't show up on your phone bill.

## TACKLING BULLYING

The Government has already told schools what they can do to tackle bullying because of race, religion or culture, or because someone is lesbian or gay, or just 'different'.

Soon, it will give schools more advice on how to help children with special educational needs and disabled children who are being bullied.

Bullying can happen face-to-face or over the internet and by mobile phone. A group of experts, including people who run websites and mobile phone companies, are looking at how to tackle this 'cyberbullying'.

The Government is also looking at getting schools, people who work in your local council and anti-bullying charities to work together to make sure that its advice is being followed. We are also looking at improving the way complaints about bullying are dealt with.



# making PROGRESS

### Changing the way you are taught

Over the next few years your teaching and learning will focus more on you.

Your teachers will consider your individual knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes.

This means that your teachers will be able to:

- base the way they teach you on your individual achievements and talents
- help you understand how well you are doing and stretch you to do even better
- give you support quickly if you need it
- give your parents a good idea of whether you are progressing as they would hope and what more they can do at home to help.

The Government is going to spend more on training your teachers so they can put these changes into action.



### Stage not age

Schools are going to try out something called 'single level tests' over the next two years. Instead of taking tests in English and maths at the end of primary and then again at 14, you would take shorter tests each time you are ready to move up a national curriculum level.

They'll work like music grade exams. Your teachers will only enter you for the exams when they think you are ready and will do well, and not because you've reached a certain age or year group. If you do not pass, you will be able to take the test again six months later.

### Disruptive behaviour

You have told us that bad behaviour in school concerns you. The Government has strengthened schools' powers to ensure good behaviour and is encouraging schools to use these powers.

We will also be helping schools work with parents to reinforce good behaviour, and help police and the children's services fight bigger but related issues like drugs and gangs.

Nearly all secondary schools are now in a 'behaviour partnership' with other local schools. That means local schools working together to improve overall standards of behaviour and help problem pupils.



### Skills

To get on in life, it's important that you can use English, maths and ICT skills well day-to-day. That's why 'functional' skills will increasingly form part of all different qualifications.

Employers have also told us they want to see a greater focus on the skills needed for jobs so we'll include more on things like team work in the learning you already do.

### GCSEs

GCSEs are being changed from 2009 to include less coursework. From 2010, you will need to pass functional English, maths or ICT before you can get a grade C or above at GCSE in those subjects.

### A levels

From 2008, A levels will be changed to give you a chance to show off how good you really are, with an opportunity to do an extended project.

The standard required to pass will stay the same, but the exams will include some more demanding questions and a new A\* grade is being introduced to reward the highest achievers.

# taking THE RIGHT DECISIONS

To support you while you're learning, we guarantee there'll be a single person in your school who knows you well – a personal tutor – and who:

- knows how you are doing in all of your subjects
- helps you make subject choices and to look forward to education and careers after school
- ensures you get any extra support that you need, including for problems outside of school.

They may also help you find out about activities you'd like to do in your free time.

Some of you already have someone like this. By 2010 personal tutors will be working in every secondary school.



# HELPING YOU STAY IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING TO 18

We're raising the age when you leave school, college or training, from 16 now, to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.

But to help you stay on in learning now the 'September Guarantee' has been introduced. This will make sure that every 16 year old is able to get a place in some form of learning – either in school, college or on the job training.

### Financial support while you're learning

We don't want lack of money to stop you staying on in full-time education if that's what you want.

You might be able to get an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) while you study. These are the facts:

- you could get up to £30 a week, and bonuses if you stay the course, behave well and put in effort
- to work out whether you can get an EMA and how much you'll get, the Government looks at your family's income
- almost half of young people in full-time education could get an EMA.

From 2008, most 16 year olds with an EMA will be told how much financial support they'll get if they decide to go into higher education later on.

### How to get help with your studies

The Study Plus scheme is being introduced in all secondary schools. It will support 15 to 16 year olds who need extra help getting a good grasp of literacy and numeracy skills.

There will also be more one-to-one teaching available for all young people who are having difficulties in the main subjects.

# GIVING YOU MORE CHOICES

Once you turn 14, the Government wants you to have more choice over what – and how – you study. New qualifications are being introduced, and older ones are being brought up to date.

### Diplomas

Diplomas are new qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds. They will start to become available from September 2008 and will combine practical and classroom learning for everyone.

They keep your options open, because (like GCSEs and A Levels) they can take you into either university or work. But they can bring your learning to life by putting it into practice.

Employers and universities are deciding what the content of each Diploma will be – making sure it's relevant to your future life and career. As well as giving you knowledge, they will help you develop communication, teamwork and other useful skills.

You can take GCSEs or A levels as part of a Diploma, or alongside it.

### Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer occupational training for young people.

With a big emphasis on practical and on-the-job learning, they are ideal for those over 16 who want to learn new skills and gain qualifications while working.

Apprenticeships allow you to earn while you learn and are available in over 180 different types of business, from catering to engineering.

### Foundation Learning Tier

The Foundation Learning Tier is for young people over 16 not yet working at Level 2 – the equivalent of GCSEs – to recognise achievements and enable them to progress to the next level.

If you take this route, you will have a 'progression pathway' – clear stepping stones that will help you start your first Level 2 qualification and develop the skills necessary for living independently. Look out for the launch in September 2010.

# WHAT IF...

### ...my parents have split up, or are about to?

A family break up is very upsetting for everyone involved. We want to make families aware of how to get help as soon as troubles start.

We are also looking at how to help your parents, or the people looking after you, continue to support you fully during and after a split. In particular, we are looking at what more schools and others can do to help dads stay involved with your life if that's what you want, even if they no longer live with you.

### ...my family isn't well off?

Despite what you see on TV, poverty isn't just a problem in faraway countries. It still affects millions of children in this country too.

The Government wants to bring all children out of poverty by 2020.

We will help to give parents training so they can start working, get better jobs and access good childcare they can afford.

### ...I've been excluded

If you've been excluded from local school or college, there are still other ways to get your education. To improve this 'alternative' education the Government is:

- improving pupil referral units – alternative schools for excluded pupils – and providing new small schools that work with local businesses to provide on-the-job training
- ensuring that all young people who are not at mainstream schools have a personal education plan
- encouraging pupil referral units and other schools to link up.

## CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES



### ...I'm the one doing the caring

There are some young people who are caring for another family member across England and Wales. Young carers look after people, for example those who are ill or disabled.

The Government will be launching a new carers strategy next year which will look to strengthen support for all carers, including young carers. But to get some early progress over the next three years there'll be funding to develop and test better ways to support families with young carers, so young people do not have to undertake caring that is too much for them.



### ...I am disabled?

The Government is setting up a programme to give extra support to disabled young people and increase their opportunities to be included in all activities. The aim is to have this in place by 2011.



### ...I might be taken into care?

You have said that you want more support for your families and we are working hard to develop better services which will help you stay safely with your families or make the changes that will get you back home as soon as possible. The Government is also trying to make it easier for relatives and friends to be considered as carers for you where it isn't possible for you to stay with your parents.

At the moment, young people in care have to leave their placement at the age of 18. That's a full six years earlier than the average young person leaves home. From 2008, we're going to test the idea of allowing young people in care to stay with their carers until they turn 21.

Care leavers who are in education – or who wish to go back – will get a personal advisor until the age of 25. A £2000 grant is also planned to help fund your further education.



## **tackling drugs and alcohol**

Drinking too much can make you more vulnerable to all kinds of trouble, from getting pregnant to becoming a victim of crime. The Government is looking at providing information to make young people under the age of 18 more aware of the risks.

A new strategy for giving young people better drugs education, giving families information on treating addiction, and dealing with drug-related problems such as crime, is due in 2008.



### **What if my parents are the ones with the problem?**

The new drugs strategy will also cover protecting the children of parents who use drugs and alcohol.

## **a new approach for young offenders**

The deeper young people get into the justice system – like young offender institutions – the more likely they are to keep on committing crimes. That's why the Government is looking at other options for young offenders, especially for those who've committed less serious crimes for the first time.

If they do go into custody, getting a good education and support can also help to break the cycle. So can good support after they get out. The Government is thinking about how to provide this.

The Government is also hoping to cut down on the number of young people behaving anti-socially in the first place. To do this, it is:

- giving local councils money to pay for different types of support at different times – this might involve a warning letter or a contract for a young person to sign agreeing what they think is acceptable behaviour
- helping young people who get anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) to behave better.



# HELPING PARENTS TO SUPPORT YOU

The Government's role is to help parents do the best for their children.

But although three out of every four parents and carers say that they have needed help in the past, many felt it was difficult to work out what help was on offer and how they could actually get it.

That's why changes are being made to help your parents support you better.

## Sharing knowledge

The Government is sharpening how it informs and supports parents. From 2008 telephone helplines will be able to take more calls from parents needing advice on things from dealing with bullying to family breakdown. In the future there will be a new search engine so parents can find support and advice online more easily. We are also testing whether Facebook or MySpace style social networking sites might be a good way for parents to swap tips and support each other.

The Government is also trying to develop a single place where every parent can record information about the progress you are making from birth to school days – helping them to see what the next steps are and if there is a problem.

## A helping hand

Local councils are working to make sure parents know where to turn when they could use a bit of extra help and advice, and that all local services are easy for every family to use.

## Reaching out

Some families don't make full use of the support available to them. Parent support advisors in schools are there to reach out to parents and give them advice if a child or young person is experiencing problems.

From 2008, in some areas there will be new key workers to help families with particular problems. Their role is to link children's and adult services so families are better supported.

Ref: 00999/YPV

© Crown copyright 2007

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan)

Published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

**75% recycled**

This leaflet is printed  
on 75% recycled paper



When you have finished with  
this leaflet please recycle it

department for  
**children, schools and families**