

Governors' Information Bulletin

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Calderdale Challenge 2008 – 2013

So, what is the Calderdale Challenge?

It is a five year change programme that will last from September 2008 until August 2013.

Why do we need the Calderdale Challenge?

The Calderdale Challenge comes at a time of significant change, challenge and new opportunities nationally, regionally and locally. We need to take advantage of these new opportunities to raise our game.

Currently, across Calderdale, many agencies are engaged in a wide range of initiatives to improve the lives of Calderdale's children and young people and much has been achieved since we started our change for children programme in 2005. Building on these achievements, we are now well placed to revisit our vision and ambition for Calderdale's children and young people and bring together these initiatives in a way that makes sense for staff and workers in all agencies and, most particularly, to the children, young people and their families whom we are trying to support and whose lives and life chances we are seeking to improve.

What is the purpose of the Calderdale Challenge programme?

The programme will build on what we have achieved and help us to move from good to best. This means, as providers of services for children and young people, we need to raise our game. The programme is intended to ensure that services will help all children and young people to achieve and succeed and make the best possible progress they are able to make.

In short, we aim to make Calderdale a place that recognises that every child and young person is different and ensures that they all matter.

What are we committed to do through the Calderdale Challenge?

The Calderdale Challenge has 7 proposed objectives. They are to:

- **achieve more equal outcomes by narrowing the gap.** We need to understand more about the different needs and challenges for children, young people and families wherever they live in Calderdale. We need to work with partners



to develop services that meet these needs. In particular we need to help those children and young people who, for whatever reason, are not able to achieve and succeed as well as other children and young people in Calderdale;

- **work with children, young people and families to help them to take positive action to avoid pitfalls and problems.** We need to develop family support and outreach services so that we can ensure the safety and well-being of all children and young people. As these services develop, over time, fewer children and young people will need to come into care;
- **ensure appropriate and effective specialist services for children, young people and families.** We recognise that there will always be some children and young people who will need particular specialist support. Therefore, we must ensure that we can provide high quality services that meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups of children and young people so that they are able to achieve and succeed;
- **focus on families.** We need to focus more on families, in particular those of the most vulnerable children and young people. We need to reduce the impact family crises can have on children's safety, well-being and learning. In particular, we need to improve the way in which we work across the full range of children's and adult's services to help families resolve their challenges;
- **keep schools and settings at the centre of our Every Child Matters agenda.** We need to recognise that schools and education settings are at the heart of universal provision for all children and young people. Therefore, we need to ensure that all Calderdale schools and settings should not only help all children and young people to learn and achieve but should also become the focal point for community development and regeneration. We need to keep learning at the heart of our wider change for children programme;
- **build schools for the future.** We need to develop a clear vision and rationale for our proposals to rebuild and refurbish both primary and secondary schools. When shaping and framing this vision, we need to consider the wider regeneration implications of our building schools for the future programme. We need to ensure that the future of schools and learning is an integral part of Calderdale's integrated regeneration strategy;
- **ensure sustainable leadership.** We need to ensure sustainable high quality leadership in our services. We must recognise that, if we are to achieve our vision, we not only need to encourage and support future leaders but also help them to develop the skills that are needed to lead services that can identify and meet the needs of all Calderdale's children and young people.

What are the goals we are trying to achieve? Every young person will:

- receive high quality services that are judged to be outstanding; and
- attend a school which is judged to be at least good.

How will we know when we've got there?

By 2013:

- Calderdale schools will be in the top ten local authorities nationally for outcomes for children and young people;
- all Calderdale schools will achieve their floor targets;
- we will have achieved all targets for outcomes for children and young people in our 2012 Children and Young People's Plan and our Local Area Agreement.

A discussion paper has been produced to explain the Calderdale Challenge proposals in more detail. The first version of this document was sent to schools in September 2007 and a revised version, taking account of the feedback received so far, will be sent into schools shortly. I do hope that governing bodies will take the time to consider this paper and to respond to the consultation.

At the moment, we are consulting on the proposed objectives and goals for the challenge. Once this stage of the consultation process has ended, we will finalise these and then move on to consider, with colleagues, what actions we need to take to realise our ambitions. This phase of the consultation will last from April until July 2008. We plan to launch the Calderdale Challenge in September and, by that time, hope that every Calderdale school has determined what it can do to support our shared vision and help us all move from good to best.

The revised discussion document will be posted on the Clerks'/Chairs of Governors' vle area.

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