

**Response by the Social Enterprise Coalition to the consultation on
21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child**

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Introduction

The Social Enterprise Coalition (the Coalition) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for Children, Schools and Families' consultation on 21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child.

The Coalition was established in 2002 as the national voice of social enterprise. We represent a wide range of social enterprises, umbrella bodies and networks, with a combined membership reaching over 10,500 social enterprises. These include co-operatives and mutuals, development trusts, housing associations, leisure and football supporters' trusts and Social Firms. This response was informed by consultation with members of the Coalition.

Social enterprises are businesses with primarily social or environmental objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners. We believe that by applying innovative and efficient approaches to addressing the complex and diverse needs of children and young people, social enterprises can make a real and sustained contribution to providing children and young people's services.

We welcome this opportunity for consultation on the Government's vision for 21st century schools. The Coalition fully supports the commitment made to preparing every child and young person to make a success of their life through a world class education system, which is outward-facing and works in closer partnership with the third sector, and which recognises the valuable role of extended activities and opportunities in enriching the lives of children, families and the wider community.

Question 1: Do you support the overall vision of a 21st century school system in paragraphs 2.1 – 2.12?

1. The Coalition supports the overall vision of a 21st century school system in which a responsive and outwards facing and system aims to prepare every child and young person to make a success of their life.
2. In particular, the Coalition welcomes both the department's recognition of the contribution of the third sector in providing high quality activities and opportunities for children and young people, and the recognition of the value of extra-curricular activities and opportunities in enriching the lives of children, families and their communities.
3. Social enterprises, which combine entrepreneurialism with an emphasis on engaging directly with users and local people, are well placed to design and deliver services tailored to the needs of users and the local community. Indeed, social enterprises are frequently characterised by a close understanding of and commitment to their users, often including the involvement of these clients in the organisational structure.
4. Through the provision of services tailored to a community or individual's needs, ranging from affordable childcare, and activities such as sports clubs, to training designed to support

people into employment, social enterprises make a real contribution to enriching the lives of children, families and their communities.

5. Additionally, as the consultation document suggests, through meeting the needs of the individuals and communities they serve, third sector organisations are also helping to realise the community objectives highlighted by DCSF of local cohesion, sustainability and regeneration.
6. It is particularly important that strong and sustained support for activities which allow individuals to gain skills and thereby contribute to their communities as citizens and workers, whether these be team working and cooperation skills learned through football clubs or IT skills which enhance employment prospects, is given during the current economic climate.
7. Taking the example of tackling child poverty, a recent report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation forecasts that tackling child poverty will become more difficult in the current recession, and highlights the need for placing a “much greater emphasis on developing parents’ skills and qualifications, as well as improving both childcare and the quality of jobs”¹ in order to make progress on meeting the Government’s targets for ending child poverty by 2020.
8. As stated above, third sector organisations are well placed to meet these needs through the provision of tailored community services, and sustained support by Government for these services through an extended school system could play a significant role in supporting communities through the current recession.

Question 6b: How best can the performance/impact of partnerships of schools and other services be recognised and monitored (paragraphs 3.25 – 3.34)?

1. Where partnerships are formed between schools and third sector deliverers of services to children, families and their communities, the Coalition recommends that performance and impact are best measured through the outcomes achieved by the partnerships for the service users.
2. The Coalition recognises the complexity of determining what the desired outcomes of services should be, especially where services such as music teaching or sports clubs are concerned.
3. As such, it is vital that the desired outcomes are considered with care and in consultation with experts, including third sector service delivery organisations, who through their close contact with service users are expert in understanding what paths to success for their service users look like.

¹ Quote from Julia Unwin, Chief Executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, <http://www.jrf.org.uk/media-centre/child-poverty-targets-feb-2009>

4. It is important that outcomes, like services, are tailored to the service users, and there will be a need for looking beyond traditional measures of success such as academic qualifications, particularly where hard-to-reach groups are concerned.
5. In terms of assessing whether an individual has benefitted from a service in terms of furthering their own paths to success, evaluators must look to assess positive outcomes across an individual's life, ranging from employment, to citizenship and personal development.
6. For example, it may be inappropriate or insufficient to assess the performance of music tuition on whether pupils make progress in passing music exams.
7. Wider considerations, such as whether involvement in positive activities like music lessons supports a young person to end their involvement in anti-social activities, or whether sustained commitment to learning a musical instrument supports a young person to develop better study skills within school, may be of greater significance for some students than achieving success in musical examinations.
8. The implications of this for assessing the performance of service deliverers, and by extension partnerships, are that the desired outcomes set by evaluators need to take added value from service delivery into account and recognise the work of service deliverers who take a holistic approach to service delivery, and who may therefore simultaneously address multiple user needs.

Question 6c: Other than how we measure performance, what are the key changes that need to be made to drive the development of stronger partnerships?

1. In order to meet the vision for 21st century schools and enable strong partnerships to form between third sector service deliverers and schools, it is imperative that the contribution of third sector organisations is understood and appreciated at all levels, including at the level of local government and individual schools.
2. Evidence from the social enterprise movement suggests that this understanding has yet to be achieved, and until this is addressed, an extended school system will be unable to make the most of the contribution that social enterprises have to offer, both at the level of service design, and at the strategic level.
3. Indeed, social enterprises, which are often characterised by an emphasis on engaging directly with users and local people, are well placed to feed in at the strategic level on the commissioning needs of the communities with which they work.
4. The Coalition recognises the potential to address the current situation through Children's Trusts, which aim to address the fragmentation of responsibilities for children's services and develop holistic services which can address the totality of each child's needs.
5. However, whilst commitments to engaging the third sector at the strategic level through Children's Trusts are positive, questions remain over how this will translate into practice,

particularly in relation to ensuring effective, comprehensive and valued third sector representation.

Question 11: Do you have any other comments?

1. Whilst the Coalition supports DCSF's vision for 21st century and recognises the potential of a greater emphasis on the delivery of extended services, we nevertheless caution against an emphasis on the delivery of such services through co-location on school sites at the expense of the recognition that there is a need for services delivered from alternative locations.
2. Consideration for the fact that schools are not the most appropriate location for all extended services, particularly for those young people or parents who have had difficult relations with their local school and may be discouraged from participating in activities provided on the school site, must be given at all times in order to ensure that certain groups do not feel alienated from valuable service provision.

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