

Draft Project Proposal: ARMA Standards of Care for Children and Young People

Project background

ARMA convened a meeting in September 2005 for organisations with an interest in children and young people with musculoskeletal conditions to discuss how they could work together more effectively. This brought together a group of people with distinctive but complementary approaches – including paediatric health professionals and parents of children with arthritis.

The participants recognised that whilst there was some understanding of good practice that was being used in some health localities there was not a complete picture nor a set of shared, agreed standards for health care and social support.

It was felt that ARMA was uniquely positioned to lead a project to:

- Determine appropriate standards of health care and social support to meet the needs of children and young people with musculoskeletal conditions and their families;
- Draw on the experience and expertise of service users and providers to identify and promote good practice;
- Develop audit tools to enable local service providers to evaluate their own services against the Standards of Care to identify areas for improvement;
- Support local service planners and providers in commissioning and delivering high quality services thus promoting equality and inclusion in access to health services around the UK;
- Provide tools to support local and national organisations with an interest in children and young people, such as Children's Trusts, Sure Start and Connexions, develop their awareness of the issues affecting children and young people with musculoskeletal conditions.

This work will be innovative because it will be underpinned by:

- An increased role for children, young people and their families in shaping key decisions over the design and delivery of services;
- Building 'evidence-based' policy making into the processes by linking directly to the everyday experiences of children, young people and their families;
- Achieving a consensus on standards of care in services, information and guidance;
- Recognising the importance of good self-management with strategies to help children and young people with musculoskeletal conditions to support each other;
- A focus on multi-disciplinary approaches that provide a continuity of management in service provision across agencies, which will bring a 'whole-child' approach;
- Promoting public health issues such as equality and inclusion in access to education, public transport, youth and leisure services (particularly those provided by the statutory and voluntary sectors).

Project design and planning

The Project Management Team will establish the framework for conducting the various stages of the project. This will include convening the Working Group and wider group of stakeholders who will be involved and scoping out the parameters of the project leading to a terms of reference for the Working Group.