

# Public Document Pack

## **Supplementary Information for 10<sup>th</sup> June 2010 Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)**

Pages 1-10: Agenda item 9 - An overview of the key themes of the Children's Services Improvement Plan and an extract from the annual progress review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

This page is intentionally left blank

### Section D

An overview of the key themes of the improvement plan

#### 9.1 Background

9.1.1 The Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2014(CYPP) sets out a vision for all the children of Leeds to be happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the effects of poverty. The CYPP sets out two important cross cutting priorities, very relevant to the context that Leeds is now in given more recent inspection findings, which are:

- improving safeguarding
- enabling integrated working

9.1.2 Additionally, the CYPP set out 8 further short term priorities and 10 longer term ambitions. All of the short term priorities are relevant to the themes in the Improvement Plan and many of the targets feature in the Improvement Notice. The short term priorities are:

- Improving outcomes for looked after children
- Improving attendance and reducing persistent absence from school
- Improving early learning and primary outcomes in deprived areas
- Providing places to do and things to do
- Raising the proportion of young people in education or work
- Reducing child poverty
- Reducing teenage conception
- Reducing the need for children and young people to be in care

#### 9.2 Structure of the Improvement Plan

9.2.1 However, it is clear that we need to increase the pace of improvement in a number of areas in Leeds and this Improvement Plan will provide a focus for that increased pace and impact. The Improvement Plan is organised around five themes, in order to provide comprehensive and coherent coverage of the issues. The themes are:

- Effective leadership and governance of integrated children's services in Leeds
- Excellent safeguarding standards and practice
- Improve outcomes for looked after children
- All young people participating fully, socially and economically
- A highly skilled, well motivated, motivated and continually developing workforce

9.2.2 The detail of what will be done, by, when and who, how, and how we will measure success is all laid out in section E of the Improvement Plan – a detailed implementation plan across all the themes. However, these can also be summarised as:

- Effective leadership and governance of integrated children's services in Leeds

## Children's Services Improvement Plan

- Implement new Leadership and Governance arrangements for Children's Services, including developing an accountability framework for the delivery of outcomes for children and young people at a local level
  - Create a new Children's Trust Board with appropriate governance arrangements at both citywide and local level
  - Review the Children and Young People's Plan
  - Establish robust commissioning arrangements
  - Develop a strong performance management culture and framework, and develop robust quality assurance systems
  - Consider requirements for budget realignment to support delivery of children's services priorities
- Excellent safeguarding standards and practice
    - Establishment of high quality operational procedures with strict compliance, good record keeping and clear risk assessed decision making backed up by excellent quality assurance processes
    - Revise the operation of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure it is able to carry out all its functions effectively
    - Improve Early Intervention and prevention by: good information sharing, adherence to clear thresholds, use of CAF and effective interagency working
  - Improve outcomes for looked after children
    - Improve placements for looked after children
    - Reduce the number in care and time spent in care
    - Ensure effective planning for children and young people in care and leaving care
  - All young people participating fully, socially and economically
    - Implement an action plan to reduce the numbers of NEET (including the number of not knowns)
    - Improve attainment with particular focus on under achieving groups and settings (Eg. LAC relevant BME pupils, SEN and Free School Meals, National Challenge)
    - Improve school attendance with a particular focus on secondary and persistent absentees
    - Reduce the numbers of young people involved in burglary and reduce the high number of young people in the youth justice system who receive a custodial sentence
  - A highly skilled, well motivated, motivated and continually developing workforce
    - Produce workforce development plan for an integrated C&YP workforce to include recruitment, retention, training, skills development and provide improved clarity of roles and responsibilities
    - Ensure staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities efficiently by provision of effective IT systems and adequate support

## Children's Services Improvement Plan

- Ensure C&YP Social Care staff have appropriate and manageable workloads, and are kept under regular supervision

9.2.3 The Annual Review of the CYPP 09-14 will take place during March/April, set within the context of the revised children's trust arrangements. This Annual Review will take account of the Improvement Plan.

### 9.3 How we will know when we've got there

9.3.1 We want to secure excellent services for children and young people in Leeds by 2014. This will mean no areas for priority action being found in our next unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment, and improved annual performance ratings to "adequate" in 2010 and "performing well" in 2011.

9.3.2 During the lifetime of the Improvement Notice we will embed revised Children's Trust arrangements city-wide and at local level. This will include effective Children's Trust and Local Safeguarding Children Boards, with the appropriate level of representation across all partners, and the necessary supporting and consultative groups, with robust linkages between the different elements, in order to drive our improvement through the Children and Young People's Plan. Our leadership arrangements will be redefined to better manage and support effective integrated frontline services.

9.3.3 Through internal self- evaluation and external scrutiny we have increased our self-awareness and understanding of risk .We will build on this approach in a more systematic way, embedding it into our routine performance management. Delivery of services for children and young people will be backed by integrated support functions including commissioning and performance management to achieve greater coherence across the whole system and enable robust prioritisation and alignment of resources to priority improvement areas and sustaining good quality services. Our longer term approach to financial planning will ensure that budget allocations are kept under review and aligned to the delivery of our plans and priorities. Any such planning will need to take place in the context of the national funding picture and the impact of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

9.3.4 Strengthening the leadership and challenge role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board will help us to ensure that practice in Leeds is robust and agencies are working together effectively to safeguard vulnerable children and young people. An Integrated Safeguarding Unit will help to deliver a robust child protection system in which children, young people and families are properly engaged. Promotion of safeguarding, learning the lessons from Serious Case Reviews and delivering comprehensive training are all important elements that will be secured to improve our safeguarding arrangements.

9.3.5 We recognise that we cannot secure the improvements we need for our children and young people without a skilled, motivated and well supported

## Children's Services Improvement Plan

workforce that continues to develop, and this will be reflected in our Integrated Workforce Strategy.

- 9.3.6 It is of critical importance that frontline staff have appropriate case loads and are well supported, trained and supervised. Staff will be deployed into multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams as best fits the needs of the children, young people, families and communities we are here to assist. To achieve this we will require strong leadership and a clear agreed vision for the delivery of integrated children's services in Leeds.
- 9.3.7 Clear thresholds for intervention have been developed and will be fully understood and utilised by staff across all agencies. Integrated front-line services targeting support for children and families with additional and multiple additional needs will deliver timely responses to problems using appropriate care pathways. As the whole system is strengthened to respond more effectively to meet families' needs, we expect to see a reduction in the numbers of children and young people becoming looked after.
- 9.3.8 Whilst outcomes for our looked after children are improving, they lag behind those for their peers and this is unacceptable. We will continue to narrow that gap through better assessment, planning and co-ordinated individualised support for looked after children and young people and their carers. We will make sure that we are listening to what looked after children and young people are telling us about their experiences and use this to evaluate and improve our provision. A better range of local placements will not only improve choice and stability for children and young people, but will also have an impact on one of our major budget pressures, thus freeing resources for other priority areas of activity.
- 9.3.9 We want to see a greater proportion of our young people engaging fully in their community, thriving socially and economically. This means that we will focus our collective efforts more keenly on those groups of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable to under achievement. The gap between them and their peers must reduce progressively. We will tackle disengagement through our approach to Raising the Participation Age : ensuring we have the right range of opportunities for learning and training that will excite and motivate our young people, and providing them with good quality advice and support to access them. Our systems for information, advice and guidance will be strengthened to track young people more effectively and ensure that they stay within a supportive network that will help them to succeed. Partnership activity including a "Think Family" approach and integrated offender management will be used to reduce burglary and re-offending.
- 9.3.10 Leadership across all levels of our children's trust partnership in Leeds needs to be active, visible and effective in sustaining high quality responses to improve outcomes for our children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable. As our Improvement Plan develops we expect it to provide further

## **Children's Services Improvement Plan**

evidence of strong partnership activity to deliver on our priorities, and increased satisfaction of both service users and staff.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Review of progress against the immediate priorities**

### **1 Improving outcomes for Looked After Children**

#### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- Strengthen the arrangements for monitoring the quality and outcomes of external placements and for those children and young people in schools out of the city
- Improve the regularity and timeliness of information-gathering on the progress of Looked After Children at a strategic level, to enable regular tracking of pupils' progress and more timely evaluation of the impact of actions and interventions on progress and learning of Looked After Children
- Implement an integrated service for Looked After Children
- Develop a clear and understandable set of measures and targets for the achievement of the Care Promise.

### **2 Improving attendance and reducing persistent absence from school**

#### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- Securing delivery of the Children Leeds attendance strategy and activity plan through effective partnership engagement
- Targeted work with secondary schools to further address levels of persistent absence, including persistent absence for Looked After Children.

### **3 Improving early learning and primary outcomes in deprived areas**

#### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- 34 primary schools are below the national key stage 2 floor target, an increase of 6 from 2008. An increasing trend was also seen nationally. To meet national ambitions will require Leeds to have 19 or fewer schools below the target in 2011.

### **4. Places to go and things to do**

#### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- Loss of time limited funding for key projects in 2011, eg. Find Your Talent, Positive activities for young people, Youth Opportunity Fund, Youth Capital Fund and Engage
- Transport facilities and arrangements, particularly for those in disadvantaged areas
- Improved integration of websites and information sources.

## **5 Raising the proportion of young people in education or work**

### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- The current economic climate is especially challenging for young people entering the workplace for the first time
- Delivering the Children's services improvement plan activities for EET/NEET
- Improved collaboration between learning providers, employers and Connexions providers.

## **6 Reducing child poverty**

### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- Gaining the widest acceptance that poverty is the root of most poor outcomes for children and is the business of every service, agency and partner. There is a need to grow the commitment to developing integrated work to provide children, young people and families with pathways to economic and personal well being
- The current, medium and long term economic climate will impact upon employment and the income and resources in families
- There is limited project management capacity to take work on this priority forward across agencies. This will become acute as the statutory requirements in the Child Poverty Bill for joint needs assessment and strategy development are put in place.
- Developing coherent approach to Think Family policies and practice in the city, including working between services for children and young people and adult services
- The need to embed work to raise aspiration and resilience in family support work and to reduce the level of EET/NEET and narrow educational achievement gaps.

## **7 Reducing teenage conception**

### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- Mainstreaming teenage pregnancy as a priority across all services and strategies
- Challenging services to provide young people friendly services, especially for those less likely to engage with mainstream services
- Support for young fathers post 16.

## **8 Reducing the need for children and young people to be in care**

### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- Deliver the 5 themes of the 2010/11 Placement Strategy: edge of care; fostering; adoption; residential care; discharge from care
- Recruitment and retention of social workers; recruitment drive for fostering, adoption and family placement personnel
- The national trend arising from greater awareness of abuse and neglect, 17% rise in referrals in last 2 quarter 2s
- Capacity of CAF team to deal with the increase in the number of CAFs
- Fully evaluate the effectiveness of preventative services and respond to findings,

- including the Children Leeds Panels and residential provision
- Delivery of relevant sections of Children's Services Improvement Plan.

## **9 Strengthening safeguarding**

### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- Developing locality based integration around the multi-agency panels and ISLs and securing wider engagement with the CAF and stronger understanding of the suite of threshold documentation
- There is a need to develop clear pathway processes for all referrals that do not meet thresholds for statutory interventions and ensure that integrated working, the CAF and multi agency panel address needs
- Performance in the completion of initial and core assessments within the appropriate timescales, as illustrated in Table 10, is the subject of intensive activity reflected in the Children's Services Improvement Plan
- Clarity in roles and responsibilities for the ISLs and an evaluation of the placement pilot to ensure that capacity to support the integration of services is appropriate and in place at the end of the pilot
- The Clusters of Extended Services including schools, children's centres and their partners need to be supported, challenged and further developed to ensure they are able to take a lead in the integration of services locally
- Evaluation of case work in the Children Leeds Intervention Panels and CAF teams around the child needs to inform the commissioning of early intervention and preventative services.
- Work needs to be undertaken to assess the capacity needed centrally in the CAF and the Children Leeds Intervention Panel team and where those teams are best located. There will be an anticipated increase in the number of CAFs and capacity needed to support progress towards the national e CAF.
- Degrees of vulnerability are impacted by economic recession which exacerbates the likelihood of exposure to abuse and neglect.
- Fully evaluate the effectiveness of preventative services and respond to findings, including the Children Leeds Panels and residential provision

## **10 Enabling integrated working**

### **Key challenges and areas for development**

- Development of integrated service for Looked After Children
- Development of an integrated disability service
- Development of an integrated family support service
- Effective roll out and use of Multi agency thresholds in all agencies
- Deliver agreed action plan for the further embedding of CAF, particularly to inform early intervention across Children's services
- Emphasis on integrated working around the Think Family agenda as well as around the child
- Development of greater mutual understanding between universal front line services and specialist and targeted services
- Integration of Leeds inclusive learning strategy into city wide arrangements for integrated working

This page is intentionally left blank