

**DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS ACTION PLAN**

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER(S)</b>	<b>PROGRESS/ACTIONS</b>
<p><b>Recommendation One</b></p> <p>That a Children's Services communications project be set up, including all the relevant partners, to enable the new Directorate to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• take a lead on communications</li><li>• assess current practice</li><li>• draw the partners together</li><li>• assist the Communications Manager, Children's Services in his role to influence and share best practice</li><li>• draft a communications strategy</li></ul>	<p>Strategic Leader, Partnerships and Participation – Barbara Newton</p> <p>Communications Manager - Stuart Tarbuck</p>	<p>A communications network has been set up including key officers from across relevant Council Services and partners in health, the police and Connexions. This group will first meet in early July 2007, it will address the issues raised in recommendation one and provide a framework for the broader development of communications across children's services. In addition, work done since the Board's report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The launch of an electronic Every Child Matters newsletter to keep Children Leeds staff across the city up to date on developments.</li><li>• Open Forum 'marketplace' events in each area of the city for local children's services to come and promote their work through stalls and networking.</li></ul>

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<p><b>Recommendation Two</b></p> <p>That costs for departmental publications 2006/2007 be supplied to a future meeting of Scrutiny Board (Children's Services), to establish a baseline figure for departmental publications produced by Education Leeds for comparison with future years.</p>		<p>We can provide financial information on all design and print projects managed by the communications team during 2006/07. However, because budgets in Education Leeds are devolved to teams, if they have procured their own design and print without using the services of the communications team it will be more difficult to extract this information for 2006/07. This is because the same budget code was used for both stationery and external printing up until the end of 2006/07. For the financial year 2007/08 a separate code has been identified for external print. This will allow Education Leeds to monitor more closely the spend on external design and print across the whole company. It is worth noting that we may already have achieved the greater part of the efficiencies due to our increased emphasis on electronic communication over the last few years. However, we are still pursuing this agenda, and will continue to do so in the future.</p>

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<p><b>Recommendation Three</b></p> <p>That the Director of Children’s Services obtain costs for publications relating to Children’s Services 2006/2007 from Council Departments and external partners, where available, to supply to a future meeting of Scrutiny Board (Children’s Services).</p>		<p>This work could be picked up by the communications network (outlined in recommendation one). Considerable work would be involved in seeking comparable figures from the different teams and partners involved in children’s services. As part of our efforts to develop effective children’s services communications we would appreciate a steer on the urgency and priority of collecting this information from the new network.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation Four</b></p> <p>That information on any monitoring process(es) used to evaluate the effectiveness of the corporate communications published by Education Leeds and Children Leeds be supplied to a future meeting of Scrutiny Board (Children’s Services).</p>		<p>Responding positively to feedback around communications has been central to the partnership approach being taken in developing children’s services across Leeds. For key communication events such as Open Forums and seminars, feedback is always sought and responded to (hence the latest move from conference style to ‘marketplace’ Open Forums).</p> <p>The Every Child Matters newsletter has also developed in part out of feedback relating to the previous Director of Children’s Services newsletter.</p>

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		<p>The planned communications network will look at how to co-ordinated monitoring and self evaluation work around communications more effectively.</p> <p>In communications with schools, Education Leeds use a variety of means of evaluating effectiveness, these include questionnaires, formal and informal discussions with heads and feedback opportunities at training and conferences etc. The need to develop this work further in the future is recognised and as such there is a desire to seek feedback from schools and partners on the overall approach being taken to communications. This will be supported by efforts to achieve the governments new Charter Mark standard when it is introduced later this year, that will include seeking more feedback from stakeholders on Council communications as a whole.</p>