

Report of: Nigel Richardson, Director Children's Services

Report to: Inner East Community Committee

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To: Note

Title: Children's Services Update Report

Purpose of report

1. This report provides the Inner East Community Committee with an update on activity and progress of Children's Service's against the Children and Young People's Plan and an overview of some of the key activities and issues in the area.

Main issues

1. Appendix 1 provides a summary of data relating to the Children and Young Peoples Plan. Child protection numbers remain stable at 119 (20.9 per cent of the overall cohort). The Inner East has a significantly greater proportion of both the looked after and child protection cohorts when compared to the share of overall child population.
2. At the end of December 2015 the number of children looked after who come from the Inner East area was 322 (a quarter of the city's children looked after cohort), 50 fewer than the previous December.
3. In 2015, 50.3 per cent of five year-olds living in the area reached what is known as a good level of development, a four percentage point improvement on the previous year's performance; however, the area remains significantly below the Leeds average of 61.7 per cent.
4. Attendance for primary school pupils in the area was 95.0 per cent, down 0.7 percentage points; attendance for secondary school pupils was 92.5 per cent, down by one percentage point.

5. Persistent absence (pupils missing at least 15 per cent of the school year - going forwards this will be pupils missing 10 per cent) in the area rose, by 70 pupils at primary schools (345, from 275), and by 133 at secondary schools (610, from 477) NB 2014/15 data includes half-term six; 13/14 does not. More than a quarter of the city's persistently absent pupils in the primary phase come from the Inner East, with 23 per cent of secondary pupils coming from the area.
6. Clusters are the predominant structure for the delivery of non "specialist" services for children and young people in the city. The Inner East Community Committee incorporates the Inner East Cluster and part of Seacroft Manston and part of CHESS. Clusters began life as extended services for Leeds schools and have grown to engage a range of partners who provide early help, early intervention and prevention services for children, young people and families.
7. The Leeds citywide cluster model is a unique partnership approach for supporting vulnerable children and families. It has citywide endorsement and nationally from the Leeds Ofsted 2015 Report, which stated that the cluster model is "**effective at identifying needs and offering timely early help to pupils**", "**helping to drive improvements in all pupils' attendance**" and that through the cluster model "**there are extensive early and targeted help services available to families at the first emergence of a problem, delivered by knowledgeable, confident and well-trained practitioners.**"
8. Since 2012, cluster funding has included an annual £5.2m top slice investment by Schools Forum of the dedicated schools grant. The government is introducing new funding regulations from April 2017 so 2016/17 will be the last year that Schools Forum can top slice funding to clusters. After this it is expected that this additional funding will go directly back into school budgets.
9. Discussions are now taking place with School Governing Bodies to encourage them to re-invest in their cluster in order to sustain the work that is taking place.
10. Appendices 2, 3 and 4 provide the Committee with a summary of the type of activity that is delivered via the three clusters in Inner East.

Conclusion

11. Inner East contains the highest share of under 19 population than any other community committee. Children looked after figures have reduced in line with city trend and child protection numbers remain stable despite an increase in population.
12. Unauthorised absence rates are amongst the highest in the city accounting for more than 25% in primary phase and 23 % in secondary.
13. The Clusters are the main structure around which services for children and families are provide in the Community Committee Area.

14. Changes to the funding formula in 2017/18 presents a risk that mean that the Cluster(s) become unsustainable in their current form which will have a significant impact on non-statutory services.

15. School Governing Bodies are crucial to ensuring the continuity of the Clusters by agreeing to pay back into the Cluster.

Recommendations

1. That Members who also sit on School Governing Bodies are asked to support the ongoing funding of Clusters from 2017 and beyond.
2. That Members welcome the breadth and type of activity delivered through the Cluster.