



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Executive Board

Date: 19th December 2007

Subject: Children's Services Annual Performance Assessment and Half Year Update on Progress and Performance

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A key aspect of the integrated approach being taken to children's services in Leeds is the opportunity to work in an increasingly joined up way to monitor and manage performance. Doing so encourages a collective focus on outcomes and a stronger sense of shared responsibility around the priorities set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.
2. This report demonstrates important progress around this type of working. It summarises progress against outcomes over the first half of 2007/08, mapped against the five every child matters outcomes: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution and experience economic well-being. It also considers performance around service management. It is particularly timely that this information is being presented now as it incorporates and complements a number of significant internal and external reviews around children's services in Leeds (listed in the main report).
3. The overall assessment is very positive, with significant improvements in nearly all outcomes for children and young people, supported by improvements to services and partnership working. This view is confirmed in the judgements of inspectors and auditors. The Annual Performance Assessment (APA) from OfSTED rates both overall effectiveness and capacity to improve as 'good', confirming the self assessment scores submitted as part of the CYPP Review process earlier in the year.

4. We recognize that if we are to meet our ambitions for every child and young person growing up in Leeds then there is still much to do. Challenges remain, some of which are significant, particularly in terms of narrowing the gap for the most socially excluded. However, the children's trust arrangements are increasingly secure, effective and future proof and will help to support shared awareness, commitment and effective action to address these issues together and improve outcomes.
5. This report and more importantly ownership of it's key messages across partner organisations, represents an important step in the ongoing development of an integrated approach to performance management and collective responsibility around improving outcomes for the children and young people in Leeds.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report provides an overview of half yearly performance against the Every Child Matters outcomes across key themes and areas within children's services. It draws attention to a number of internal and external audit inspections conducted recently, including the latest Annual Performance Assessment (see appendix 1). As such, it provides a basis to consider: progress against the Children and Young People's Plan priorities; areas where we can learn from achievements so far; and identify areas requiring collective focus over the coming months.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 In recent months there have been a number of important internal and external reviews of children's services in Leeds, which have examined outcomes for children and young people, the performance of services and the effectiveness of local children's trust arrangements. These include:

- Six Month Review of Children and Young People's Plan – reported to the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board at the end of October
- Leeds City Council and Local Area Agreement Quarter 2 monitoring
- OfSTED Annual Performance Assessment (APA) – published 28 November 2007
- KPMG Audit Report of the partnership arrangements for children's services (identified as a national issue for council audit programmes)
- Government Office/National Strategies reviews of Schools Standards and 14-19 Strategy Progress Check; and
- National TellUs and Local Every Child Matters (ECM) surveys of over two thousand young people in Leeds

2.2 Whilst these processes are increasingly closely integrated and aligned, it is nevertheless important to bring them together explicitly and use them as a performance overview of progress to inform the ongoing programme of developments. The key findings from all of these separate reviews are summarised under each of the ECM outcomes below, with an additional section for service management. Inevitably this is a very brief selection of highlights, more details are available on request.

2.3 The overview of performance this report provides will help inform the action and improvement planning processes that will follow the Joint Area Review (JAR) and Corporate Assessment inspections and contribute to the Children and Young People's Plan Review of 2007/08. It also builds on recent work that has taken place around the strategic plan, the Local Area Agreement and the Council business plan.

2.4 This progress report to Executive Board is complemented by the monitoring work that the Children's Services Scrutiny Board have done, looking in turn at the priorities set out in the Children and Young People's Plan as well as reviewing quarterly performance updates.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The overall assessment is very positive, with significant improvements in nearly all outcomes for children and young people supported by improvements to services and partnership working. This view is confirmed in the judgements of inspectors and auditors. The APA from OfSTED rates both overall effectiveness and capacity to improve as 'good', confirming the self assessment scores submitted as part of the CYP Review process earlier in the year. The APA Letter (see Appendix 1) contains details of a range of strengths of local services, as well as pointing areas for further development.
- 3.2 Given our ambitions, challenges do remain, some of which are significant, particularly in terms of narrowing the gap for the most socially excluded. However, the children's trust arrangements are increasingly secure, effective and future proof and will help to support shared awareness, commitment and effective action to address these issues together and improve outcomes.
- 3.3 The following summarises performance under each of the five Every Child Matters outcomes areas and also service management:

Be Healthy

- 3.31 The judgement on this outcome in the self assessment was '**good**' and this was confirmed in the APA letter.

Strengths

- Healthy Schools: Leeds has achieved Beacon Status for Healthy Schools and a very high proportion of schools and pupils are engaged in the programme. Pupil surveys show a high level of engagement in sport. LAA targets are on track.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS): the service has developed the range of its services, reduced waiting times and provide good support to vulnerable groups, particularly improved links with Youth Offending Service.
- Obesity and activity strategy: the PCT has a lead role in a multi-agency partnership to address obesity. High levels of schools and pupils are engaged in health projects and sport.

Areas for Development

- Reducing teenage conception rates: Leeds has only reduced teenage conception rates by about 2% against an average nationally and in similar areas of between 10 and 12%. Underperformance has now been an issue for two years.
- Early years health: rates of immunisations and breastfeeding, despite improvements on both measures, remain below national averages.
- Improving health and dental checks for Looked After Children: whilst there have been some improvements to the regularity and timeliness of these checks for children in care, these are still below target and a source of concern locally and for inspectors.

Stay Safe

3.32 The judgement on this outcome in the self assessment was ‘adequate’ and this was confirmed in the APA letter. Most children who responded to the TellUs2 Survey indicated they felt safe around the area, on public transport, at school and at home.

Strengths

- Improvements to timeliness of initial assessments: the proportion of initial assessments of referrals for children and families completed within seven days has improved markedly and is on track to achieve targets. This is a key indicator for timely response to need.
- Development of Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB): OfSTED judged progress in developing the LSCB to be good, particularly the improved capacity with the new Safeguarding Manager and independent chair, and the Business Plan and governance arrangements that have been put in place.
- Improvements in most Looked After Children indicators: 2006-2007 saw significant improvements to wider indicators of assessment and care management, particularly placement stability, adoptions and teenage conception rates of LAC. The Social Care Improvement Board (SCIB) has been in place for 6 months to help support improvement activity in this area. Additional resources have been allocated to support improvement. The SCIB is being reviewed to see if the additional focus is still required or not. There is still some way to go to achieve targets but the improvement is good.
- Support for Children Missing Education: OfSTED praised the local arrangements for identifying and supporting children who are missing out on school, and the impact this is making in reducing the number of these vulnerable young people.

Areas for Development

- Reducing the numbers of Looked After Children: the number of children in public care in Leeds is well above the national average, which poses significant challenges for the service, staff and resources and even more importantly, for local children and families.
- Improving the timeliness of reviews of Looked After Children: in Leeds less than 40% of Looked After Children reviews were completed to statutory timescales in 2006/07 compared to a national benchmark of 80%. The current rate of improvement is good but this does not impact within the year on the final position so performance is still likely to be below 50% at March 2008.
- Improving the timeliness of core assessments: the timeliness of core assessments for those families and children needing further support has improved but remains below national and Statistical Neighbour benchmarks. Current performance suggests the year-end target is likely to be met.
- Improving support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC): Unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum in the UK are placed in the care of the local authority. In the past two years there has been a marked increase in the number of these young people in Leeds. Despite the development

of a specialist team to support them, the level of interagency support and care provided for this vulnerable group is not yet effective enough.

Enjoy and Achieve

- 3.33 The judgement on this outcome in the self assessment was '**good**' and this was confirmed in the APA letter. The majority of children in the TellUs2 Survey indicated that they enjoy school.

Strengths

- School improvement and support for schools in OfSTED categories: the proportion of Leeds schools in OfSTED categories of concern is below the national average, and inspection monitoring has shown very effective support for those schools experiencing difficulties.
- Early Years services and improving outcomes: Early years provision continues to be judged by OfSTED to be good, and this year has seen improvements in 'Foundation Stage' assessments of five year olds, particularly, and importantly, for the lowest achieving children.
- Improvements to secondary school outcomes, particularly in reducing the proportion of schools below floor targets at GCSE: recent years have seen marked and significant increases in exam results in Leeds secondary schools, which have largely continued in 2007. This has meant that the city has narrowed or even closed the gap with similar areas and the national average, particularly for those schools where results had been lowest.
- The range and quality of recreational and voluntary learning opportunities in the city: OfSTED inspectors praised the range of choices for leisure and learning in Leeds as 'very good', particularly the work of Breeze, support for Looked After Children and provision for the arts.

Areas for Development

- Improving attendance, with a particular focus on schools and learners with high levels of persistent absence: both OfSTED and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have praised Leeds' Attendance Strategy but, despite this, attendance remains a significant challenge. In particular the city has a high proportion of schools (18 high schools) and pupils (about 4,000) with high levels of persistent absence (defined as attendance rates below 80%).
- Narrowing the gap for vulnerable groups and schools: This was raised as an issue by the DCSF, regional National Strategies team and Scrutiny Board. Improvements in attainment in the city have been significant but in the main improved results have not been for the most vulnerable and socially excluded learners. There have been notable successes – for example in GCSE results in inner city high schools, or with targeted work with some Black and Minority Ethnic learners. However, other learners, particularly Looked After Children, those from deprived families and those with special educational needs have seen some improvements but remain well behind their peers. In addition a small number of schools remain below national floor targets. This is currently 12 under the Key Stage 3 Floor Target and no schools under the GCSE target although this will rise because the floor targets are now being raised.

- Improving value-added in secondary schools: in recent years the value-added (progress made between Key Stages) of secondary schools has been low and well below national and benchmark averages. Whilst improved GCSE results in 2007 have helped, the authority is still likely to remain in the lower half of the bottom quartile of authorities for value-added from Key Stage 2 to 4.
- Reducing the number of learners leaving school with no qualifications: OfSTED judged this to be a significant issue for the city on early data. Subsequent updates show that there was some improvement in this measure in 2007 but there remain a small group (about 1 in 20) of learners who do not gain any GCSEs.
- Achieving the LAA targets for fixed term exclusions and the proportion of schools under Key Stage 3 Floor Targets: monitoring of the Local Area Agreement indicates that these key targets are unlikely to be met. Trends at Key Stage 3 are improving but 2007 results were less positive meaning that the 2008 target is now very challenging. Fixed term exclusion rates are being addressed but are currently two and half times higher than the target level.

Make a Positive Contribution

3.34 The judgement on this outcome in the self assessment was '**good**' and this was confirmed in the APA letter.

Strengths

- Support for personal and social development: OfSTED praised the work of the authority in this area, noting its leading role in the successes of 'nationally recognised' initiatives such as the Leeds Mentoring Service.
- Arrangements for participation: OfSTED praised local arrangements at all levels for engaging children and young people, particularly: the Youth Council; work with 'hard to reach' groups through groups such as Reach Out And Reconnect; and improvements to engaging with Looked After Children in reviewing their care.
- Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour: Inspectors praised Leeds work in reducing anti-social behaviour that have led to reductions in Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, as well as intensive family support through projects such as Signpost.

Areas for Development

- Offending rates of Looked After Children: The APA recommended work to reduce the number of Looked After Children involved in the Youth Justice System.

Economic Well-being

3.35 The judgement on this outcome in the self assessment was '**good**' and this was confirmed in the APA letter.

Strengths

- Childcare provision and support for families: OfSTED were impressed with the growth in childcare provision and the 'very good' support offered to families, particularly in deprived areas and through the authority's Beacon Status work on financial inclusion.
- Post 16 participation: There have been continued improvements to proportion of young people 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). OfSTED praised the high levels of participation in learning or work by Looked After Young People.
- Improvements to the levels of qualifications and skills at 16 and 19: the sustained and marked improvements in GCSE results in Leeds have supported improvements in learning outcomes at 19. Local results are improving faster than in other areas and are now in line or slightly below national and benchmark averages.
- Support for housing for children and families: OfSTED inspectors noted the strong progress the city has made in improving housing decency for local families.

Areas for Development

- Learning choices for all young people: Whilst noting the significant improvements in developing new curricula, choices and vocational options for learners aged over 14 OfSTED is concerned that this work is as yet incomplete and uneven between areas and groups of young people. Government Office report that raising the proportion of young people completing apprenticeships should be a local priority.
- Further reducing the number of young people Not in Education Employment or Training. The 14-19 Progress Check with Government Office identified shared concerns about further reducing NEET. The LAA target for Year 11 NEET risk analysis is Amber.

Capacity to Improve and Service Management

- 3.36 The judgement on this outcome in the self assessment was '**good**' and this was confirmed in the APA letter.

Strengths

- Leadership: OfSTED judged the council's capacity as 'good', with 'strong' leadership supported by a shared vision and strategies. KPMG judged the leadership role of the Director and Lead Member to be effective.
- Integrated working: The APA judged joint working to be 'effective', supported by joint appointments as well as the work of Locality Enablers and local children's services partnership groups in local areas.
- Partnership: KPMG judged local arrangements for partnership to be effective, reporting that Leeds has made considerable progress in developing its innovative

model of local children's trust arrangements. OfSTED inspectors supported this, stating that there is a good range of improving strategic and operational groups such as the LSCB. Both OfSTED and KPMG noted the effective support for partnership working provided by new arrangements for commissioning and performance management.

- Ongoing review and learning: The DCS approach has been one of continuous review and learning, with regular reporting to Executive Board about the set up and progress of children's trust arrangements. This review activity will continue in the early part of 2008, as part of the JAR improvement planning and the preparation for the CYPP review.
- Joined-up Strategy Development and Implementation: Children's services partners are taking an increasingly collective approach to strategy development and delivery in key areas. For example: the Family Support and Parenting Strategy has been developed with significant input from parents and launched at a parent participation event; the Inclusive Learning Strategy is currently available for consultation and two big events have been held to help shape its development with partners; the emotional health strategy is also currently out for consultation; the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy was developed with children and young people and launched at a special event. Partners signed up to supporting the strategy at the Children Leeds Partnership.

Areas for Development

- Risk management: KPMG reported that there were risk management arrangements in place but noted that this was not yet consistent across the partnership and that there was a need for a more comprehensive and integrated approach.
- Information Sharing: KPMG noted that whilst there is a citywide information sharing protocol more work is needed to make sure all partners extend this into front line working.
- Further integration of services: The review of the CYPP reinforced the need to prioritise resources to extend approaches to integrated service delivery such as Common Assessment Framework and Budget Holding Lead Professional. A recent report to ISCB highlighted progress and issues on this because there is an extensive amount of development work around people, process, ICT and culture issues. There are also important connections to be made here to build on existing links to other agendas, such as safer Leeds and healthy Leeds.

Looking Ahead

Measuring the Benefits of Our Approach

- 3.4 As our trust arrangements and partnership working becomes more embedded in children's services practice, an important challenge is to demonstrate the value being added by new practices and arrangements. This value will need to be shown both in terms of the practical results it delivers – as stakeholders are already looking and able to do – showing how the formation of new partnerships, particularly at local level are improving outcomes for children and young people. Crucially, it will also need to be shown in financial terms, by demonstrating how partnership working and the different aspects of the trust arrangements (for example the added capacity provided by the Locality Enablers within the Director of Children's Services Unit) increasingly create

more efficiency, less duplication of work and a more consistent approach right across services. This area of benefit realisation work is always a challenge for major programmes of change. Work is now underway to incorporate this into our monitoring and evaluation arrangements as part of the wider performance framework. Members will be kept informed of work in this area and the findings of this type of analysis.

The Wider Context: Moving Into 2008

- 3.5 This overview paper of performance to date provides an excellent platform for planning forward work. We will also have the findings from the Joint Area Review and the contribution of stakeholders as we undertake the 2008 review of the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 3.6 Throughout the time of establishing the new approach to children's services in the city, we have emphasized the need to reflect and learn from experience, because the scope of work is very wide and the Every Child Matters policy is still relatively new in terms of national and local implementation. We will use the first part of 2008 to:
- Set out our action plan in response to the Joint Area Review findings as part of the Children and Young People's Plan and the Council's Strategic Outcome Plan.
 - Further our realignment of resources to priorities within the council and across the partnership agencies.
 - Review arrangements with providers/commissioners within the overall commissioning model (this will include the temporary arrangements for Chief Officers, Children and Young People's Social care and Early Years and Youth Services).
 - Take stock of progress in operating the children's trust arrangements.
 - Take forward our early work on locality developments.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 There are no specific implications for Council Policy and Governance.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific legal and resource implications.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 By outlining the progress and challenges so far and mapping these against key internal and external indicators of progress we have a strong platform on which to continue building on our work to date. This report and more importantly ownership of it's key messages across partner organisations, represents an important step in the ongoing development of an integrated approach to performance management and collective responsibility around improving outcomes for the children and young people in Leeds.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 It is recommended that Executive Board:
- Note the contents of this report with particular attention to the Annual Performance Assessment letter attached at appendix A.