

Adoption in Leeds

Last update received November 2007

	Recommendation	Where we are up to	Stage	Complete
2	We recommend that the Director of Social Services reports back to us within three months on action that will be taken to reduce administrative delays in the adoption process	<p><u>July 2007 position</u> Recommendations for administrative support to the Fostering & Adoption Service will arise out of the full review of the service Timescale: October 2007 <u>October 2007 update</u> The timescale for the review to be completed is now January 2008. An additional temporary post has been agreed in the interim.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> The timescale for completion of the review is now March 2008.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	
3	We recommend that the Director of Social Services considers whether a similar organisational approach to that taken in Liverpool would benefit adoption in Leeds, and reports back to us with a view within three months	<p><u>July 2007 position</u> This proposal will be considered as part of the full review of the service as it represents a significant change to current practice and has budgetary implications Timescale: October 2007 <u>October 2007 update</u> The timescale for the review to be completed is now January 2008.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> The timescale for completion of the review is now March 2008.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	
5	We recommend that the Director of Children's Services explores, with the inter-agency group, the case for change in adoption processes to make more effective use of combined resources, whilst protecting the integrity of decision-making in the child's best interests. We request a report back within three months	<p><u>July 2007 position</u> This proposal will be taken to the next Family Justice Council to begin discussion on how the court process might be streamlined. <u>October 2007 update</u> Discussions are still continuing.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> Discussions with judges have resulted in some improvements in timetabling and more efficient use of split proceedings. In April, the government will introduce tougher requirements for all assessment work to be completed prior to court hearings for care orders etc and also tougher timetabling oversight. This will have the effect of freeing time for a quicker adoption process.</p>	<p>2 (Achieved)</p>	

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6	We recommend that the Director of Social Services reports back to us within three months on the potential for the regional consortium to develop a more strategic role to complement its successful 'marketplace' function	<p><u>July 2007 position</u> The Adoption Consortium has invited the Coordinator of Adoption 22 to come to one of their meetings to discuss the suitability of a more strategic approach by the local Consortium.</p> <p><u>October 2007 update</u> Discussions on taking a more strategic approach are continuing.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> The consortium is discussion with the neighbouring consortium how they have adopted a more strategic approach. The consortium has also begun a regional campaign to increase the number of BME adopters and support them. This is the first time this has been done on a regional basis.</p>	2 (Achieved)	✓
9	We recommend that the Director of Social Services commissions appropriate activity to raise general awareness of the range of people who can adopt children and reports back to us on initiatives proposed within three months	<p><u>July 2007 position</u> Consideration will be given to increasing the recruitment budget. The current budget has not been increased for several years and is probably insufficient. The service review will report on this and make recommendations. Timescale: April 2008</p> <p>Continue current involvement with the Adoption Consortium on raising awareness about adoption at a regional level particularly about BME children needing adoption</p> <p><u>October 2007 update</u> A regional approach to the recruitment of BME adopters and awareness raising is now taking place.</p>	6 (Not for review this session)	

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12	We recommend that the Director of Children's Services considers the appointment of an independent reviewing officer for adoption, and reports back to us with a view within three months	<p><u>July 2007 position</u> The manager of the Independent Reviewing Officers will consider this proposal and make recommendations. Timescale: July 2007</p> <p><u>October 2007 update</u> A review of the reviewing service is underway and the manager has been made aware of this proposal.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> This issue is being looked at as part of the general review and restructuring of the adoption and fostering section and is not due to be complete until the end of March.</p>	4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)	
13	We recommend that the Director of Social Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds produce an action plan within three months for improving the education support to adopted children, in order to ensure a more consistent quality of experience for adoptive families. This should cover awareness raising for schools; social services staff awareness of education resources; and parental awareness of education support particularly for special educational needs	<p><u>July 2007 position</u> There is a piece of work currently being undertaken to develop practice in respect of the education of looked after children. The proposals regarding the education of adopted children will be similarly considered and added to the current piece of work. Timescale: April 2008</p> <p><u>October 2007 update</u> A 'virtual headteacher' for looked after children has been appointed and will consider this as part of his brief.</p>	6 (Not for review this session)	

The Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority

Last update received November 2007

	Recommendation	Where we are up to	Stage	Complete
1	<p>That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds and the Director of Children’s Services take a pro-active strategic approach to maximise the potential that Trust Schools might have for improving outcomes for children in deprived communities in Leeds by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring potential trust models for clusters of schools in deprived areas with a view to instigating trusts • issuing advice to strategic partners about how to target their partnership support to schools and areas most in need • informing our proactive approach to wider planning issues (BSF, 14-19 review, etc). 	<p><u>July 2007 position</u> Proposals for the development of a Central Leeds Learning Trust were agreed by Executive Board in June 2007. This is to be a formal partnership as opposed to ‘Trust Schools’ as defined in the Act.</p> <p><u>October 2007 update</u> A further report on the development of ‘The Leeds Learning Alliance’ is elsewhere on the agenda (see 14-19 review).</p>	<p>2 (Achieved)</p>	<p>✓</p>
3	<p>That the Director of Children’s Services has regard to this report when responding to any school consulting on becoming a Trust School.</p> <p>In particular the points raised in this report regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposed partner organisations sharing the same vision for the school • any proposed changes to the school’s admissions policy • potential for the proposals to help or hinder “narrowing the gap” • balance of trust appointed governors on the governing body <p>and to consider how the individual proposals will contribute to community cohesion and delivering the Every Child Matters agenda.</p>	<p>Commitment given</p> <p>No further formal proposals received to date</p>	<p>6 (Not for review this session)</p>	

Youth Services

Last update received September 2007

	Recommendation	Where we are up to	Stage	Complete
1	<p>In light of the evidence presented during our inquiry, we recommend that the youth offer for Leeds needs to address the following key findings:</p>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for a more equal distribution of universal youth services on offer across the city 	<p>The youth offer's entitlement statements cover a very wide range of service provision and are designed to ensure universal access to opportunities and support.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to include advice and signposting within universal provision 	<p>The youth offer will reinforce universal access to information, advice and guidance services and will seek to ensure entitlement to a Connexions Personal Adviser.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> Signposting to universal provision is also being added to the Breeze website.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to recognise that some groups of young people (for example carers, looked after children and young people with disabilities) may need a different approach or extra assistance to enable them to access the types of opportunities included in the universal youth offer 	<p>The Department of Children, Schools and Families has published a 'Targeted Youth Support Strategy'. The aim is very much to pursue this recommendation in the coming months and years.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> Children's Services Leadership Team has agreed an overall approach to Targeted Youth Support in Leeds. The first of a series of workshops is scheduled for February. Development of TYS will be a key responsibility of the Integrated Youth Support Service from April.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	

	Recommendation	Where we are up to	Stage	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to recognise young people's expressed desires for venues and spaces to undertake their own (unstructured) activity 	<p>The Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds have been used to channel funds into venues and spaces identified by groups of young people. The government's Ten Year Youth Strategy sets targets for the percentage of provision which should be run directly by young people so further development work will be taking place.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The important role of inter-generational/all age activities as well as specific young people's activities 	<p>There are plenty of examples of this type of work but it has not previously been collated into a summary document. This could be done as a one-off exercise for Scrutiny Board if required.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> A summary of this work was circulated to Board Members in December 2007.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	
	<p>We ask the Director of Children's Services to report to us within 3 months on how each of these issues will be addressed in the published youth offer.</p>	<p><u>January 2008 update</u> 972 young people were consulted during the summer about the contents of the draft youth offer. The results led to the production, by the Youth Council and ROAR, of an excellent DVD introducing the Breeze Youth Promise. The consultation highlighted the need to change some elements of the youth offer. This is being done at present, meaning that the Breeze Youth Promise can be finalised by the end of March. Leeds is recognised nationally as being the most advanced authority in the country regarding the youth offer.</p>		
6	<p>That the Director of Children's Services finds ways of promoting positive relationships between the police and youth services more widely, building on the good examples that exist in some parts of the city.</p>	<p>The position remains that there are good local examples but no strategic discussions have as yet taken place. This would be a useful starting point and will be followed up.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> This will be followed up once the Integrated Youth Support Service is in operation.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	

Youth Services

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7	<p>We recommend that the Director of Children’s Services ensures that, in addition to existing consultation with service users, specific efforts are made to consult with non service users about their views on the Youth Service.</p>	<p>The Youth Service will be conducting its second annual user survey in October 2007. This is specifically designed to assess customer feedback and satisfaction ratings. Extensive public consultation with young people about the youth offer has been taking place during the summer as part of Breeze on Tour.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> The annual user survey will now take place in February 2008.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	
8	<p>We also recommend that the Director of Children’s Services considers how the examples of young people’s involvement in the management of governance of services can be more widely applied across children’s services.</p>	<p>West Yorkshire Youth Association has operated the “Particip 8” initiative on behalf of Children’s Services. It has delivered 42 programmes of work and worked with 30 agencies. 96% of schools had an active school council as at December 2006. A Participation Evaluation Toolkit (PET) has been piloted with youth agencies and is now being rolled out across Children Leeds Partnership. Work is under way to adopt and implement the “Hear By Right” national standards across all Children’s Services. Both PET and Hear By Right are key elements of a participation strategy which was published in autumn 2007 and which involved children and young people in its development.</p>	<p>2 (Achieved)</p>	<p>✓</p>

Departmental Communications

Last update received July 2007

	Recommendation	Where we are up to	Stage	Complete
2	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.	Comprehensive costs for 2006/07 not available Costs for 2007/08 being monitored Scrutiny Board agreed to this as an alternative. Review at end of 2007/08 financial year	6 (Not for review this session)	
3	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).	Response indicated amount of work required to achieve recommendation. Board agreed that information would be sought from council departments only in the first place, for 2007/08 Review at end of 2007/08 financial year	6 (Not for review this session)	

Catching the Bus

Last update received July 2007

	Recommendation	Where we are up to	Stage	Complete
1	That First Bus review its fare structure so that the fare paid better matches the distance travelled. That First Bus review its fare structure in the light of the forum's findings on the barrier cost represents to young people. And, that First Bus report its conclusions/intentions to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in July 2007.	First has agreed to re-examine this issue when fares are next reviewed, although the scope for change may be limited. <u>January 2008 update</u> The issue will be raised when the young people attend Metro's 'Operator meeting' on 4 th March.	6 (Not for review this session)	
2	That Metro should investigate the possibility of developing a concessionary scheme whereby young people pay for the first few journeys in the usual way and then get one/two free (buy four, get one free for example but avoiding the need to pay up front) and report their findings/actions to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in July 2007.	Metro has agreed to consider this approach. <u>January 2008 update</u> This type of scheme is conditional on the introduction of smart cards. Metro will keep the Scrutiny Forum informed of progress in this area.	4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)	
3	That Metro and the bus companies should co-operate to develop a day pass which can be used on all buses and that Metro report progress to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in July 2007.	Practical issues may present obstacles to progress. <u>January 2008 update</u> Metro has concluded that this is not achievable.	1 (Stop monitoring)	✓
4	That Metro reviews the effectiveness of its marketing strategies with regard to young people's concessionary schemes and report its progress to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in July 2007.	Metro has offered to work with the Director of Children's Services on this issue. <u>January 2008 update</u> Some progress has been made in this area. Metro now provide information to young people at key times in their lives eg. Age 11 and 16. A new website, www.generationm.co.uk has been launched and is proving successful.	4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)	

Catching the Bus

Last update received July 2007

	Recommendation	Where we are up to	Stage	Complete
5	That Metro develop a text messaging comments and complaints system, promote this amongst young people and report progress to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in July 2007.	<p>Metro will consider this further following the launch of their young people's website</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> The website has now been launched and complaints/comments can be submitted by email. Metro are still considering the possibility of introducing a text message system at some point in the future.</p>	4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)	
6	That Metro and First Bus investigate the possibility of developing CCTV systems on buses to record sound as well as pictures and report their findings to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in July 2007.	<p>Metro and First are willing to consider this further, but warn that cost is an issue here.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> Metro have concluded that this will be too expensive to enforce. They also feel that vision-only CCTV is adequate.</p>	1 (Stop monitoring)	✓
7	That the Director of Children's Services ensures that the barriers young people face with regard to transport are taken into account by ALL decision makers and that they are a key part of the Child Impact Statement process. We ask that she report back to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in July 2007.	<p>The Director of Children's Services has given a commitment to this recommendation. The scrutiny working group is one way of promoting progress.</p>	2 (Achieved)	✓
8	That the Director of Children's Services investigates adding travel concessions to the other benefits of the Breeze card and reports back to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in July 2007.	<p>There are some technical issues that need to be addressed. Metro and Leeds City Council have agreed to closer joint working on publicity, events and discounts.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> Investigations into this are ongoing. This scheme will also depend on the introduction of a smart card. Metro will keep the Scrutiny Forum informed of progress in this area.</p>	4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)	

Catching the Bus

Last update received July 2007

	Recommendation	Where we are up to	Stage	Complete
9	<p>That the Director of Children’s Services orders a review of how school transport monies are being spent in Leeds to see if there is a better way in which it could be spent and reports back to Scrutiny Board (Children’s Services) in July 2007.</p>	<p>A review is taking place.</p> <p>Metro is developing a pathfinder bid for November 2007.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> The School Transport Team within Education Leeds are involved in an ongoing review of transport costs and implications. This is set within the context of the statutory obligations that must be met under government legislation. The team has been liaising closely with Metro as part of this work, with a strong emphasis on taking forward the recommendations from the scrutiny review, particularly using the Breeze card to widen access to bus transport. Ongoing updates on this progress can be provided.</p>	<p>4 (Not achieved. Progress made acceptable)</p>	
10	<p>That the Youth Council and ROAR lead a campaign with one aim - to achieve free bus travel for all young people - and that everyone who works with and for young people joins with and supports them in achieving it.</p>	<p>The Youth Council and ROAR are carrying out a campaign.</p> <p><u>January 2008 update</u> The campaign is ongoing. Further input from Scrutiny is not needed.</p>	<p>2 (Achieved)</p>	<p>✓</p>