

**Children's Services Scrutiny Board**  
**8 – 13 Review: Recommendation Responses**

During 2007/08 The Children's Services Scrutiny Board conducted a review of services for 8-13 year olds in Leeds. The Board agreed a number of recommendations around these services to help further develop this area of work in Leeds. This document provides a response to those recommendations through an update on children's services work relating to them.

**Background – the evolving context of services for 8-13 year olds**

Leeds' Children and Young People's Plan set's out a commitment to providing universal and targeted services for all children and young people growing up in Leeds. Many services cut across different age ranges, but it is inevitable that some services will affect, benefit and target particular groups of young people more than others. Increasingly Children's Services is increasingly moving towards the commissioning of services in a way which looks across the 0-19 age range, however it is still recognised that those aged 8-13 require specific focus to ensure they get the same level of support and opportunities as those who (traditionally) are more specifically addressed by early years and youth services.

One of the original reasons for the Scrutiny Board's interest was around concerns relating to the gradual cessation of the Children's Fund Grant, which supported targeted initiatives with a particular focus on the 8-13 age range. Since the Board's review was conducted there have been developments around this funding. Where previously it was managed and administered by Barnardos, it is now overseen within the Council (with the relevant Barnardos staff having moved across). This is important as it has enabled the gradual integrating of work supported by the grant into mainstream activities. The decommissioning and commissioning of services has been central to achieving this, as discussed further under specific recommendations below.

Another important development that sets the context for the future development of 8-13 services is the changes to the benefits system, specifically to childcare tax credit. From late September 2008, parents of children aged 12 and over who are currently receiving income support, will be moved on to receive Job Seekers Allowance and will be expected to be actively seeking work. This will create a greater need for out of school provision and/or for the children of these parents. Representatives from Early Years, Job Centre Plus, the Children's Centre Improvement Manager (Partnerships), and Childcare Advisors, have been working with Education Leeds' Extended Schools team to address the changes in benefits and the implications and issues arising.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY 8-13 ENQUIRY: RESPONSE

Recommendation	Response	Timescale
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b>  <i>That the Director of Children's Services reports to us within 3 months on how the new commissioning strategies being adopted by the Children Leeds Partnership will provide a more stable funding framework for services to 8-13 year olds.</i></p>	<p>More specific details on commissioning within Children's services in Leeds are contained in a separate report to Scrutiny on 18.09.08. The Joint Preventative Commissioning Panel has undertaken a range of commissioning around services for 8-13 year olds and further work in this area is planned - and a number of service contracts are now in the consultation, reflection and/or specification writing stage that will specifically affect those aged 8-13, these include work around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Family support for parents with older children</li> <li>○ Services for minority groups</li> <li>○ Extended services and supplementary schools</li> <li>○ Participation</li> <li>○ Play services</li> <li>○ Services for refugees and asylum seekers</li> </ul>	<p>See the separate report to scrutiny on commissioning</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b>  <i>That the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within three months on how she will encourage all schools that are not yet participating in the provision of extended services to do so.</i></p>	<p>All schools in Leeds are committed to extended services. Over the last two years, the implementation of phase 1 of the extended services programme has ensured that all schools are now in one of the 39 clusters set up citywide. All clusters, although at different stages of development, are committed to working towards the delivery or signposting the Government expectations of extended services, in partnership with a broad range of services. Phase 2 involves the Local Authority providing monitoring, support and challenge for clusters to ensure they deliver on co-ordinated, targeted and appropriate key priorities to achieve this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Director of Children's Services has given Education Leeds a mandate to carry out a supported self-evaluation of all clusters by the end of December, using the toolkit identifying the key features of successful clusters developed in Leeds through two pilots.</li> <li>○ The toolkit identifies successes to date, and areas for further development.</li> <li>○ Officers and colleagues with multi-agency experience will carry out these supported self-evaluations.</li> <li>○ The cluster data profile developed by the Performance Management Information</li> </ul>	<p>December 2008</p>

	<p>Team in Education Leeds will help identify areas for development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cluster evaluations will contribute to planning key strategic priorities and categorising clusters as: emerged, established or advanced helping to prepare of clusters for commissioning the local services their partnerships identify.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b>  <i>That the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within three months on how parents and families will be assisted and encouraged to access holiday activities for their children.</i></p>	<p>Parents and families will be assisted and encouraged through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The development of a single point of information (through the Family Information Service) for accessing information, building on what is currently gathered and promoted through the Family Information Service, Extended Services and Breeze. It is the intention to be able to use the Family Information Service to bring all this information to a single point in time for the summer 2009 school holiday.</li> <li>○ Active promotion of holiday activities to families through mail-outs and other 'advertising' routes.</li> <li>○ The developing role of the Parent Support Unit which will increasingly help to identify and then direct families who can particularly benefit from certain holiday (and other) activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Summer 2009</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b>  <i>That the Director of Children's Services reports to us within three months on how she will ensure that the Breeze and Family Hub information is kept up to date.</i></p>	<p>The approach being taken to updating the Family Information Service website places the onus on services across the city themselves being encouraged and supported to access and update the site regularly with information about the activities/help they offer. The onus is on groups to be pro-active in updating their own information. To support this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Training has been provided and is being promoted to groups across the city.</li> <li>○ Those services that are registered with the site and have received training, but have not logged on for some time will be contacted with a reminder.</li> <li>○ Ongoing promotion and support will be provided to new and existing site users to encourage them to use the site.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b>  <i>That the Director of Children's Services ensures that there is</i></p>	<p>This will be addressed at two levels:</p> <p>Citywide the Chief Officer for Early Years and Youth Services will work with partners to</p>	

<p><i>comprehensive provision of local activity programmes and directories across Leeds, and reports back to us within three months on how this will be achieved.</i></p>	<p>take an overview of programmes in place and ensure that current good practice is built on to develop a more comprehensive programme.</p> <p>At a local level the ongoing strengthening of partnerships and integration between different services will continue to enable a more co-ordinated approach and therefore a wider offer locally.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6</b>  <i>That the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within three months on the Play Officer's work plan and progress in establishing the Play Partnership, with specific emphasis on how this work will narrow the gap for the groups identified in the Play Strategy as facing particular challenge in accessing play.</i></p>	<p>The Play Officer's work plan is attached at appendix 1 of this document and the Play Officer will be present at the Scrutiny Board meeting to provide an update on her work. The Play Partnership will hold its first meeting in mid-September and the Play Officer will be able to provide initial feedback on this at the Scrutiny Board meeting. Leeds is currently applying for Play Pathfinder funding, more details of which are attached at appendix 2. If successful, this bid will include funding for universal provision across the city, as well as more specific projects targeted to areas of greatest need. More details will be provided at the Board meeting.</p>	<p>Ongoing (see workplan for specific details)</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b>  <i>That the Director of Children's Services reports to us within three months on the progress of the Participation Partnership in delivering the implementation plan arising from the Participation Strategy.</i></p>	<p>The Implementation Plan from the Participation Strategy is attached at appendix 3. There are many examples of progress that supports this, a selection includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Embedding the Hear by Right Standard by working with young people to further understand their priorities and the areas where they wish to have more influence.</li> <li>○ Over 300 staff from right across Children Leeds have undertaken training on using the Participation Evaluation Toolkit to enable more effective engagement with young people. This training is being rolled out to more staff through a growing pool of trainers.</li> <li>○ Children and young people involved in the development of young people's versions of the Joint Area Review and CYP Plan Review 2008.</li> <li>○ Focus groups of young people working on the priorities for the CYP Plan 2009.</li> <li>○ Young people's regular participation at the Children Leeds Partnership, leading</li> </ul>	<p>See timescales on the Implementation Plan</p>

	<p>sessions on high priority issues such as bullying, attendance and new arrivals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The piloting a new publication called 'Mayhem'. This aims to build on the success of the 5.2.13 publication, but has a focus on informing young people about how they can influence decision making. An editorial team of 15 young people have been involved in the development of this. It has been widely distributed and is now being evaluated in schools to see if further additions would be worthwhile.</li> <li>○ A special session with young people to develop their role in commissioning.</li> <li>○ The Youth Council Executive and young people from ROAR were involved in finalising the specification for the commissioning of future participation work.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Recommendation 8</b>  <i>We recommend that the Director of Children's Services promotes the development of local networks to help smaller organisations to continue to play an effective part in the provision of services for 8 to 13 year olds and qualify for funding.</i></p>	<p>Extra capacity has been created within the Business Support Team of Early Years with a specific focus on creating more support locally to the voluntary, community and faith sector, promoting local working and supporting families with children in the 8-13 age range. Projects are in place offering more targeted assistance to local services that support vulnerable groups where we have recognised that there are growing levels of need.</p> <p>Through our commissioning arrangements Leeds is also developing the specification for 'think family' contracts targeted at developing work for families with children aged 8-13. The different strands of the Children's Fund organisation have also been brought together under a single contract to create a more focused and joined-up approach to supporting local projects that work with the 8-13 age range.</p> <p>More broadly, the integration of Leeds Children's Fund into the Early Years and Youth Services remit to form a single 0-19 approach, will help to bring additional resources to the 8-13 age range. Within these arrangements the Children's Fund will have a specific responsibility for providing support to the voluntary, community and faith sector.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 9</b>  <i>That the Director of Children's Services commissions an in-depth review of transport, to promote more</i></p>	<p>It is agreed that an in-depth review is required, but it is not possible with the resources available in this financial year to undertake the work to scope and conduct such a review.</p>	

<p><i>effective use of existing resources and improve children and young people's access to services, and that she reports back to us within three months on progress.</i></p>	<p>We have however, during the last three months undertaken informal discussions with key stakeholders about opportunities to take this forward.</p> <p>This recommendation from scrutiny will also ensure this matter is considered a priority within the revised Children and Young People's Plan for 2009 and beyond.</p> <p>Meanwhile, work is progressing to look at the current availability and use of school transport so that it better supports the offer of extended services to young people.</p>	<p>Children and Young People's Plan 2009</p>
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