



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 19 April 2007

Subject: The Joint Area Review and the Children and Young People's Plan Review

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is twofold: firstly to provide the Board with an update on progress in preparing for the inspection of children's services during this year; and secondly to provide the basis for engaging the Board in the ongoing review of the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan.

2 Background

- 2.1 As set out in the December 2006 report, Children's services are monitored and inspected by central government, OfSTED and other inspectorates. This year Leeds will be subject to both the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) in the autumn and the Joint Area Review (JAR) inspection of children's services in December 2007. The inspection regime is currently changing which in turn requires changes to our preparations.
- 2.2 The first Leeds Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) was published in 2006. The plan replaces many earlier statutory plans and now forms the overall citywide strategy for improving outcomes for children and young people for all local services and partners. The plan was developed with strong input from children and young people and from across the Children Leeds partnership, and runs from 2006-2009. Government guidance regarding these plans has also been changed recently.
- 2.3 The key changes to the planning and inspection arrangements for children's services are as follows:

- There are new requirements for Children and Young People's Plans in terms of consultation guidelines, new sections on school diversity and childcare sufficiency and additional focus on the needs of vulnerable groups
- The annual review of the Children and Young People's plan now forms the sole self-evaluation for APA and JAR, rather than requiring additional information.
- The Annual Performance Assessment will take place each autumn and will be an assessment of *council services'* contribution to improving outcomes. The scores from this assessment will continue to feed into the CPA judgement for the council.
- The Joint Area Review will become more limited but more focused on key areas and those where inspectors feel that local children's services are underperforming or at risk. Each inspection will always focus on *all local services* effectiveness on safeguarding and improving outcomes for both Looked After Children and those with learning difficulties and or disabilities. In addition the inspectors will highlight a small number (perhaps three or four) of further areas for investigation.
- Overall there is a much stronger emphasis through the planning and inspection guidance on impact and improving outcomes, and particularly on narrowing the gap between vulnerable groups and their peers. In support of this it is clear that inspectors will use the views of children, young people, families and partners in informing their judgements through surveys and focus groups.

2.4 In light of these changes, local plans for the review of the Children and Young People's Plan and preparations for the inspection have been changed. The revised timescales are set out below:

- April/May: CYPP review ongoing. Consultation.
- June: Sign off by Executive Board and Director of Children's Services. CYPP Review submitted 14th June. OfSTED survey of pupils in schools to inform inspection.
- September: JAR set up meeting with inspectors. Evidence and case files submitted.
- Sep/Oct: APA meeting
- November: Analysis week for inspectors to review evidence and case files.
- December: Inspectors onsite 3rd – 14th

3 Preparation for Inspection

3.1 Despite all these wider changes, local services and the wider Children Leeds partnership are making progress in reviewing the Leeds Children and Young People's plan and preparing for the inspection later this year.

3.2 Activity over the past four months includes:

- Consultation with children and young people: events have taken place to include children's views on key issues and progress, including representatives from Youth Council and ROAR
- Consultation with Members: there have been two workshops for elected members on the CYPP and all Area Committees will be engaged in the review of the plan during March and April.

- Consultation with services and schools: managers and staff from local agencies have been engaged in the ongoing review through multi-agency ‘Outcome Conversations’ and headteachers and wider staff have been invited to put forward their views in meetings and via an online survey.
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning: all key council services have undertaken an initial self-assessment against the inspection criteria and key data. In turn services have put in place improvement plans where necessary to make sure that weaknesses are being properly addressed.
- Preparing the review of Children and Young People’s plan: local partners are now engaged in developing a review of progress and updating action plans.

4 Children and Young People’s Plan Review - emerging issues

- 4.1 Due to the timescales of the review of the Children and Young People’s plan it is not possible to include a full first draft of the review in this report. Further information will be provided at the meeting once partner agencies have completed their initial drafting in mid-April.
- 4.2 However, at this point it is possible to share early information from the review which shows both the expectations of inspections as set out in the new JAR inspection criteria and the issues which are emerging from ongoing self-evaluation.

OfSTED inspection criteria	Emerging issues from CYPP Review
<p>Be Healthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Most’ NHS child health and waiting time targets met • Good health promotion programmes making an impact on lifestyles • Mental health services multi agency, accessible, well-linked to other services • Effective maternity, community services • All checks for LAC in place • Joint commissioning, care plans for LDD children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA 2006: ‘good’ • Challenges with NHS targets • Beacon Status for Healthy Schools. Wider health promotion more mixed. • Weak outcomes for teenage conceptions and sexual health • Mental health – improved referrals and waiting times. Strategy emerging • Vulnerable groups: some issues with LAC support, particularly dental care
<p>Stay Safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Most’ children feel safe and listened to. • All local services engaged in processes and culture of safeguarding • Prevention reducing incidence of abuse • Prompt, effective assessments and care • Stable placements for LAC • Better outcomes for children on CPR than elsewhere • Good shared arrangements for sharing information and joint working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA 2006: ‘adequate’ • Placement stability good, but unlikely to meet PSA target • Adoptions improved but still lower than other similar authorities • Assessment times improved, but core still below target • Consistency and quality of assessments, case management and residential care • Timeliness of reviews of LAC still low

<p>Enjoy and achieve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved school attendance and reduced exclusions • Children and young people are happy in life and education • Recreational, cultural and leisure facilities are wide-ranging and accessible • Majority of nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, PRUs and early years settings are good or better • 'Narrow the gap' for vulnerable groups, esp. LAC and BME groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA 2006: 'good' • Improvements in secondary school attainment but progress overall and outcomes for some groups still weak • Primary school outcomes good but not improving, particularly in schools in deprived neighbourhoods • Attendance still a challenge, exclusions reduced significantly • Positive progress across play, sports and arts though challenges with inclusion
<p>Make a Positive Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good participation • Comprehensive range of activities, especially in 'trouble spots' • Good mentoring, guidance, personal and social development • Effective support for parenting • Good interagency community safety work esp. bullying and ASB • Youth offending rates falling, high levels of ETE for young offenders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA 2006: 'good' • Young offender numbers slightly higher, low levels of ETE • Youth service – reach targets achieved, accreditation low, Youth Offer developing • Good participation arrangements and good progress • Strong overall support for personal and social development, some challenges • Some challenges on community safety, but strategies emerging
<p>Economic Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreasing poverty and worklessness • High proportion in education, employment and training • Effective 14-19 provision and strategy, high qualification levels at 19 • Wide range of childcare and good information about provision • Good interagency work on regeneration, adult and family learning • Most young people in decent housing. No use of B&B, good support for vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA 2006: 'good' • 2006 NEET and unknown targets achieved, strong improvements in qualification levels at 19 • Poorer outcomes for vulnerable groups • Good range and quality of childcare though issues on uptake and impact • Wide investment and projects to support parenting, strategy emerging • Regeneration and housing investment, increasing links, decency target on track.
<p>Service Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious partnership acting on good needs analysis • Clear priorities with emphasis on prevention and equalities • Strong partnership based on trust and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYPP needs analysis and participation good, emerging shared priorities • Children's trust arrangements in place • Emerging capacity and networks at locality level

<p>clear decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective shared management of resources, workforce, risk and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good progress on extended services and children's centres and some wider projects• Further work required on shared management of resources, workforce, information and performance
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5 Recommendations

5.1 Scrutiny Board are asked to:

- Comment on the issues raised in the report
- Advise on the Board's views on priorities for the CYPP Review and action planning for the next year