

Report of: Children's Services Lead Officer Sue Rumbold

Report to: Outer West Community Committee], Calverley and Farsley, Farnley and Wortley, Pudsey

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To note

Children's Services area committee update report

Purpose of report

1. This report provides members with a comprehensive data set of children's information. There are established city priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), identified as three obsessions, (i)reducing the need for children to be looked after, (ii) improving attendance and (iii)reducing those not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The purpose of this report is to highlight any local priorities. It is recommended that the local lead member for Children's Services works with the area head of targeted services and those members attached to specific clusters in the area, to identify local priorities for the committee's approval. The committee can in addition be supported, where necessary, by relevant council officers in order to provide information on specific issues.

2. Main issues

2.1 The Outer West contains 9.5 per cent of the Leeds under 19 population, an estimated 16,322 children and young people.

2.2 A rise of two in the number of children from the Outer West who are in the looked after cohort took the number in June 2016 to 76, 6.1 per cent of the total looked after cohort.

2.3 Despite this slight rise, fewer children from the area were taken into care between April and June 2016 (fewer than five) compared to the same period last year (eight). Small fluctuations such as this are not uncommon, and do not indicate a rise in the underlying level of need within an area.

2.4 The number of children from the area subject to a child protection plan remained level, at 27 (five per cent of the total cohort).

2.5 Total contacts made to Children's Social Work Services at the "Front Door", as well as the smaller subset of contacts that become referrals, are slightly lower in the most recent reporting period; 373 contacts (24 fewer) and 177 referrals (eight fewer). As the reporting period only covers three months, it is too early to draw any conclusions about a reduction in the underlying level of need in either the Outer West or the city.

2.6 The attendance levels for pupils living in the Outer West are higher than the city averages at both primary phase (96.5 per cent, compared to 96.2 per cent) and secondary phase (95.3 per cent, compared to 4.7 per cent). Secondary attendance is 0.7 percentage points higher in the most recent reporting period, with primary attendance rising by 0.3 points. Nearly 800 Outer West children and young people were recorded as persistently absent - 391 (7.3 per cent) at primary phase, and 402 (11.4 per cent) at secondary phase. Persistent absence in the Outer West is lower than the city averages (of 8.7 per cent at primary, and 13.6 per cent at secondary).

2.7 109 young people (five per cent) in the Outer West are categorised as NEET, a reduction of 20 since December 2015. Even more notable is the reduction to 16 (from 64, a drop of 48) in the number of young people whose status is unknown. Often a reduction in not known statuses can lead to a rise in NEET numbers, but this is not the case here. Only 0.7 per cent of young people in the area have a not known status, compared to almost two per cent across the city, meaning that targeted advice, guidance, and pathways to EET activities are supporting many young people in the area to secure education, employment or training opportunities.

2.8 Free school meal eligibility is slightly below the city average, at just under 15 per cent in primary schools, and almost 14.5 per cent in secondary schools. Eligibility levels have reduced at both phases between 2015 and 2016; this reduction reflects the trend at a city level.

2.9 Children's Services are currently responding to requests from area officers to respond proactively to anti social behaviour in the Wortley area. A small working party led by Andrea Richardson is currently working with other officers and local police to address issues.

2.10 Changes to cluster arrangements are affecting local partnerships as schools and academies in particular refocus their resources. This follows a change in funding that ends the previous "top slice" arrangements from the Direct Schools Grant. Children's Services continue to work closely with all schools and academies to encourage a commitment to working with clusters and a continued focus on providing support to vulnerable families.

3. Options

3.1 Not applicable, as this report is information based.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Discuss whether local priorities may be required in addition to the Children's Services obligations, to be initiated by the local lead member for Children's Services and the area head of targeted services.

5. Corporate considerations

1.1 Consultation and engagement

1.1.1 This report is for area committee meetings, involving a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Consultation and engagement is integral to the work of Children's Services and the Children's Trust, as evidenced in child friendly city work.

a. Equality and diversity/cohesion and integration

1.1.2 Equality issues are implicit in the information provided. The differences shown illustrate that there are different levels of need and of outcomes across the city. Additional equality analysis of the information provided is undertaken, and the detailed information already provided to clusters is powerful intelligence that can be used to help focus priorities and narrow the gap.

b. Council policies and city priorities

1.1.3 A significant proportion of the information included in this report relates to the city priorities for children and young people and the outcomes contained in the CYPP. The area committee summary sheets currently developed builds on wider priorities and the Children's Services obsessions, and incorporate locally-agreed priorities.

c. Resources and value for money

1.1.4 Families First is a payment by results scheme linked to Families First Leeds. For every family 'turned around', the local authority can claim additional payments if successful across the full range of indicators.

d. Legal implications, access to information and call in

1.1.5 This report is not eligible for call in, due to being a Council function.

e. Risk management

1.1.6 There are no risk management implications in this report. The priorities reflected in this report are monitored through Leeds City Council performance and, where appropriate, risk management processes.

6 Conclusions

1.2 Not applicable, as this report is information based.

Background information

As part of the ambition for Leeds to become the best city in the UK, we are aiming to become the best city to grow up in - a child friendly city. This ambition will be realised by improving outcomes against the three obsessions, five outcomes, and 12 priorities in the CYPP, which is overseen by the multi-agency Children's Trust Board and implemented locally by the 25 local cluster partnerships of schools and other key local services.

A full set of the area's Children's Services performance data, including attendance data for all primary schools within the area committee boundary, is appended in a separate document.

Appendix 1

Children's Services Update

- Steve Walker, who has been deputy director of children's services since 2011, has been appointed as acting director of children's services from 1 October 2016 for a period of up to a year.
- Steve joined children's services in December 2011, played a central role in transforming children's services in Leeds and will ensure continuity at an important time for the directorate. He will continue the work started by Nigel Richardson to ensure that Leeds is recognised as a child friendly city.
- Alongside the executive member for children and families, Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Steve will provide officer leadership in our work to deliver the children and young people's plan and achieve necessary budget savings across the directorate. We know that you will be supportive of Steve as he settles in to his new role and that you will continue to support our shared ambition for Leeds to be a truly child friendly city.
- Nigel Richardson retired on 30 September after six years in the role and 34 years working in and around the public sector. Nigel worked hard to turn around the 2010 'inadequate' Ofsted rating, and has put Leeds children's services on the map both nationally and internationally. Leeds was the first, and still the only, core city to be rated as 'good' with 'outstanding' leadership by Ofsted; has been named 'exemplar' by the Department for Education and called upon to assist other authorities as part of the government's improvement framework.
- Leeds remains committed to the cluster model, which is the most efficient and cost effective way of ensuring that our families, children and young people get the local targeted services that they need, which then lead to improved outcomes. Discussions in all clusters are now well advanced in terms of confirming the new arrangements that will take effect to support this model in light of the school forum top slicing coming to an end.
- Leeds City Council and children's services in Leeds were both recognised with prestigious awards by the Municipal Journal in June. The council won the overall 'Local authority of the year' prize and children's services received the 'innovation and impact' award. Children's services drew praise from the judges for their 'strategic, intelligence-driven approach to supporting children and young people', which delivered with a 'strong unity of purpose' had helped the city achieve a 'range of better outcomes'. This wide-ranging work had the judges said, resulted in 'less children in care, better school attendance and more young people in education, employment and training' in Leeds.

Children's services staff update

The recruitment process for a Deputy Director replacement for Paul Brennan is moving forward despite being unable to appoint to the role after a recruitment process in November 2016.

An internal recruitment process to appoint an interim deputy director to cover for Steve Walker whilst he is acting director was completed in December 2016 and Saleem Tariq was appointed.

As well as bidding farewell to Nigel at the end of September, we also said goodbye to two other children's services colleagues; Martyn Stenton and Catherine O'Melia.

Budget

Children's services, and the rest of the council, continue to face a very challenging budget position for 2017/18. However, the council remains committed to supporting locality working through the successful cluster model in Leeds. Further communications will be shared in due course.

OfSTED and Care Quality Commission (CQC) Area SEND Inspections

The new inspection cycle kicked off in May 2016 with eight areas having inspection visits so far – Brighton & Hove, Bolton, Enfield, Gloucestershire CC, Hertfordshire, Nottinghamshire CC, North Yorkshire CC and Stoke on Trent.

An inspection for Leeds took place in December 2016 and the outcome will be documented in letter format outlining the findings made. Three elements were considered by inspectors;

- how effectively the area identifies needs of children and young people with SEND;
- how effectively the area meets those needs; and
- how effective the area is in improving outcomes for children and young people.

Inspectors spoke with children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities, parents and carers, representatives of the local authority and National Health Service (NHS) officers. They visited a range of providers and spoke to leaders, staff and governors about how they are implementing the special educational needs reforms. The inspectors also looked at a range of information about the performance of the local area, including the local area's self-evaluation, performance data and evidence about the local offer and joint commissioning.

The letter should be available in February 2017. Letters do not give a graded judgement (e.g outstanding, good etc) but list the local area's strengths and areas for development. The inspection letters are published online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspection-outcome-letters>

From the letters published so far, we can see that the following topics have featured in the inspections (note: this list is based on a small sample of inspection letters and is expected to expand as more inspections are undertaken during the autumn).

- Child-centred; how child-focused are services for children and young people with SEND
- Early help
- The healthy child programme (health visiting and children's centres)
- Screening for early identification in health services
- Early identification through HV and school nursing services
- Early identification in schools, and the role of SENCOs
- Health development checks for two-and-a-half-year-olds
- Support for parents at the point of identification of need
- Children educated outside of school, i.e. home-educated, medical needs teaching, new arrivals without a school place, school exclusions
- Outcomes for children and young people with SEMH needs
- Pathways for identifying needs and referrals for support
- Feedback from children, young people and families on the quality and impact of services
- Multi agency working, specifically between the local authority and health
- Accessing short breaks in community facilities

Updated information will be made available in the near future.