



Report of the Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement

Meeting: Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 14 February 2008

Subject: Quarter 3 Performance Report 2007/08

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report discusses the key performance issues considered to be of corporate significance identified for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board as at 31st December 2007.

2 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present the key areas of under performance at the end of Quarter 3 (1st October to 31st December 2007).

3 Background Information

- 3.1 This 'highlight report' has been prepared in readiness for the Accountability process, which includes the CLT meeting on 29th January 2008, Leader Management Team on 31st January 2008, Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5th February 2008 and each of the scrutiny boards for the February cycle of meetings.
- 3.2 The issues discussed in this report have been identified because performance in these areas impacts upon one or more of the following; the delivery of effective services, the delivery of our corporate priorities; our CPA score; or our ability to deliver efficiency savings. This report is supported by detailed PI information.
- 3.3 Any improvement in service assessment scores should potentially have a positive impact on the council's Direction of Travel assessment and overall CPA Star Rating.

Performance Issues

Enjoy and Achieve – GCSE results for Looked After Children and Young People

Looked After Young People achieved the local target for **BV50**, the proportion of those leaving care with at least one GCSE or GNVQ. However, the proportion of young people Looked After achieving five or more higher grade GCSEs (**CP-CF51**) was well below target, despite some improvement since 2006. Whilst these young people are generally more likely to have special educational needs and other barriers to learning than the population as a whole they are the direct responsibility of the Council and as such should be expected to make better progress than the current data suggests.

To address this key issue Education Leeds has employed an experienced local secondary headteacher to lead a 'virtual school' for Looked After Children and Young People, working to provide leadership and challenge across the local educational community. He is working closely with Children and Young People's Social Care, School Improvement Partners and wider agencies to agree further strategies for improvement.

Make a Positive Contribution – youth services participation and outcomes

As the attached data show, the indicators relating to participation and outcomes in youth services are flagged as causing concern. At present it is estimated that there may be a considerable shortfall in performance and targets may not be fully reached, however accurate assessments and estimates are difficult due to ongoing data management problems.

As reported in Quarter 1, there are longstanding data quality issues within youth services that are only now starting to be fully resolved. A new management information system has now been implemented but as is common with such changes, there is a considerable lag between new IT systems and improved data quality as staff and partners are supported in changing their recording and reporting processes. As such it is now estimated that data will only become more reliable later in this year. Senior managers in the service are involved and an audit will be undertaken in Month 10 to assess progress and target further action.

Stay Safe – Adoptions

As the data for **BV163** show, current estimates suggest that the authority will not achieve its target for raising the rate of adoptions for Looked After Children and Young People. As the commentary explains, service managers believe that this is largely due to the continuing high numbers of children in care in the city. Whilst managers expect that adoption numbers will be increased over 2007/08, the number of children in care is expected to remain higher than planned, and as such this indicator will not improve.

Action to improve performance against this indicator is being considered as part of wider plans for reducing the overall number of Looked After Children and Young People, as mentioned in Quarter 2. It is also expected that the impact of additional resources for this area, agreed as part of recent investments in children's social care services, will also contribute to improved performance in 2008 and future years.

Recommendation

That the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) notes the Quarter 3 performance information and highlights any areas for further scrutiny.