



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Executive Board

Date: 16th July 2008

Subject: Leeds Joint Area Review action plan.

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.0** This report advises members of the production of the formal action plan arising from the recent Joint Area Review (JAR) which took place in November and December 2007. The report was published on May 6th 2008. There is a formal requirement to prepare an action plan relating to the ten recommendations which are made in the report. Progress on the implementation of the action plan will be monitored by Government Office, and it will be factored in to the considerations of performance in the Annual Performance Assessment. The action plan is reflected in the Children and Young People's Plan, and in the relevant Service Improvement Plans.

1.0 Purpose of This Report

- 1.1 To advise Executive Board members of the production of the formal JAR action plan, and the arrangements for its implementation and performance monitoring.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 A three year programme of Joint Area Reviews is taking place between 2006 and 2009, with each Local Authority Area being subject to one JAR during the three year cycle. The JAR is linked to the Corporate Assessment (CA), and the outcome of the JAR forms the Children and Young People's block of the CA.
- 2.2 The JAR is a joint inspection of all publicly funded service provision in the local area, including those external to the Local Authority, and the inspection team is therefore drawn from a range of inspectorates, led by Ofsted.
- 2.3 Every JAR has a core of investigation areas which are scored on a 1-4 basis, where 1 is inadequate, 2 is adequate, 3 is good and 4 is excellent. The scored elements are :-
- Safeguarding
 - Looked After Children (LAC)
 - Children with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD)
 - Service Management
 - Capacity to Improve
- 2.4 In addition to these core elements, up to three additional areas of investigation can be added. In Leeds' JAR, two areas were added, these were :-
- Child and Adolescent Mental health Services (CAMHS)
 - The impact of the 14–19 strategy in improving outcomes for young people
- These additional elements are given a separate grade (inadequate, adequate, good or excellent) but these grades are not counted in the overall grading.

3.0 Inspection recommendations

- 3.1 The formal recommendations arising from the inspection were as follows:-

For immediate action

The local partnership should:

- ensure that an appropriate way is found for the successful dissemination of the findings of this report to children and young people in the area
- ensure all initial child protection conferences happen on time and all core assessments are of good quality
- reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions for looked after children.

For action over the next six months

The local partnership should:

- ensure the electronic case record system (ESCR) provides a fixed and permanent audit trail of entries made
- improve the proportion of looked after children in education, employment and training at age 16 and 17
- reduce the proportion of pupils who leave school with no qualifications
- increase the rate of progress made by pupils in low-performing secondary schools
- establish the mental health needs of the increasing number of 0-19 Black and minority ethnic population.

For action in the longer term

The local partnership should:

- complete the review of 14–19 provision and address the issues involving small school sixth forms, excessive competition and duplication of provision and the low outcomes for some vulnerable groups
- ensure there is sufficient good quality education and training for young people who offend.

- 3.2** The JAR action plan preparation was overseen by the multi-agency group which acted as the steering group for the JAR. This group has also overseen the production of the CYPP review and the preparation of the APA self assessment. The actions arising from the recommendations have been incorporated in to the CYPP, and also into the relevant Service Improvement Plans where appropriate. However, progress against the JAR recommendations will be separately monitored by Government Office, and this progress will inform judgements on performance in the Annual Performance Assessment.
- 3.3** Progress against the actions will be monitored through the integrated strategic commissioning board on a monthly basis, and through quarterly reports to CLT.
- 3.4** The full plan is attached at Appendix A. In summary, the key actions relating to each recommendation are as follows:-
- 3.4.1** *ensure that an appropriate way is found for the successful dissemination of the findings of this report to children and young people in the area*
- The creation of children and young people's versions of the JAR report and the CYPP review,
 - Publication on a range of websites and in 'About Leeds', along with mailings directly to young people involved in key groups, such as the Youth Council and ROAR.
- 3.4.2** *ensure all initial child protection conferences happen on time and all core assessments are of good quality*

- Additional staff training around undertaking assessments
- Business process re-engineering and structural changes to the Independent Reviewing Officer and child protection teams
- Changes to procedures around child protection conferences

3.4.3 *reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions for looked after children.*

- Improved data recording, sharing, analysis and research
- Improved advice and guidance to staff and carers
- Improved inter-agency working, including individualised support packages to prevent exclusion or to support early return to school.

3.4.4 *ensure the electronic case record system (ESCR) provides a fixed and permanent audit trail of entries made*

- Complete the implementation of the Integrated Children's System
- Undertake a full review of system capability and user compliance and make recommendations for future arrangements.

3.4.5 *improve the proportion of looked after children in education, employment and training at age 16 and 17*

- Improve data integration to support better identification of those at risk,
- Deliver additional targeted support during summer 2008
- Increased training, communication and joint working across staff and carers, including all relevant agencies and providers.

3.4.6 *reduce the proportion of pupils who leave school with no qualifications*

- Implement targeted schools persistent absence plans
- Promote school collaboration to prevent exclusions
- Improve provision and quality of alternative learning programmes
- Enhanced focused support for schools on the progress, attendance and welfare of pupils at risk of leaving with no qualifications, and further support to schools on functional skills for English, maths and ICT.

3.4.7 *increase the rate of progress made by pupils in low-performing secondary schools*

- Update and deliver support plans for schools in extended partnerships and in focused partnership
- Enhanced support and capacity building for Schools Causing Concern from Education Leeds, National Strategies and other schools,
- Programmes of support for school in use of pupil and cohort performance data
- Increased support for English and maths to schools below floor targets

- Focus on the improved performance of Black and Minority Ethnic, LDD and Looked After pupils, and a narrowing of the gap for target cohorts.
- Extend the range of pathways and learning opportunities.

3.4.8 *establish the mental health needs of the increasing number of 0-19 Black and minority ethnic population.*

- Joint audit of need with adult services to review 0-19 unmet need
- Establish revised baseline data
- Participation in National Outcome Consortium

3.4.9 *complete the review of 14–19 provision and address the issues involving small school sixth forms, excessive competition and duplication of provision and the low outcomes for some vulnerable groups*

- Secure multi-agency agreement to future model of 14-19 delivery,
- Finalise a high quality curriculum offer
- Further develop integrated locality working to promote school collaboration, improve attendance and implement the Inclusive Learning Strategy,
- Introduce an effective and responsive planning and commissioning structure which will eliminate poor quality provision and maximize achievement.

3.4.10 *ensure there is sufficient good quality education and training for young people who offend.*

- Work with Area Management Boards and other providers to ensure all alternative programmes provide minimum statutory requirements to provide 25 hours of education/training.
- Finalise multi-agency protocols to ensure young offenders spend minimum time off school rolls and receive alternative provision within agreed timescales,
- Agree protocols to ensure that young offenders leaving custody all have identified education/training destinations.

4.0 Legal And Resource Implications

4.1 The local authority is required to make a written statement of proposed action, or action plan, in light of the formal recommendations made in the report. It has 70 working days from receipt to do this. It is required to send the action plan to those groups in receipt of the report; to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Ofsted, and the Secretary of State; to make it available for inspection, free of charge, at its offices; and to supply a copy on demand, for which it may make a reasonable charge.

4.2 The actions arising from the recommendations should not incur significant additional costs. Most of the actions are already factored in to ongoing work, as they address priority areas which are already highlighted within existing strategic plans.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The formal timescales in developing the JAR action plan have been met, and the actions reflect the priorities within the CYPP review and the Service Improvement Plans. Comprehensive monitoring processes are in place within the partnership and the council, and progress against the plans will also be monitored externally via Government Office

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to receive this report and to:

- Approve the JAR actions plan for submission to Ofsted;
- Receive updates on progress against the action plan as part of the APA assessment reporting in December 2008.