



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

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Report of the Director of Children's Service

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 1st April 2009

**Subject: Children's Services and the Children and Young People's Plan
Priorities Update (April 2009)**

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity



Community Cohesion



Narrowing the Gap



1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Board has a well-established process of receiving regular update reports providing a broad and brief overview of key developments across the children's trust arrangements and discussing progress against specific priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 1.2 These reports aim to give members: a feel for the strategic 'direction of travel' across children's services; an insight into key initiatives and developments; and a 'manageable' way of looking across the various priorities within the Children and Young People's (CYP) Plan over the course of the year.
- 1.3 Since September 2007 these reports have enabled the Board to consider the majority of priorities within the 2006 – 2009 Children and Young People's Plan. As discussed with the Board at their February 2009 meeting, the Children and Young People's Plan is now in the final consultation stage before a fully-revised version is published in summer 2009. This will see a new set of priorities put in place, with some of the priorities from the old Plan (whilst still clearly important areas of work) no longer included in the short-list of key priority areas.

- 1.4 The Chair of the Board has therefore agreed that this report will focus on assessing progress against two of the existing priorities that are not included in the priorities list of the new Plan, these are: work to reduce bullying; and work to improve services for children, young people and families with additional mental health needs. Both of these issues were last considered by the Board at its February 2008 meeting, this report therefore provides an update on progress against the initiatives outlined in that report, as well as information about any more recent developments in these areas. The Board may wish to consider if either of these issues are areas that they would like to continue monitoring when they are no longer included as part of the short list of priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 1.5 Like the previous 'update' reports brought to the board, this report follows the structure of firstly providing a brief overview of some recent key developments across children's trust arrangements and children's services and then highlighting the range of work being done around the priority areas of anti-bullying and improving services for children, young people and families with additional mental health needs.

2.0 Children's Trust Arrangements

- 2.1 The different parts of the children's trust arrangements continue to support commissioning, partnership and safeguarding work with children and young people across the city. An important period of development for trust arrangements is now approaching as the government introduces revised guidance to make them stronger and more effective. More detail on this is outlined following an overview of recent activity across the key standing city-wide groups within the trust arrangements.

Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board:

- 2.2 The ISCB has met twice since the last update report to scrutiny was written. An extraordinary meeting in January took the form of a workshop, where agencies were asked to demonstrate how they plan to contribute resources to meet the Children & Young People Plan (CYPP) priorities. The exercise confirmed a high level of commitment, which included budget realignments, pooled budgets, officer time and use of buildings to co-locate staff and deliver services. The information will be used to produce an appendix for the Children and Young People's Plan demonstrating the prioritisation of resources to meet the CYPP priorities.
- 2.3 At its February meeting the Board considered work taking place to develop integrated working across the city and how different strands of this are being managed. It also looked at a variety of commissioning projects, including 14-19 commissioning arrangements and the Play builder project.

Children Leeds Partnership

- 2.4 The Children Leeds Partnership has met once since the last update report to the Scrutiny Board. At its March meeting the Partnership were updated on progress in developing the new Children and Young People's Plan. They were also updated on work to introduce a new attendance strategy and took part in an exercise to consider the next stage for workforce development across children's services.
- 2.5 The main item on the agenda was the Young People's Alcohol Strategy and Action Plan. Young people joined members of the partnership and led table exercises challenging officers and partners to consider issues around alcohol misuse and how to address the problem. Young people are taking part in a further workshop to develop their own ideas and solutions around alcohol abuse, the discussions from the partnership are helping to inform this.

Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

- 2.6 The LSCB has met once since the last update report submitted to the Scrutiny Board. The Board is continuing to contribute to monitoring safeguarding activity following the Baby P case. It also looked at revisions to the process for Serious Case Reviews in view of recent ofsted and DCSF research and guidance around this. The Board also considered the initial findings of some evaluation work of safeguarding practice in Leeds (discussed further below) and considered progress made since the Ofsted inspection of the fostering service in 2008. The Board were also presented with the e-safety strategy for children and young people in Leeds (see the discussion in the 'bullying section below for more details).

Next Steps for Children's Trust Arrangements

- 2.7 In 2008 the Government consulted on plans to further develop local children's trust arrangements, based on learning from the first few years of their operation. Following on from this, the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Bill contains the necessary primary legislation to implement the changes the Government has identified as a result of its evaluation. These primarily concern making children's trust arrangements a statutory function for every local authority (this was not the case in the 2004 Children Act). This will include a statutory requirement for a Children and Young People's Plan for each local authority area. As part of this, the number of relevant partners with a duty to cooperate is being expanded along with increased powers to align and pool resources; particularly in terms of delivery of action in Children and Young People's Plans. For example, schools and GP's will have a duty to co-operate and share ownership to deliver priorities from the local Plan.
- 2.8 Under the Government's proposals there is also a renewed focus on commissioning as a process for improving outcomes for children and young people (particularly those at most risk of poor outcomes). Both the ASCL Bill and the Education and Skills Act increase the commissioning responsibilities

of Children's Trusts, for example by transferring work previously undertaken by Connexions and the LSC.

- 2.9 Leeds is well placed to respond to these proposals. Children's trust arrangements in the city are well developed and have been organised to give greater prominence to the effective integrated strategic commissioning of services (the Scrutiny Board received a report on commissioning within children's services at its October 2008 meeting). The Children and Young People's Plan is widely known and understood across the city and is increasingly being used as the basis to target resources and initiatives around priorities. Guidance around the proposals is expected in the summer of 2009 and work will take place at this point to review the current arrangements in Leeds and address challenges presented by this, in particular it will be important to ensure that the expansion in the number of partners with a duty to co-operate is reflected effectively in the partnership arrangements Leeds has in place. The Scrutiny Board will be kept up-to-date on these developments through its regular update reports and the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee will also be engaged in this work.

3.0 Performance Monitoring

- 3.1 This report forms part of a package of regular 'performance monitoring' papers that are brought to Scrutiny on a quarterly basis and include the regular performance indicator information and updates on progress against recommendations from scrutiny reviews. In addition to these, children's services has recently been reviewing progress against recommendations from its recent key external inspections, specifically the Joint Area Review (JAR) published in May 2008 and the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) published in December 2008. A summary at appendix 1, extracted from an update report to be submitted to Executive Board on 1st April, assesses progress against each of the JAR and APA recommendations/areas for improvement. The summary indicates a mixture of good and satisfactory progress. Particular improvements have been made in relation to a number of recommendations around raising attainment, and on some key health issues, in particular reducing the number of teenage conceptions. Areas where ongoing, particular focus is needed include a number of issues relating to safeguarding (discussed further below) and work to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training. The Scrutiny Board may wish to consider this review of progress in helping it to determine its work plan for 2009/10.

4.0 National and Local Developments

Safeguarding

- 4.1 In the update report submitted to the Children's Services Scrutiny Board in January, Members were provided with an overview of the significant recent focus on safeguarding activity within local authorities, happening in the context of the Baby P case in Haringey. This focus has now been taken to the next stage with the publication of Lord Laming's paper 'The Protection of

Children in England: A Progress Report'. The report considers how well local authorities and other children's services partners have progressed in implementing the change developed through the Every Child Matters approach. It makes 58 recommendations for improvement to strengthen safeguarding work. The Government has accepted all of these recommendations. Children's Services partners locally are now working together to examine the implications of these recommendations and begin to develop and revise practice accordingly.

- 4.2 Throughout the period following the Baby P case, children's services in Leeds have been actively reviewing and responding to the changing context around safeguarding work. An audit of child protection cases for children aged 0-4 was completed by the end of February 2009. The initial part of a wider evaluation of safeguarding strengths and areas for development was also completed in this timeframe. Both of these exercises have helped establish better understanding around practice in Leeds and informed both longer-term planning and a number of immediate actions to strengthen practice. This process has been approached positively by staff and led by Service Delivery Managers. A management day for senior officers across children's services has also taken place to consider the wider implications of the Baby P case for work in Leeds and a further session is planned that will help to underpin action following the Laming report.
- 4.3 Whilst safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone working across children's services, those working at the front-line with some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Leeds have a particularly key role to play. As such, and in view of the learning from both the audit and evaluation work mentioned above, as well as input from external inspections, a specific transformation programme has been implemented in Children and Young People's Social Care. The aim of this work is to improve safeguarding performance and ultimately therefore outcomes for young people. This work identifies eight distinct strands that the programme will cover. It is being overseen by the Director of Children's Services. Appendix 2, again lifted from the update report being submitted to Executive Board on 1st April, provides more detail on this programme and recent learning around safeguarding in Leeds.
- 4.4 The Children's Services Scrutiny Board is conducting two ongoing reviews of safeguarding work and these will complement the measures discussed above to provide a platform to strengthen safeguarding work in the future.

Children and Young People's Plan 2009

- 4.5 As reported to the Board at its March 2009 meeting, the final consultation period on the new Children and Young People's Plan for 2009-14 is underway. The draft plan and consultation guidance have been shared with a wide variety of partners across the city. All responses have been requested by April 3rd 2009, after which a final draft will be developed. The comments of the Scrutiny Board in March will contribute to this process and a further report on the Plan will be brought to Members in May.

5.0 Priorities from the Current Children and Young People's Plan

- 5.1 The performance report that accompanies this paper provides supporting information giving an overview of progress across the various Children and Young People's Plan priorities. Below two of our priorities are discussed in more detail to enable members to explore these issues further.

Anti-Bullying

- 5.2 The Children's Services Scrutiny Board were last informed about work to address bullying in February 2008. This was identified as a priority in the Children and Young People's Plan particularly because it was an area that young people themselves had identified concerns over. A number of initiatives were outlined to the Scrutiny Board that have helped target this priority and progress has been good, although challenges remain and it is clear that anti-bullying messages need to be constantly reinforced and developed. The latest 'Tell Us 3' survey (carried out with children in local authorities across the country) identified 58% of young people in Leeds saying they had never been bullied in school and 78% saying they had never been bullied outside of school, in both cases this was better than the national average. The information below outlines some of the key pieces of work that have been done over the past year, including follow-up on those initiatives originally described to the Scrutiny Board.

Strategy Implementation and Future Development

- 5.3 In their latest update the Board were informed about the development of the Leeds anti-bullying strategy and in particular the involvement of children and young people in influencing and monitoring this. Young people have made many suggestions over the last two years, many of which have been acted upon directly. To ensure the strategy remains relevant to young people's lives and concerns review work is now taking place. On Thursday 26th March a consultation event will be held to give children, young people and adults the opportunity to contribute to the new anti-bullying strategy. The results of this consultation day will shape and inform the anti-bullying strategy 2009 to 2014.
- 5.4 The current strategy has five main themes:
- multi-agency partnership;
 - participation;
 - raising the profile;
 - ensuring prevention and support for children and young people and
 - managing the use of data.

There have been significant developments in each of these areas. The participation of children and young people continues to be integral to the success of the strategy. This is demonstrated by the level of participation in the Ambassador programme and anti-bullying events. The strategy group meets termly and has welcomed new members for Leeds Voice and Leeds

Rugby Foundation. A pilot initiative is underway for introducing a city-wide system to report incidents of bullying and racial harassment. In June 2009, the anti-bullying waved approach will be launched to all schools. This web based tool provides schools with detailed information on how to prevent bullying cultures and how to prevent and tackle bullying behaviours, whilst also supporting vulnerable children. This is part of the Emotional Health and Well-being strategy for Leeds. Cyberbullying and Homophobic bullying training has been delivered to primary schools using Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). The Anti-bullying Alliance and the DCSF have recognised the anti-bullying strategy for Leeds as a model of good practice.

Anti-Bullying week 2008

- 5.5 Anti-bullying week 2007 was used to launch the Anti-bullying Strategy and promote the 'Power of Me' campaign. Anti-bullying week 2008 built on this. Over 200 children and young people attended an anti-bullying information day at Beckett's Park, Leeds Met University. The event was opened by the Chief Executive of Education Leeds and started with an inspirational video. Guests had the opportunity to attend three workshops from a choice of: the role of anti-bullying ambassadors, homophobic bullying, raising resilience by practising immediate responses, disability bullying from KidzAware, a charity delivering disability awareness puppetry sessions, positive breaktime activities from Leeds Rugby Foundation and a Power of Me drama workshop.
- 5.6 To continue to raise the profile of anti-bullying, power of me branded material including posters, sticker sheets and travel wallets were distributed to schools, libraries, leisure centres and to youth workers across the city. This week also saw the launch of the new anti-bullying web site:

www.educationleeds.co.uk/powerofme

Anti-bullying Ambassadors Programme

- 5.7 In their latest update the Board were informed of the aims of this initiative - to pilot a participation programme within 10 high schools, training and enabling young people to actively support and raise awareness of the Anti-bullying Strategy. Progress on this work has been very positive. In November 2008, the Anti-bullying Ambassadors achieved the Diana Anti-Bullying Award. This national award publicly recognised the work that young people of all ages do to combat the problem of bullying in schools and communities. Two Ambassadors were invited to an Awards Ceremony in London. This reflected the achievement of the first group of 13 Ambassadors, from four secondary schools, who have made an impact in the way their schools prevent and tackle bullying.
- 5.8 In September 2008, a recruitment event for new Ambassadors, held at the Carriageworks was hosted by the current Ambassadors, supported by the Project and Education Leeds. This event had a 100% conversion rate meaning that there are now 70 Ambassadors from 13 secondary schools across the city. By the end of this academic year the Ambassadors will have effected policy change in school, be trained on how to deliver assemblies and

cyber-bullying workshops and will be able to deliver sessions on raising resilience by practicing immediate responses to their peers. This programme is run in partnership with the Project, with additional training provided by ChildLine.

- 5.9 The first staff network meeting took place in February 2009. This gave staff the opportunity to share good practice and ideas on how they could progress their anti-bullying work. It is anticipated the Ambassadors programme will continue to grow, with a recruitment event planned for June to introduce the programme to primary schools and an additional recruitment event planned for secondary schools in September.

The Anti-bullying Pilot with Ralph Thoresby school

- 5.10 In the previous update, Scrutiny were informed about a pilot initiative involving Ralph Thoresby and five of its feeder primary schools with the objective of measuring and evaluating positive anti-bullying intervention strategies. As part of this the peer support programme was launched during anti-bullying week 2007.
- 5.11 Ralph Thoresby school have been developing this work across the whole school. Their anti-bullying ambassadors recommended that the peer support programme should be extended across all year groups. In September 2008, the anti-bullying co-ordinator received over 250 applications from willing children and young people for 44 places, which extended beyond the sixth form. All the peer supporters received training from ChildLine and Leeds Mediation Service. The positive breaktimes initiative from Leeds Rugby Foundation provided a catalyst for introducing many new breaktime activities, including a popular cookery club, maths club, dance club and a self named 'geek' club.
- 5.12 This pilot was formally evaluated by an independent team of Education Psychologists in February 2009, the results will be available in June 2009. The intention is to roll out the pilot to the Ambassador schools during 09/10.

E-safety and preventing bullying

- 5.13 Over the past year, with the support of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, particular attention has been focused on developing an e-safety strategy for children and young people in Leeds. This has included the dissemination of a range of learning materials including CD Roms for parents and films for schools to raise awareness of e-safety. Addressing cyber-bullying is an important element of this work and young people have been significantly involved in both the development of the strategy and a conference run for schools across the city to raise awareness of this work. There is a cyber-bullying section on the anti-bullying website.

Next Steps:

- 5.14 As well as continuing to build on the work outlined above, anti-bullying initiatives will continue with the development of the ambassadors programme in primary schools; further development of the anti-bullying website and planning for anti-bullying week 2009, co-ordinating this with National Strategies for Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Ambassador schools.

Improving services for children, young people and families with additional mental health needs

- 5.15 The previous update report to members containing details of work to provide child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) gave a useful background summary of what these services involve and the type of problems they help to support. Members may find it helpful to refer back to this information as context for the section that follows.

Leeds Emotional Health Strategy/ National CAMHS review

- 5.16 Leeds has in place an Emotional Health Strategy and has been implementing this over the past year. The overall objectives of this Strategy - to build the capacity of all children's services staff to address emotional health issues - has been reinforced by the publication of the National CAMHS Strategy in 2008. The National Strategy requires all Children's Trusts to ensure emotional health is regarded as a high priority and that all partners play a role in supporting better mental health amongst young people, i.e. this is not just the business of specialist staff. This presents particular challenges for those staff who are not directly engaged in CAMHS work on a daily basis, but over time will help to raise understanding and skills across the children's services workforce about the mental health difficulties that young people face. The broader implementation of the Common Assessment will support this process by providing more clarity about when a child/family can have their emotional needs met within the setting they find themselves (e.g. a school or Children's centre), and when they require a referral to the CAMHS service.
- 5.17 Both the Leeds Emotional Health Strategy and the National Strategy support the aim for all universal services (such as schools and Children's Centres) to be able to provide "early intervention" emotional health services themselves for those children and families who need them. This is now being measured by a Public Services Agreement target (PSA 12). In Leeds more work is needed to develop services to be able to provide this type of support, and identify who they will be commissioned by.
- 5.18 To support this development the "Targeted mental health in schools" National pilot (of which Leeds is in the first phase) is providing a test bed to establish the relative roles of specialist staff and more generic staff in providing emotional health services in schools. One part of this pilot (in the South) has commissioned a voluntary organization, Place2Be, to provide emotional health services to a number of primary schools. This innovative development will be monitored carefully.

Development of the Social and Emotional Aspects to Learning (SEAL) Programme

- 5.19 The support and training programme available to schools that assists with social and emotional aspects to learning is continuing to make good progress. The number of schools involved is growing, with over 100 primary schools and 21 secondary schools now signed up. Those schools that have not signed up at this stage still have generic training available to them. Feedback from schools indicated that this work is having a positive impact on social and emotional health, for example by helping to give children in primary schools better coping strategies when something potentially upsetting happens. This in turn has a positive impact on related areas, such as attendance. Challenges remain to engage the full school community with the scheme, but overall progress in recent years has been positive.

The Multi-Systemic-Therapy (MST) Pilot

- 5.20 The Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) pilot in Leeds (again part of a national pilot) is being successfully implemented. This initiative is being led by Social Care, and provides intensive support to a small number of families that have complex needs, and where the child is “on the edge” of becoming looked after or sentenced to custody. This embodies a different model of intervention – where one therapist engages with the whole family on a very intensive basis (without a range of other professionals). This is a very evidence based intervention, and is one of a growing number of evidence based interventions which are now being promoted by DCSF.

Commissioning emotional health services

- 5.21 Commissioning CAMHS services is now being led by the Vulnerable Groups Commissioning Group – so that CAMHS input can be better integrated with other services provided to vulnerable groups. A key issue is the relative roles of this city-wide group, and the roles of locality commissioners (e.g. clusters of schools) in ensuring all settings have access to emotional health services. A specific review of CAMHS inpatient and day services is currently underway to ensure that services to the most complex children and families are providing good value for money, and are integrated with other specialist services provided by other agencies.

Ongoing challenges

- 5.22 In taking forward CAMHS a number of particular challenges need to be considered. These include:
- Achieving a balance between the NHS “18 week wait” requirements and the expectation arising from the National CAMHS review that a greater proportion of CAMHS staff time will be spent on supporting generic children’s service staff.

- Capacity to meet requests made of CAMHS by a number of services to second staff into their settings to improve their understanding and impact around CAMHS issues (e.g. Family Intervention Projects, Youth Offending teams, high schools etc).
- Keeping waiting times shorter. Significant progress has been made, but challenges remain in waiting times for autistic spectrum diagnosis in the East of the City
- Deciding when to increase the CAMHS/Adult mental health service age cut-off from the current 17th birthday to 18 years. This will increase the demands on the CAMHS service, but is agreed by all to be “best practice”.

5.23 There has been increased recognition both nationally and in Leeds of the importance of developing emotional resilience in children and young families. Leeds has a number of positive initiatives in place that are helping to take this work forward positively across a variety of services, however challenges remain to implement this type of support as a universal element of all services working with children and young people.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Children’s services are currently undergoing an important period of development. The particular focus on safeguarding and especially the requirement to implement the Laming recommendations present challenges to services that require a considered and co-ordinated response. Leeds is developing this through detailed evaluation activity, transformation within key front-line services and a collective focus on safeguarding across children’s services leadership. At the same time preparations are being made to respond to the anticipated changes around children’s trust arrangements and to continue progress in acting on the recommendations and areas for improvement from recent external inspections. The completion of the Children and Young People’s Plan later in 2009 will support this work.

6.2 The overall progress of work around the two priorities from the Children and Young People’s Plan that are discussed above has been good. However there are ongoing challenges to continue this progress and it is fully recognised that although these areas are not to be included in the short list of priorities in the new CYP Plan (reflecting, in part, the progress made), they remain vital areas of work to improve the lives of children and young people. As such, work will continue to build on the progress that has been made.

Background Papers

Children’s Services and the Children and Young People’s Plan Update Report (3rd Report) – Report to Children’s Services Scrutiny Board, February 2008

Children’s Services and the Children and Young People’s Plan Priorities Update (Looked After Children) – Report to Children’s Services Scrutiny Board, January 2009