

Appendix 2: Children’s Services JAR and APA Progress Monitoring:

The following table lists the recommendations/areas for improvement from the Joint Area Review and Annual Performance Assessment of Children’s Services in Leeds. For ease of reference only, the table uses the recognised Ofsted grading format of ‘poor’, ‘satisfactory’, ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ to judge recent progress against this area of work in Leeds. Following the table there is more detailed explanation behind the assessments made, with brief detail about work done in each of the areas.

Joint Area Review Recommendation*:	Assessment of progress	Annual Performance Assessment area for Improvement	Assessment of progress
<p><u>14-19 Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the proportion of young people who leave school with no qualifications • Increase the rate of progress made by pupils in low-performing secondary schools. • 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 	<p>Good</p> <p>Good</p> <p>Good</p>	<p><u>14-19 Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There remain a high proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training, especially from minority ethnic groups. Progress to improve this has been slow. • The proportion of young people obtaining a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 is lower than in similar councils and is not improving. • Attendance rates are below those of similar councils despite a significant reduction in the number of persistent absentees. 	<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Full data unavailable at the time of report publication</p> <p>Satisfactory</p>
<p><u>Outcomes for vulnerable groups:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions for looked after children • Improve the proportion of looked after children in education, employment and training at age 16 and 17 	<p>Good</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Good</p>	<p><u>Outcomes for vulnerable groups:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of looked after children receiving final warnings or convictions over the past year is much higher than similar councils or the national average. • Whilst there has been some improvement in the rate of dental checks over the past year, there has 	<p>Good</p> <p>Satisfactory</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there is sufficient good quality education and training for young people who offend. 		<p>been a reduction in the number of looked after children receiving annual health checks. Performance remains much lower than in similar councils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite marked improvements in the achievement of children of Black Caribbean and Black African heritage, the achievement of children from some other minority ethnic backgrounds remains low, particularly children of Kashmiri Pakistani origin. High levels of investment in family support and preventative services are not yet leading to improved outcomes for many young people. 	<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p>
<p><u>Health:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the mental health needs of the increasing number of 0-19 Black and minority ethnic population. 	<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p><u>Health:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of teenage conceptions remains high and the rate has not decreased since the baseline of 1998. Although the council and its partners have taken action and have agreed a new strategy, in 2004-06 the infant mortality rate is significantly higher than the national average. 	<p>Good</p> <p>Good</p>
<p><u>Safeguarding:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all initial child protection conferences happen on time and all core assessments are of good quality Ensure the electronic case record system (ESCR) provides a fixed and permanent audit trail of entries made 	<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Good</p>	<p><u>Safeguarding:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action taken to improve the quality of children's homes has yet to have a significant impact across the provision as a whole. The council's fostering service has recently been judged inadequate. 	<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Satisfactory</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timeliness of reviews for looked after children has improved but remains significantly below the national average and that found in similar councils. • Despite continued improvement, the participation by looked after children in their reviews remains much lower than similar councils and nationally. • The percentage of unfilled posts for social care staff directly employed for children and families is high and there is too much reliance on temporary staff, with social care vacancy rates nearly twice those found in similar councils. 	<p>Good</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Good</p>
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* One JAR recommendation is not included in this list – this was to disseminate the findings of the report to children and young people. This recommendation was fully met through the development of a young people’s version of the final report, shared with young people through schools with the support of ‘the Project’.

1.0 14-19 Education

1.1 **Progress against three of the key areas** identified under this theme has been **good**. In terms of reducing the number of young people who leave school without a qualification, 97.7% of learners achieved a qualification in 2008. The rate of increase in 2008 was in the top 5% of authorities nationally and consequently the gap with the national average has now closed to 0.9% points. Progress in low-performing secondary schools has also been good. The number of schools below the 2011 Floor Target has reduced from 14 to 6, one ahead of target. Leeds' improvement is in the top 20% nationally. There have also been improvements in value-added scores. The review of 14 – 19 provision is progressing well. Arrangements for Confederations and new college structures have been agreed. The required progress is being made around 'Machinery of Governance' reform (i.e. the process for transferring LSC powers to local authorities). Most 14-19 Progress Check targets are recording good progress.

1.2 Progress to improve **attendance** has been **satisfactory** with evidence that Leeds is moving in a positive direction. Over the past year Leeds has seen its best ever levels of secondary school attendance and a significant fall in persistent absence. There has been a 22% reduction in the number of persistent absentees between 2005/06 and 2007/08. There has been particular progress in those schools targeted for specific focus. Attention in this area will continue as, whilst significant progress has been made, secondary attendance figures remain 2.5% below the national average. Leeds is classified by the DCSF as an intensive support authority and a reduction of 1.2 percentage points is required in the 2008/09 academic year for the authority to achieve its target of 7.7%. Ongoing intensive support to target schools will enable continued improvement; a new attendance strategy will be completed during the spring with ownership across key partners. Discussions with schools to enable the sharing of best practice and support are ongoing. Improving attendance will be a key priority in the new Children and Young People's Plan.

1.3 Progress on reducing **the number of young people not in education, employment or training** (NEET) has been **satisfactory**. There has been an improvement in the NEET rate, with the most recent annual figures showing a decline from 10% to 9.5%. The rate of improvement has not been as fast as hoped however. This was reflected in the Annual Performance Assessment. In view of this, the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board, Children Leeds Learning Partnership, and the 14 to 19 Strategy Group have all made NEET a priority area for attention and effort over the coming year. Recent measures taken include the commissioning from April 2009 of a new main provider of Connexions services which has an excellent track record elsewhere in the country. Additional significant external funding has been secured for targeted NEET activity and new mobile provision has been introduced. Like attendance, reducing NEET numbers is also a priority in the new Children and Young People's Plan.

1.4 It is too early to make an assessment in relation to the proportion of young people obtaining a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19. Data relating to this from 2008 should be available during the week commencing 23rd March 2009 and an update should therefore be possible at the Executive Board meeting. Progress in this area is closely linked to the work being done to review 14-19 provision (see above). Detailed analysis of the causes behind the limited improvement in level 3 performance in recent years is helping partners identify issues that particularly need to be addressed and this has been supported through an action plan agreed with the Learning and Skills Council.

2.0 Outcomes for Vulnerable Groups

2.1 In terms of outcomes for looked after children, there has been **good progress** in relation to **reducing offending**, with a decrease in the number of offences committed by looked after children and stronger arrangements now in place for better joint working between key partners (e.g. children's homes and the police), faster, targeted referrals towards positive activities and more constructive arrangements to address 'low level' offences. There has also been **good progress** in relation to **LAC exclusions**, with a reduction from 353 in autumn 2007 to 282 in autumn 2008. More targeted support and capacity for this group is now in place.

2.2 Progress for **looked after children in terms of improved health outcomes**, specifically around dental health, is **satisfactory**. However, a number of measures have been established in recent months to target this area including a dedicated LAC Dental Health Team to provide dental services to all young people in care and the funding of a specialist sexual health nurse for Looked After Children. Further investment in the LAC Health Team and improvements in performance management over the coming year are expected to bring improvements in this area, when 2009 data becomes available. Progress in terms of **looked after children who are NEET is satisfactory**. This reflects the wider ongoing challenges around reducing NEETs. Within the context of the work being done to target NEETs, there is further capacity and targeted support to looked after children, but more development of this work is needed to increase its impact.

2.3 Progress has been **good** in **reducing the number of young offenders who are NEET** with increased numbers of these young people staying on in education. Leeds now has one of highest proportion of school age young offenders in full time provision.

2.4 Progress on **improving the achievement of black and minority ethnic groups** has been **satisfactory**. The APA area for improvement focuses on children of Kashmiri Pakistani origin and the 5+ A*-C measure for this group on pupil performance has increased by nearly 9% points. However, the 5+ A-C GCSEs including English and maths measure for Bangladeshi and Kashmiri Pakistani pupils has fallen back in the past two years. Overall the majority of black and minority ethnic groups recorded increases in the

numbers of pupils leaving school with a qualification in the past two years. Kashmiri Pakistani and Other Pakistani heritage pupils' rates are better than the Leeds average.

- 2.5 In primary schools a new project for fourteen schools with high numbers of Pakistani heritage children will consider the causes of underachievement in each school. Good practice is being identified in order for schools to learn from one another. There is evidence that targeted programmes can have a positive impact. However, embedding this success into mainstream provision and for all priority groups is an ongoing challenge. To support this, various programmes have been brought together into a raising attainment strategy, enabling a better targeting of resources.

- 2.6 In terms of improving outcomes as a result of **increased investment in family support and preventative services**, progress has been **satisfactory**. An analysis project in this area by partners at Leeds Metropolitan University has been completed and shared with leaders across children's services organisations through the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board (ISCB). It has identified particular issues and groups of children (primarily 0-2 year olds and 10-14 year olds) where preventative services can be better targeted and care pathways for children and families most at risk need to be re-modelled, for example with better use of the common assessment framework (CAF) to assist earlier intervention. This intelligence will support more targeted work in the coming months and will also inform the transformation work in Children and Young People's Social Care that is discussed in more detail below.

3.0 Health:

- 3.1 Overall progress against health recommendations and areas for improvement has been **good**. The latest figures for **teenage conceptions** show rates are declining after several years of increase. In 2006 the rate was 50.9/1000 teenage conceptions in our 15-17 year old population. The rate for 2007 is showing a decrease, down to a rate of 48.1/1000. This is a 4.6% reduction from the baseline figure of 50.4/1000 in 1998. Reducing teenage conceptions remains a priority for children's services partners. New leadership and commissioning arrangements are now in place and starting to make an impact through more targeted service delivery. This has been underpinned with the agreement of a new strategy, additional investment to improve access to support for young people, a social marketing campaign and an initiative to target resources to the six wards with the highest levels of need.

- 3.2 Progress in **reducing levels of Infant mortality** has been **good**. The data for 2007 indicates a decline in the infant mortality rate. A support visit from the Department of Health national Support Team produced good outcomes, with the Team positive about the plans in place. The new Infant Mortality Strategy is being implemented with the development of targeted action plans for the areas with highest need.

3.3 Progress in **establishing the mental health needs of the BME population** has been **satisfactory**. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has identified the baseline mental health needs of this group. A more detailed assessment is taking place as part of the ongoing work programme relating to the commissioning of CAMHS provisions.

4.0 Safeguarding:

4.1 The specific work recommended in the JAR around the **electronic case record system (ESCR)** progress is **good**. At the time of the inspection the functionality for recording audit trails did exist, but was not readily accessible or user friendly. As part of the development to meet the national Integrated Children's System requirements this functionality was improved and is now easily accessible for users and more robust. All staff will be using the new version of ESCR over the coming months. As discussed below, improving the ESCR system is an important strand of the improvement programme taking place in children and young people's social care.

4.2 The **timeliness of child protection conferences and quality of core assessments**, show **satisfactory** progress. Child protection conferences processes have been improved, as have monitoring and management of the system. The latest data show 48.3% of conferences are completed on time, compared with 31% in the quarter prior to the publication of the JAR Action Plan. In terms of core assessments progress has been more limited. Implementation of the new national approach to assessment and IT systems (Integrated Children's System or ICS) is delayed, but assessment training is now ongoing and feedback to date on these sessions has been positive. Again this work forms part of the improvement programme outlined below.

4.3 Progress on **improving the quality of children's homes** has been **satisfactory**. All but one of these homes have now been judged by OfSTED to be adequate or better. One home was judged to be 'outstanding' with all but one of the remainder judged adequate or good.

4.4 Work to **improve the fostering service** following the inadequate grading at inspection has been **satisfactory**. There has been focused effort to address the areas for improvement identified by the inspection. An OfSTED monitoring visit took place in mid-February 2009 and at the time of writing no formal feedback has been received.

4.5 Progress on improving the **timeliness of looked after children's reviews** has been **good**. This reflects investment in additional capacity. During the second quarter, 98% of reviews were on time (although, the year end performance measure will be slower to change due to the cumulative way it is measured), improved performance is expected to continue into 2009/10. Progress on **looked after children and young people participating in their reviews** is **satisfactory**. As outlined in the January 2009 APA report, actions are in place to improve performance more significantly, including training, the development of a specialist participation sub-group within the

reviewing team and the introduction of a set of standards for participation. These should make a greater impact as the year progresses.

4.6

There has been **good** progress on **reducing the number of unfilled Children and Young People's Social Care vacancies**. Current field social worker vacancies are at approximately 1% and targeted initiatives for specific services areas have made a positive impact. This targeted approach will continue to maintain the trend of reducing the overall number of unfilled posts across Children and Young People's Social Care.