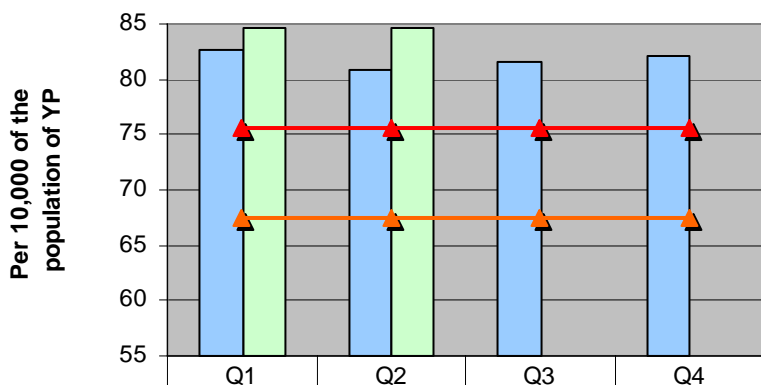


Why is this a priority

High quality universal services, integrated at the frontline, represent the best preventative strategy. We know that prevention is cost effective and provides the best outcome for children, young people and families. Our priority actions aim to increase resilience and reduce risks for everyone. Our frontline services will place the child, young person and family at the centre, personalise services and provide rapid and proportional responses where there is escalating risk.

LSP-HWb (i) - Number of LAC per 10,000 population of children & young people (excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers) (fall)



The number of looked after children has increased compared to last year and remains high in Leeds when compared to statistical neighbours and the national average. However, the increase in the numbers of looked after children in Leeds reflects a national trend. Since the last quarter the overall number has remained stable.

Overall progress to date and outcomes achieved 1st April - 30th September 2009

Overall Summary

Inspections and research conducted internally and by Leeds Metropolitan University confirm that the thresholds for admission to care are appropriate and are being consistently applied. However, there has been a lack of clarity across agencies in understanding and owning common thresholds for action, leading to a fragmentation in service delivery to families. Whilst there have been pockets of excellent inter-agency work at a local level across the city, this has not been consistently applied. The Common Assessment Framework is the primary assessment process used by all agencies for entry into, and exit from, multi-agency working where appropriate, by looking holistically at the needs of each child, young person and family. Through the CAF, a single multi-agency plan is agreed with the child, family and all partners and by focusing on rolling out and improving the use of CAF we are seeking to deliver more consistency and better joining up with partners. In addition, work to reduce the Looked After Children population has focused on reducing drift for those already in care through robust care planning and innovative approaches such as the joint arrangement with CAF/CASS to fast track S39 applications to discharge Care Orders where appropriate. The effect of this work is that the overall population is being held at a consistent level, in spite of a significant increase in admissions which mirror the national trend – for example, in May alone, there were 50 admissions to care. The overall population is 1364, and 66 of these are unaccompanied asylum seeking children which compares with 1359 in March 2007, 1364 in March 08 and 1338 in March 09.

Due to the continuing high number of looked after children in Leeds the overall rating remains red. The direction of travel assessment reflects the fact that the numbers remained stable in the last quarter.

Achievements since the last quarter

- A suite of clear and succinct ‘threshold’ guidance documents have been developed across the partnership. These documents have been included in multi-agency training programmes and are referenced in the Leeds City Council corporate induction to children’s services.
- A new system was established in the council’s contact centre to help identify and appropriately redirect referrals made into the contact centre which are not for action by CYPSC. This includes the stationing of a senior social care manager within the Contact Centre, helping to advise and direct callers.
- The result is that no caller receives ‘no further action’ and where social care thresholds are not met,

Improvement Priority – CYPP 8 Reducing the need for children to be in care

Lead Officer – Jackie Wilson/Sally Threlfall

callers are directed to support from another service e.g. offering family support services or suggesting the use of a Common Assessment to effectively assess needs

- Local multi-agency triage teams have been established in the three social care delivery areas to ensure referrals deemed as 'not for action' by social care at a local level are redirected appropriately. Separate audit activity is tracking rerouted cases to ensure that effective services are delivered.
- Improvements in CAF provision include.
 - Increased the size of the CAF Team with a member of staff from Children & Young People Social Care, YOS and Early Years.
 - 500 CAF training places have been allocated between September and December 2009. A further 500 places will be available between Jan and March 2010.
 - Published the Referrals Pathway which identifies CAF as a first point of contact of assessment of need.
 - The Workforce Development Team has been supplemented by 12 trainers who are able to provide up to 20 days CAF training each, significantly increasing training capacity.
 - Budget holding is now available through CAF process
 - Continued rolled out across the city, with nearly 1350 completed by the end of October 2009
- The new Parenting Commissioner is in place and the Parenting Unit is up and running. The first two pieces of work undertaken included plotting Family Support Services and parenting courses against levels of need across the city.
- Adolescent Cases Panel was established in North West as a pilot
- Developed a staff learning package to assist improvements in care planning, initially focusing on permanency planning .
- Family Hub is now 'Parent Know How' compliant.
- Directory of Family Support Services has been launched and is currently being populated with information from various services.
- The C&YPSC commissioning framework was formally reviewed by Leeds Met at a family group conference. The framework will be used for the future commissioning bids.

Challenges/Risks

- Risk - The national trend of looked after children: greater awareness around abused and neglected children results in increases in referrals. Q1 & 2 08/09 = 7475 referrals; Q1 & Q2 09/10 = 8770 referrals, 17% rise.
- Risk - reluctance to use CAF as a first assessment
- Risk - capacity of CAF team to deal with the increase in the number CAFs generated by the new pathways document
- Challenge - degrees of vulnerability are impacted by economic recession. Poverty exacerbates the likelihood of children experiencing or being exposed to abuse and neglect.
- Challenge – increase monitoring and assessment for vulnerable children

Council / Partnership Groups			
Approved by (<i>Accountable Officer</i>)	Sally Threlfall / Jackie Wilson	Date	05/11/09
Approved by (<i>Accountable Director</i>)	Rosemary Archer	Date	11/11/09

Improvement Priority – CYPP 8 Reducing the need for children to be in care

Lead Officer – Jackie Wilson/Sally Threlfall

Key actions for the next 6 months					
	Action	Lead Officer	Milestone	Timescale	Date Action Last Reviewed
1	Directory of Family Support Services to be populated at weekly activity level	Sally Threlfall	1) Directory fully populated 2) Staff able to easily access latest version of directory on line	Dec 09 Ongoing	New action
2	Ensure sufficient staff are trained and confident in administering the CAF	Sally Threlfall	Staff in all clusters, Schools, Children's Centres and health service are trained and confident	Ongoing	New action
3	Establish additional Integrated Service Leader posts in 10 most disadvantaged clusters	Sally Threlfall	Integrated Service Leaders in post	Ongoing	New action
4	Embed CAF as first part of assessment	Sally Threlfall	1) Increase in Number of CAFs : Develop indicators to monitor numbers 2) Decrease in referrals to CYPSC through monitoring performance of NI 68.	By Quarter 3 Ongoing with quarterly reviews	New action
5	Establish cluster based Intervention Panels	Sally Threlfall	First ten panels in place	April 2010	New action
6	Establish wedge based Children Leeds Panels	Sally Threlfall	Panels in place	April 2010	New action

Performance Indicators										
Performance indicators aligned to the LSP Improvement Priority										
Reference	Title	Owner	Frequency & Measure	Rise or Fall	Baseline	2008/09 Result	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Quarter 2	Current Predicted Full Year Result	Data Quality
LSP-HW2b(i) a	Number of looked after children excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers (Numerical)	Children and Young People's Social Care (C&YPSC)	Quarterly Numerical	Fall	1281 (2007/08)	1255	1031	1293	1293	No concerns
LSP-HW2b(i) b	Number of children looked after (expressed as a rate per 10,000) excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers	(C&YPSC)	Quarterly Rate per 10,000	Fall	83.8 (2007/08)	82.1	67.5	84.6	84.6	No concerns