

	Recommendation	Stage	Complete
1	<p><b>That the Executive Board includes an increased resource for children's social care staffing in the budget proposals to be put forward to Council in February 2010.</b></p> <p><b>Also that the costings provided to us by the Chief Officer for Children and Young People's Social Care for a caseload of 20 cases are used as a minimum starting point for working towards a children's social work service with sufficient staff to ensure a reasonable caseload, and promoting quality outcomes for the children and families of Leeds.</b></p>	<p><b>4 Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.</b></p>	
	<p><b><u>March 2011 update</u></b></p> <p>The unannounced inspection of contact and referral arrangements in January 2011 found that 'Social work staff have manageable caseloads, regular supervision and access to appropriate training'. This is a positive reflection on the recruitment and wider work that has been done to address case load issues.</p> <p>However, this remains an area that requires careful management and monitoring, particularly given increases in the number of referrals to CYP Social Care. The service re-design work that will change the way teams are organised is moving forward as part of the wider transformation programme and it is anticipated that this will be fully implemented by September 2011. In order to be fully effective this will need to run alongside wider efforts to develop our early intervention work, which is a key feature of the transformation programme.</p> <p><i>Director's Response (Approved by Executive Board February 2010)</i>  <i>Children's Services recognize and value the depth of the Scrutiny Inquiry into Safeguarding and appreciate the timeliness of this interim report and its recommendation. The Interim Director of Children's Services is happy to support the first part of the Board's recommendation. The need for additional resource has been highlighted through analysis carried out with Children and Young People's Social Care during 2009/10. Resource levels are also a key theme in the report on the announced inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services, published on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The Council is committed to responding effectively to the findings of that report. A separate report about the announced inspection is also on the February Executive Board agenda.</i></p> <p><i>Before the announced inspection, as Scrutiny Board's interim report recognises, work had already started to help reduce caseloads. In October 2009, for example, it was agreed that capacity should be increase through 25 new Advanced Practitioner posts. Eight of these have been recruited and will be starting work in these posts in February. The second wave of recruitment has now commenced.</i></p>		

*In view of the Scrutiny Board's recommendation, Executive Board is asked to note the report also on its February agenda, which sets out the Council's proposed revenue budget for 2010/11. In broad terms, the scrutiny recommendation is already taken account of within the proposed budget, which incorporates a £6.2 million increase for Children and Young People's Social Care.*

*What this proposed increase does not do is direct the full amount suggested in the Scrutiny Board's interim report for the immediate recruitment of the additional social worker numbers suggested (and the administrative and managerial staff needed to support these extra numbers). This would be an unrealistic ambition given the limitations of the support of qualified social workers currently available. Instead, the 2010/11 budget proposals include a two-year approach to increasing social work capacity. Year one builds-in additional funding for the 25 advanced practitioners, alongside a re-designation of other funding into additional frontline social work posts. Year two (2011/12) will allow for further new posts to be built into the social worker establishment. The two-year approach is pragmatic, with a strong focus in year one on remodeling the existing workforce to undertake more support functions and release social worker capacity. Importantly, this increased capacity is part of a wider approach to improving the quality of practice at the front line and the quality of service as a whole.*

*It is suggested therefore that Executive Board endorses the recommendation of the Scrutiny Board but rather than proposing the immediate recruitment of the number of additional social workers and support staff suggested in the scrutiny's report, agreed a more pragmatic approach, combining the remodeling of existing services along with phased recruitment of additional frontline staff. This is considered a better way to achieve the improved quality and reduced case loads being sought. Over the next two years this approach can significantly improve our support for vulnerable children and young people in Leeds.*

*If approved, Children's Services will welcome the opportunity to report progress on this approach to the Scrutiny Board. In addition, the progress and the impact of this work will be closely monitored by the newly established Improvement Board, ensuring it is continually and effectively reviewed. Executive Board will be kept up-to-date through the monitoring reports on the Children's Services Improvement Plan.*

#### September 2010 update

*In February 2010, both the Executive Board and Full Council approved a budget for 2010/11 that includes significant additional investment in Children and Young People's Social Care. A proportion of that investment has been used for the recruitment of additional social workers. Since February the number of Advanced Practitioners in post has risen to 12, another round of recruitment to these posts is underway. A number of temporary additional Team managers have also been appointed. Furthermore, over the summer 35 new social workers have also been recruited. A further round of recruitment for social workers is also about to be launched.*

*These new social workers, when combined with the agency staff who have been retained, have helped to increase capacity, which has in turn had a positive impact on caseloads. At present the average caseload is approximately 22 per social worker. However, it is important to recognise that given that many of the recently appointed social workers are newly qualified, workloads are being managed to reflect their experience.*

*We would anticipate a continuing positive impact on caseloads through:*

- Ongoing recruitment drives – a budget is in place to enable continuing recruitment of social workers. Though this must be considered in the context of the national shortage of social workers and the competition this creates.*
- The service re-design work that is a key part of the transformation programme in children's services. The re-design work is informed by the intention to reduce case loads in child protection work to 20. More details about this can be provided on request.*

*December 2010 update*

*Leeds now has 14 Advanced Practitioners in post and a further five people have been recommended for the post, subject to the necessary HR processes and checks.*

*At the start of December the latest round of interviews for social workers was due to commence. The latest round of recruitment saw a significant level of interest. We hope to be able to update the Board further at their December meeting.*

*Work to address case loads is continuing. The latest analysis (carried out in November) showed case loads for social workers in Child Protection Teams down to an average of 21.6 per social worker. Although case load levels continue to be managed to reflect the experience of different social workers. The service re-design work to reorganise teams locally is progressing. A draft structure has been developed and is currently subject to approval as part of the wider transformation programme in children's services. As stated previously, this model has been informed by the intention to reduce the average case load for social workers in child protection teams to 20.*

	Recommendation	Stage	Complete
1	<p><b>That Education Leeds revises its complaints procedure to incorporate a specific section for school complaints, including an appropriate third stage review process.</b></p>	<p><b>3 Not achieved (obstacle). Scrutiny Board to determine appropriate action.</b></p>	
	<p><b><u>March 2011 update</u></b> From the start of April, as Education Leeds is incorporated into the Council's Children's Services, a fully integrated Complaints Service will be in place (this is largely the case already).</p> <p>Children's Services will work closely with schools to resolve any issues at the earliest point.</p> <p>The ombudsman has confirmed that they can only take cases from individuals who want to complain about their local authority. So, if an individual from a school, such as a governor, wants to make a complaint about services in connection with a school matter, then they can do so but not on the school's behalf.</p> <p>If, we have not been able to resolve a wider issue with a school, and that school remains dissatisfied after going through stages one and two of the complaint procedure, then therefore their only recourse is to take the council to judicial review.</p> <p><i><u>Director's Response (Approved by Executive Board May 2010)</u></i> <i>Education Leeds will work within the context of the Children's Services to ensure that the recommendation is incorporated into the Leeds City Council procedure.</i></p> <p><i><u>September 2010 update</u></i></p> <p><i>The complaints framework and procedures for Children's services are currently being reviewed under the One Council arrangements as part of the Children's Services Transformation Programme. Children's services will ensure that schools' interests, as stakeholders will be taken account of in that programme.</i></p> <p><i><u>December 2010 update</u></i></p> <p><i>A further update will be provided by 31 March 2011 once the complaints procedure has been reviewed as part of the transfer of Education Leeds into an integrated Children's Services.</i></p>		

	Recommendation	Stage	Complete
2	<p><b>That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds ensures that parents, schools and governors continue to be reminded that term time holidays are discouraged.</b></p>	<p><b>4 Not achieved</b></p>	
	<p><b><u>March 2011 update</u></b>            Good practice from two primary schools in the city who have seen significant decreases in requests for Extended Leave has been incorporated into the guidance which is now under consultation/comment.</p> <p><i>Director's Response (Approved by Executive Board June 2010)</i>            Following the lead taken by the North West area which reduced the overall number of days lost to holidays, more clusters and families of schools are adopting consistent holiday in term time policies across primary and high schools.            The Attendance Strategy Team support schools by using penalty notices in instances of excessive, unauthorised holidays in term time.            Analysis on the impact of holidays in term time is shared with schools and area partnerships.            The policy on extended leave is being reviewed and updated. Once this has been completed, information will be sent out to all schools and key partners reminding them of the importance of regular school attendance and the impact holidays in school time has on learning.            The Attendance Strategy Team utilises a variety of media to communicate with schools, parents and governing bodies e.g. press, radio, campaigns, newsletter, bulletin etc.</p> <p><u>September 2010 update</u>            A working group has been set up to review the current policy on Extended Leave which includes primary heads, Attendance Strategy, elected members and community representatives with plans for a consultative process which includes the voice of parents and families.            This revised policy also clarifies and reaffirms to schools the guidance from the DfE that holidays in term time are not a parental right and are authorised at the school's discretion, in line with policies that must be communicated regularly to parents. Those policies are increasingly being adhered to by clusters and families of schools to deliver consistent responses to schools in their localities for example the North West area policy as the first example of schools working collaboratively to agree a single approach to holiday requests.</p> <p><u>December 2010 update</u>            More and more clusters across the city are adopting consistent approaches to holidays in term time. The positive impact of this is being seen in the data – in 2009/10 primary school children attended an extra 9,000 days compared to 2008/09 because fewer parents removed their children from school during term time. In the secondary phase, the impact was an extra 6,500 days of school attendance.</p> <p>When the socio-economic background of pupils who do take holidays in term-time was examined, there were not significant differences in the secondary phase. However, there is a small difference in the primary phase where parents who are defined as "comfortably off" take more holidays in term time than other categories i.e. wealthy achievers, hard-pressed etc. There is also a significant difference in parental attitudes to holidays across phases – almost twice as many parents take their primary age children on holiday than secondary.</p> <p>An initial draft of the Extended Leave guidance has been circulated to the members of the working group and to key partners for comments and amendment. The guidance will be circulated to an appropriate consultative audience before the end of January to enable to contribution of key community representatives.</p>	<p><b>(Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.</b></p>	