

## **LEEDS CITY COUNCIL CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT NOTICE NOVEMBER 2011 UPDATE**

### **Purpose**

1. This is a consolidated update against all the areas in the Improvement Notice as at the end of the Improvement Notice period (insofar as is possible given availability of validated data). It follows the same format used for the interim update reports and is written within the context of all the detailed reports provided to Improvement Board on a monthly basis throughout the life of the Improvement Notice so far.

### **Background**

2. We have had an Improvement Notice in place since March 2010, with an Improvement Board meeting each month since January 2010 to provide monitoring and challenge. Once the detailed Improvement Plan was agreed in March 2010, we provided very rigorous monthly monitoring reports to the Improvement Board. Additionally, we have provided interim reports to DfE in May and October 2010, and in May 2011, which formed the basis of progress review meetings with DfE. Bill McCarthy, chair of the Improvement Board, has also provided regular reports to the Minister of State, from his perspective as chair of the Improvement Board. We have used all of this monitoring information to provide detailed quarterly updates to the Council's Executive Board, Scrutiny Board, and a Cross Party Member Reference Group. Latterly, we have also provided update reports to the Children's Trust Board and to the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Main Points**

3. Many areas of the Improvement Notice have been achieved in full, eg targets for Initial and Core Assessments. Some of the 'process' areas of the Improvement Notice are well on the way to being achieved, but will be a journey of continuous improvement, eg the quality and consistency of practice. A few areas of the Improvement Notice have not been met, eg the very challenging NEET targets.
4. Overall, significant progress has been made in all areas, and has been recognised in a number of Ofsted reports, including the recent Safeguarding Inspection report and the draft Annual Assessment Letter. Improvement Board have also recognised significant improvements in a number of areas. The Children's Trust Board is operating well and has an ambitious, and widely owned Children and Young People's Plan, which includes areas where there are significant outstanding challenges in terms of outcomes for children and young people in the city. The Leeds Education Challenge sits alongside the Children and Young People's Plan as an ambitious plan to improve learning in

the city, given the performance challenges in that area. The leadership and governance arrangements for the Leeds Education Challenge are part of the Children's Trust Board's remit, and also include a broader group of relevant stakeholders and external challenge from leading national experts. Extensive discussions are taking place with relevant DfE colleagues and with the Schools Commissioner about the plans for improvement in the city.

5. We are in the process of developing a new improvement plan, which is appropriate for the current stage of development. Subject to the outcome of the Progress Review meeting with the DfE, and ministerial considerations of the Leeds position, we would expect that the Children's Trust Board would own and drive this improvement plan. We expect that this improvement plan will include:
  - a. outstanding areas from the current Improvement Notice. Eg ICPC performance and quality and consistency
  - b. Ofsted recommendations eg CAF, ICT system, quality of recording
  - c. issues contained within the Annual Assessment letter eg educational performance and quality of residential provision
  - d. relevant work from the CYPP and the Leeds Education Challenge.
6. The work we are currently doing is to ensure that this approach has widespread ownership, sufficient depth and rigour to be effective, but that it doesn't duplicate other plans. The Children's Trust Board will want to ensure some appropriate external challenge to the ongoing improvement journey in order to maintain what has been effective through the Improvement Board, but without necessarily the frequency and detailed monitoring that has taken place so far.

## **Conclusion**

7. All the evidence is that we have made significant progress against the Improvement Notice and that we have ambitious and well owned plans in place for the key areas of outstanding challenge. The leadership and governance that wasn't in place when the Improvement Notice was issued is now in place and effectively driving improvement.

## **Recommendations**

8. DfE colleagues are asked to consider the papers this report, the other papers in this pack, and all the information that has been considered by the Improvement Board, as they consider the next steps in the DfE intervention process and as they advise ministers.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT NOTICE NOVEMBER 2011 UPDATE

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| <p>NI 59 - whilst maintaining high quality, increase the percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within timescale to 72% for the month of June 2010, to 80% for the month of October 2010 and to 80% for the cumulative period October 2010 to March 2011</p>  |
| <p>As reported in May, the cumulative target from March 2010 to October 2010 of 80% for initial assessments being completed within timescales was met with a performance of 80.1%. Performance remains above the 80% target set in the improvement plan. The August performance (80.5%) is higher than the same period 12 months ago (78.3%) in spite of a 42% increase in the total number of initial assessments carried out. Intensive work continues to ensure the timeliness of initial assessments in spite of the continuing rise in the volume of assessments.</p> <p>Work has continued to ensure improvements to the quality of recording practice and this has reduced the amount of out of date and incomplete recording. A program of file auditing is in place with corrective actions being addressed in a timely manner. Iperformer continues to be used at all levels to manage performance, as has been reported in previous updates.</p> |
| <p>NI 60 - whilst maintaining high quality, increase the percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement to 80% for the month of June 2010, to 84% for the month of October 2010 and to 85% for the cumulative period October 2010 to March 2011</p>   |
| <p>As reported in May, the cumulative target from March 2010 to October 2010 of 85% for core assessments being completed within timescales was met with a performance of 90.1%. Performance on core assessments continues to be strong in 2011/12 and exceeds the 85% target set in the improvement plan. The August performance (90.2%) is higher than the same period 12 months ago (81.4%) in spite of a 64% increase in the total number of core assessments carried out.</p> <p>Work has continued to ensure improvements to the quality of recording practice and this has reduced the amount of out of date and incomplete recording. A program of file auditing is in place with corrective actions being addressed in a timely manner. Iperformer continues to be used at all levels to manage performance, as has been reported in previous updates.</p>  |
| <p>NI 78 - reduction in number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths to no schools in the 2011 examinations, with plans in place and demonstrable progress towards that goal by September 2010</p>  |
| <p>Confirmed school level results for academic year 2010/11 will not be available until January 2012 however provisional results indicate that three schools are below the threshold of 30% of pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and maths. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Primrose, which has now re-opened as The Co-operative Academy; a sponsored academy that will specialise in Enterprise. Results have improved in 2011 to 28.9%, with a possibility that confirmed results will be at or nearer 30%.</li><li>o South Leeds Academy is part of a successful academy chain (Schools Partnership Trust) that has its own school improvement capacity. Current provisional reports available to the local authority suggest 25.4% of pupils reached the national level</li></ul>   |

but the school has indicated that confirmed results may be higher.

- o City of Leeds provisional results are currently 18.3%. An executive headteacher is now in place who has substantial experience of school improvement within Leeds. The school is also receiving significant support around leadership, curriculum, HR and financial issues. It is acknowledged that these results are not good enough and discussions about different structural solutions are underway with the school.

Given provisional information may change there is the potential for between 1 and 3 Leeds secondary schools will be below the 30% target level for 2011. Swallow Hill which was below in 2010 is now above the 30% level, academy proposals are progressing with this school.

There are ongoing reductions in the number of schools below the current and future floor standards. With the current floor standard of 35% provisional results for 2011 show four schools were below this level; an improvement from seven below in 2010. David Young Academy, John Smeaton and Parklands have all achieved results above the floor standard. In anticipation of the floor standard rising, there are five schools below 40% on this measure (10 in 2010); 11 below 45% (15 in 2010); and 15 below 50% (20 in 2010). Four schools improved by more than 10 percentage points. 60% of Leeds schools improved against this measure. These results are provisional and do not include consideration of progress measures.

Schools below 35% achieving 5A\*-C including English and maths in 2009

| 2009              |     | 2010                      |     | 2011 - provisional        |     |
|-------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Parklands         | 33% | Rodillian                 | 48% | Rodillian                 | 64% |
| Rodillian         | 33% | Farnley Park              | 45% | Farnley Park              | 47% |
| Farnley Park      | 32% | Leeds West Ac.            | 37% | David Young Ac            | 47% |
| Intake (closed)   | 30% | (Intake)                  | 35% | Leeds West Ac. (Intake)   | 44% |
| David Young Ac.   | 29% | Carr Manor                | 32% | Carr Manor                | 41% |
| Carr Manor        | 27% | City of Leeds             | 32% | *Parklands Ac             | 38% |
| West Leeds        | 24% | Parklands                 | 31% | Swallow Hill (Wort/W Lds) | 31% |
| (closed) Primrose | 16% | David Young Ac.           | 29% | *Co-operative Ac          | 29% |
| South Leeds       | 16% | South Leeds Ac            | 25% | (Primrose)                | 25% |
| (closed)          | 15% | Primrose                  | 24% | South Leeds Ac            | 18% |
| Wortley (closed)  | 12% | Swallow Hill (Wort/W Lds) |     | City of Leeds             |     |
| City of Leeds     |     |                           |     |                           |     |

Source: Performance tables 2009 and 2010, EPAS 2011

\* Academies from September 2011

A fundamentally new approach to school improvement in the context of an integrated Children's Service is now set out in the Leeds Education Challenge. Initially produced in response to the Secretary of State's request in March 2011 for plans to tackle primary and secondary schools performing below floor standard, the Leeds Education Challenge now goes beyond this remit by describing an ambitious city-wide commitment to a child-friendly city that drives school improvement. This policy will not tolerate under-performance and will seek to use all powers of the local authority to support, monitor, challenge and intervene as appropriate. The Children's Trust Board recently agreed the leadership structure for the Leeds Education Challenge, which embraces partnership working and includes advice and challenge from nationally renowned experts.

NI 79 – increase achievement of Level 2 qualifications by the age of 19 to 75.2% in the 2009/10 academic year.

The target of 75.2% for the 2009/10 academic year was not achieved with 73.7% reaching this level. This represented an increase of 2.6 %pts of Leeds young people reaching this level. We can be more confident about 2011 results based on the

position at age 18 of the cohort, that will be 19 in 2011. 76.1%, of this group had already reached level 2 by age 18. This is 6 %pts more than the 2010 cohort (who at the equivalent point achieved 70.1%) and the rate of improvement is twice the national rate. Ongoing improvement is being sustained with 70.8% of the cohort who will be 19 in 2011/12 already having reached level 2 by academic age 17. (DFE SFR04/2011)

2011 Key Stage 4 provisional data provides further confidence of ongoing improvement. Among the 2011 Year 11 cohort in Leeds (the cohort that will be 19 in 2013/14), 80.8% of young people have achieved level 2, which is the second year in a row that performance in Leeds has been above national for this indicator and Leeds is in the top half of local authorities for performance nationally. This accepts the methodologies for calculating achievement of the level 2 threshold are not directly comparable between the Key Stage 4 performance tables and the Level 2 and 3 attainment at 19 SFR.

NI 102 - narrow the achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving a 5 ppts reduction at Key Stage 4 in the 2010 examinations

In May we reported that improvements in attainment in 2010 had been greater for pupils eligible for free school meals than those who were not eligible and as a result the gaps had narrowed, but by differing degrees for different indicators. Provisional 2011 results show good progress in narrowing performance gaps at lower qualification levels but while more young people entitled to FSM are now reaching the 5+A\*-C including English and maths level a sizeable gap remains to the overall cohort. This is a key focus in developing the Leeds Education Challenge and in implementing an integrated approach to meet the needs of children, especially those with the greatest needs.

Provisional data for 2011 indicates that, since 2009 the rate of improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving **5 A\*-C GCSEs** has been almost twice as high for FSM pupils as pupils who are not eligible for FSM, increasing by 21%pts compared to 12%pts. The gap for this indicator has decreased from 34% pts in 2009 to 25%pts in 2011.

For the **5 A\*-C including English and maths indicator**, despite the gap between FSM and non FSM pupils narrowing slightly in 2010, over the period of the Improvement Notice (2009-2011) the gap has remained the same with both sets of pupils improving by 7%pts over the two years. The provisional gap between FSM and non FSM in 2011 is 35%pts.

The gap between FSM and non FSM pupils has narrowed for attainment of **5 A\*-G** since 2009 with the attainment of FSM pupils increasing 8%pts compared to a 1%pt increase for non FSM pupils.

Between 2009 and 2010 the rate of improvement for pupils eligible for free school meals was greater than the national improvement for FSM eligible pupils for 5A\*-C, 5A\*-C including English and maths and 5 A\*-G. National data is not yet available for 2011.

There is evidence from the data above that improvements are being made but this is not yet showing sufficient improvement in the key indicator of 5A\*-C including English and maths. Children and young people entitled to Free School Meals are a key vulnerable group being prioritised within the Leeds Education Challenge. This strand of the Leeds Education Challenge will be crucial to secure embedded improvement in

the city.

NI 108 - achieve a sustained upward trend in the achievement of black and mixed heritage pupils by the end of the academic year 2010/11

Provisional 2011 KS4 results indicate that BME cohorts of Black and Mixed heritage pupils are achieving improved results at a faster rate than the Leeds and national comparative averages. The improvement in the 5+A\*-C (inc E&M) indicator for Black groups in Leeds is 9.5 percentage points over 3 years the equivalent figure for Mixed groups is 7.3 percentage points while the overall total improvement for Leeds is 6.9 percentage points.

The most recent available national data for BME outcomes (2010) also indicates that the improvements seen in Leeds for Black and Mixed groups are faster than those seen for the same groups nationally. The improvements in Leeds from 2009 to 2010 for Black and Mixed groups were 10 percentage points and 4 percentage points respectively, compared to national improvements of 4 percentage points and 3 percentage points. It is accepted that gaps to both national and local averages need to continue to be narrowed, and as with FSM entitled pupils, the strand on vulnerable groups within the Leeds Education Challenge will continue to address and embed improvement.

The most recent available RAISEonline Attainment Analyses (2010) indicates that there were significantly fewer BME groups performing significantly below average. In 2009 all 5 Mixed / Black BME groups were judged as significantly below average. In 2010 only 1 group (Mixed White & Black Caribbean) was judged to be significantly below.

Ofsted analysis of 2010 results for 5+A\*-C (inc E&M) showed Leeds attainment for the Black cohort was above the statistical neighbour average. Additionally amongst our neighbours Leeds had the smallest gap between the Black cohort and the overall local authority result. For young people of mixed heritage Leeds compares less well with statistical neighbours having the third widest gap of the 8 authorities included.

Provisional 2011 Fisher Family Trust (FFT) Value Added (non-contextualised) analyses indicate that on the 5+A\*-C (inc E&M) measure all Asian groups made progress which was broadly in line with, or significantly above expectations. The Black African cohort (the fastest growing BME group in Leeds) made progress which was significantly above expectations however the progress of the Black Caribbean cohort continued to make progress which was below expectation.

Despite some improvement trends the attainment for various ethnic minority groups in all phases of education is still too variable and with gaps both to the Leeds average and to national peer groups that need to be closed.

Through the Leeds Education Challenge a more coherent approach is being used to tackle some of the more complex issues surrounding ethnic minority achievement. Through the use of individual pupil data there has been an increased understanding of the interplay of issues such as ethnicity, levels of deprivation, gender and in some cases special educational needs coming together to impact on standards of attainment of groups of young people. This approach is particularly evident when reviewing the number of schools below floor standards as a high number of these schools are concentrated in areas of the city where there are higher levels of deprivation than the average for the city and have much higher proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language. We do not however take deprivation as an excuse for underperformance and will continue to support schools to identify pupils for particular intervention and support.

NI 117 – reduce the number of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to 6.8% in 2010/11

The January 2011 target of 6.8% presented a significant challenge for the city. The level of NEET for the November 10 – January 11 period was 8.3%, remaining in-line with the reduced figure of 8.2% achieved the previous year. Leeds has achieved a significant reduction in the number of young people whose status is Not Known over the past year. This reduction can be attributed to the work done by the Connexions Service to improve tracking processes and recording practice. The Not Known figure was 4.8% in January 2011, compared to 10.9% the previous year.

With the changing of the NEET definition in April 2011 Leeds now has around 400 extra young people in the NEET cohort. Leeds continues to have a higher NEET rate than national levels, although it is slightly below the current average rate for statistical neighbours, with 5 neighbours with higher rates and 5 with lower rates. Based on the most recent comparative data (July 2011) Leeds has a lower rate of young people whose status is not known (7.8%), compared to national (10.4%) and statistical neighbour levels (9.3%). The percentage of Leeds young people in learning (77.8%) is above national (76.4%).

To ensure further improvement NEET has been identified as a city priority being driven through our Children's Trust Board arrangements as one of the partnerships three "obsessions". As part of this improvement, partnership activity is taking place within localities (clusters) to determine how partners and communities can best address NEET related issues in their localities.

City- wide actions to reduce NEET over the coming year include:

- Work to increase numbers of young people in apprenticeships, including the development of a mentoring scheme to support new apprenticeships, particularly at the point of transition from school.
- Strengthening and development of enterprise and employability skills in pre and post 16 provision, supported by business, through the Education Business Partnership.
- Work with schools to ensure they provide good careers guidance support to young people under their new duties.
- Ensure IAG and careers guidance within schools and other learning providers links to future job prospects to raise aspirations;
- Implementation of the IAG targeted service review to commission quality services to enable vulnerable young people to participate in learning
- Improve the progression information and advice available to parents / carers.
- Work with post 16 learning providers, including the West Yorkshire Colleges Consortium, to ensure learners facing financial hardship in accessing learning receive appropriate financial support.
- Develop a city wide strategic action plan that joins up the work of children's and adult services with 14 to 19 year olds. This will focus on placing NEET in the context of city-wide issues such the raising of the participation age as youth employment, apprenticeships, jobs and skills, and changes to the provision of IAG.
- Use of systematic process in all schools to identify a learning pathway and progression route for every young person.
- Analysis of young people NEET and their needs to improve the recruitment of young people to available programmes.
- Investing in long term solutions by raising aspirations at an early age through

development of resources and training for primary schools on the careers curriculum, including systems for work across primary and secondary schools

National changes to the provision of careers education and information, advice and guidance; and reductions in financial support to young people in learning combined with the ongoing economic context provide a challenging background for improvement.

The Council is expected to improve the response to child protection referrals to meet statutory guidelines, and ensure discussions with the police and other agencies take place in a timely manner in all relevant circumstances, as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

The timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences and response to referrals continues to improve against a backdrop of considerably increased workloads. A great deal of work around improving attendance, systems, procedures and processes and staffing is now starting to come to fruition.

- The improvement trend of the timeliness of ICPC's being reported in May has continued and the stand alone figure for ICPC's held within 15 days for August was 68.9%. There has also been a reduction in the number of overdue conferences with the majority taking place within 20 days (in the last 11 months 10 of these months have achieved 50% or higher ICPC's completed within 20 working days). There has also been a reduction in the number of cancelled conferences.
- As a result of an agreement reached between schools and Education Services, there was education input to 100% of ICPCs and core groups which took place during the school summer holidays.
- The number of conference chairs has been significantly increased to 10 established posts plus two additional posts to meet the demand for conferences.
- The service has recently introduced a duty system of conference chairs to provide additional challenge at the point of ICPC booking or cancellation.
- A new system for overseeing child protection core group meetings has been put in place which will provide greater consistency of approach as well as better analysis of agency attendance.
- The LSCB has now established an initial baseline for ICPC performance and will continue to monitor and further refine suitable interventions aimed at achieving continuing improvement in attendance at ICPCs and outcomes for children.

The Council must have clear multi-agency thresholds in place, shared with and understood by partners, in order for children and young people to access appropriate services and to ensure consistent and high quality referrals from other agencies.

In May, it was reported that the January 2011 unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment had identified that there had been considerable progress in this area since the last inspection. In particular the inspection noted that senior managers provide strong leadership for Children's Services and this has resulted in a remarkable and impressive improvement in the quality of the services and the safety of children in the city. This has been confirmed in the recent Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding.

Having clear multi agency thresholds in place that are shared with and understood by partners continues to be recognised as an important issue. Examples to demonstrate this include:

- The screening team in the Contact Centre has been increased. The team now includes two managers, an advanced practitioner, two social work staff and administrative support.
- The screening team are continuing to ensure the thresholds are adhered to and this is demonstrated through the rise in the percentage of referrals which lead to

an initial assessment (formerly NI 68). Since the screening team started in May 2010, the percentage of referrals that lead to an initial assessment has maintained its performance of 70% since March 2011 which is a considerable increase on previous year end figures (54.6% in 08/09 and 60.7% in 09/10).

- To ensure appropriate thresholds are applied, the domestic violence protocol is being revised and shared with relevant partners.
- Work is being undertaken to explore options for the co-location of C&YPSC and Police resources to provide the appropriate filter and signposting of DV notifications

The Council needs to ensure that it has effective information management arrangements in place, ensuring that records for all children and young people are up-to-date and that assessment reports are routinely shared with parents as appropriate.

In May it was reported that funding had been agreed for a replacement for the ESCR system. The Practice Standards manual had been finalised and is available online and the practice improvement programme had been undertaken. Work continues to replace ESCR specifically:

- There is extensive engagement of practitioners in the whole design and procurement of the new system, to ensure that the ICT supports practice.
- The first phase of the tender process, pre-qualification questionnaire assessment, has been completed resulting in seven suppliers being short listed to submit tenders detailing how their systems meet LCC user requirements.
- Before the suppliers can submit their tender proposals LCC are to issue a Statement of Requirements Specification (SoR). The SoR has been released to suppliers in October 2011.
- Suppliers will submit their responses in November 2011. System demonstrations will take place in January, site visits in February with a final decision in relation to the preferred supplier being made in May 2012.
- Running in parallel to the procurement, significant pre-implementation work has also been initiated to a) review processes, templates and forms in readiness to build and configure the system and b) map all the data, both paper and electronic, and undertake a data cleansing exercise in preparation for the migration to the new system.

The service is also updating the practice standards manual sections on recording practice with an emphasis on avoiding delays in completed work being placed on the ESCR. Additionally, significant improvements have been made to the current system that have made for a better user experience.

The Council needs to ensure that it has effective quality assurance arrangements in place to monitor the quality of contact, referral and assessment services and ensure that assessments are of a consistently high standard.

- In May it was reported that the unannounced inspection of January 2011 validated the changes made to monitor the quality of the contact, referral, and assessment service. These changes have been embedded further and the quality assurance of case files continues to be a key element of service delivery. Ofsted recently said "Cases referred to the social care services receive prompt attention, those that result in assessment are allocated promptly and the progress of assessments is closely monitored by managers."

Examples that demonstrate how this is being achieved include:

- Monthly auditing on children's social care case files is now established as part of the Casefile Audit Framework which is now in its third month of operation. Key themes are being drawn from the audit work and corrective actions are being put

into place. The continued number of Advanced Practitioners across the teams also contributes significantly to improvements in the quality of assessments and to risk analysis.

- Work has been carried out to address areas of weak recording practices which resulted in significant improvements in addressing the volume of out of date and incomplete recording. The momentum of this intensive work is being carried forward with ongoing challenge and support to staff across all teams in order to ensure that progress is maintained and improved upon.
- The LSCB has developed a performance management system and is now receiving regular performance reports of quarterly available information. Professor David Thorpe has been commissioned jointly by the LSCB and CTB to work on an updated evaluation of contacts, referrals and assessments.

The Council must further embed the use of the CAF in practice across children's services so that it is effectively used to inform early intervention.

Common assessment (CAF) practice has gained in momentum during 2011 in terms of fewer CAFs being abandoned, more multi agency meetings are taking place and the process is timelier with a larger proportion of meetings being held within agreed timescales. The majority of CAFs are closed with needs met. Parents' ratings are very good, and parent evaluation suggests that common assessments are helpful and supportive.

However as reflected in the recent Safeguarding Inspection, we need to significantly increase the usage of CAF. The 2010/11 period shows a reduction in CAFs initiated (958) compared to 2009/10 (1063) and rates are yet to pick up to desired levels for 2011/12. To address this improving the use of CAF is a partnership priority, with:

- A renewed communication strategy being launched to promote the use of CAF.
- Local Authority Partners (senior council staff) will act as advocates for CAFs within each of our local cluster partnership arrangements.
- Pilot clusters have Target Service Leaders embedded to coordinate responses to local need including better application of the CAF.
- Changes to the CAF process to emphasise the partnership approach and to minimise the paperwork.
- More regular performance management information is being produced for services and clusters.
- Clear expectations about the number of CAF's a service will be required to undertake.
- Links to the roll out of restorative practice as a way of working with families locally.

Leeds is currently working towards a permanent electronic solution through the national eCAF trial. The trial in Leeds began successfully with a number of participants in West Leeds. A consultation ended on 30th September and we are awaiting the final outcomes to determine our next steps. We continue updating and improving the current system and input our learning into the work around the new social care system.

The Council must demonstrate improvements in staff satisfaction (measured through the Council's corporate staff survey and the local social worker survey) and in the satisfaction of children and families (measured through various service specific surveys) throughout the term of the Improvement Notice.

Staff satisfaction and the satisfaction of children, young people and families continue to be gathered across the directorate and is considered critical to improving service provision.

- On 17<sup>th</sup> October the council opened its new employee engagement survey. Staff will be able to complete the survey up until 11<sup>th</sup> November. The survey is different

from previous surveys in that is shorter and looks at the simple things that affect the way staff feel about their jobs. The survey will collect information from as many staff as possible to build an understanding of how engaged staff are with the jobs they do and with the council. The results will be shared with staff in December. The survey will be repeated regularly throughout the year with samples of staff. By carrying out regular surveys throughout the year the authority will be able to take regular action on the answers obtained and see what's improved. Staff will also get more feedback on a more regular basis about how their views are being used.

- The results of the Parent and Carers Survey were presented to Social Care SLT on 21<sup>st</sup> July. CYPSC has recommenced carrying out the survey from July. Methods of consulting with parents for whom completion of a written survey is not appropriate are being explored and recommendations will be discussed with CYPSC SLT once the various options have been identified and investigated.
- The new case conference system has been running since mid August. The parental questionnaire about conferences continues to be undertaken. Early analysis indicates that parents are in favour of the new conference system. Verbal feedback on the new system has also been very positive.
- The 2010/11 ECM Survey has been undertaken and the report of findings will be published in November. Early analysis confirms that children and young people in Leeds continue to report that they feel safe, and that bullying levels are comparatively low.
- There is extensive work with children and young people through the approach to child friendly city, that is ensuring that there is a stronger voice being heard, and crucially that this is being responded to.

During their recent inspection, Ofsted noted 'User engagement and participation are good. The participation of children, young people and families in service planning and review is given a high priority in children's services. A wide range of consultation groups and forums are used to gather the views of service users.'

The Council must establish clear and agreed processes with partners in the Children's Trust and LSCB to ensure effective scrutiny and training takes place so that the quality of contacts, referrals and assessments improve.

In May it was reported that strong new partnership arrangements had been developed in Children's Services over the last year despite considerable change for many partners and significant shifts in government policy. Both the Leeds Children's Trust Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board were fully constituted and meeting effectively on a regular basis. In November 2011 these partnership arrangements have embedded further, resulting in an increasingly productive working relationship between the LSCB and CTB.

The LSCB has developed a performance management system and is now receiving regular performance reports of quarterly available information. Professor David Thorpe has been commissioned jointly by the LSCB and CTB to work on an updated evaluation of contacts, referrals and assessments. The LSCB is developing its Multi Agency Audit Programme. An audit of the effectiveness of Child Protection Plans will be initiated in Feb 2012.

Implementation of the performance management framework is progressing significantly, with very regular data being produced in all the key areas, and at a range of geographic levels. Dashboards are being considered by the CTB, clusters and the leadership team, in a much more active way to ensure the relentless focus on impact. The consistent use of Outcomes based accountability at all levels, with trained facilitators supporting this, is making a big difference.

The recent Ofsted inspection noted that:

- "The LSCB is adequate and meets its statutory responsibilities. It has an independent chair who provides effective leadership. She has worked to secure the effective engagement of all members and is beginning to challenge agencies on their contribution to safeguarding."
- "The LSCB has reviewed and improved its multi-agency training programme and access to this high quality training is good. It has secured resources to establish new posts to support the business of the board in 2011-12 and will use these to improve communication, consultation, quality assurance, performance monitoring and the participation of children and young people."
- "The CTB has established strong performance management arrangements and key performance measures are reported by senior managers on a monthly basis."

Working with the National Challenge Board and any other government agencies as appropriate, effectively deliver the National Challenge Programme, implement the Council's agreed plan for Schools Vulnerable to the National Challenge and ensure agreed targets are met.

A refreshed approach to school improvement in the context of an integrated Children's Service is now set out in the Leeds Education Challenge. Initially produced in response to the Secretary of State's request in March 2011 for plans to tackle primary and secondary schools performing below floor standard, the Leeds Education Challenge now goes beyond this remit by describing an ambitious city-wide commitment to a child-friendly city that drives school improvement. The Children's Trust Board recently agreed the leadership structure for the Leeds Education Challenge, which embraces partnership working and includes advice from nationally renowned experts.

In addition we continue to work with national colleagues to address underperformance. The number of secondary sponsored academies is continuing to increase and discussions are progressing on how best the development of primary academies in Leeds can be applied as a school improvement solution. Including converter academies there are likely to be at least 14 secondary academies by the end of 2011/12

There are ongoing reductions in the number of schools below the current and future floor standards. The current floor standard is 35% of pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and maths GCSE. In 2011 four schools were below this level; an improvement from seven below in 2010. David Young Academy, John Smeaton and Parklands have all achieved results above the floor standard. In anticipation of the floor standard rising, there are five schools below 40% on this measure (10 in 2010); 11 below 45% (15 in 2010); and 15 below 50% (20 in 2010). Four schools improved by more than 10 percentage points. 60% of Leeds schools improved against this measure. These results are provisional and do not include consideration of progress measures.

Working with DCSF, GOYH, National Strategies and other government agencies as appropriate, the Council is expected to demonstrate overall improvements in LAA indicators relating to children's services and statutory attainment targets through the period of this Improvement Notice.

The Leeds Strategic Plan and associated indicators came to an end in March 2011. They have been replaced by five City Priority Plans including the CYPP in Children's Services. A robust performance management approach is in place and this was ratified by the recent announced inspection of safeguarding which judged the performance management and quality assurance to be good, a significant improvement on the inadequate judgement received last time. Outcome based accountability is being used across the partnerships in the city as a working method to

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| <p>help drive collective action on priority areas and to understand what makes a difference.</p>   |
| <p>Cooperate with the independent chair to establish an Improvement Board and support the Board in providing effective challenge across the partnership to drive swift and sustainable progress through a robust improvement plan. The Council must provide the Improvement Board with robust evidence of both quantitative outcomes and qualitative processes as required. The Council must take full account of the advice and recommendations of the Improvement Board to deliver improvements in its children's services, and to continue to improve partnership arrangements.</p>   |
| <p>The Improvement Board continues to meet on a monthly basis. Regular updates against the Improvement Plan are provided to the Board along with other themed reports and detailed performance information. The Improvement Board Chair has effective communications through to the Council's Chief Executive, leader of the Council and Children's Services Scrutiny.</p>   |
| <p>Prepare a robust Improvement Plan to be agreed with the Improvement Board for delivering improvements across children and young people's services, addressing all areas of weaknesses highlighted in Ofsted inspections, the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment and other areas of concern as appropriate.</p>  |
| <p>A robust monthly monitoring and evaluation process continues to be in place which ensures continued accountability by services responsible for delivery against recommendations.</p> <p>The areas for development identified in the recent re-inspection of safeguarding have been developed into a 'Inspection Recommendation Action Plan' which will be regularly monitored by the social care senior leadership team and CSLT.</p> <p>To oversee the performance improvement work being undertaken across services and with partners, an improvement plan is being developed for CSLT and the CTB. This action plan will reference and signpost to ongoing improvement work such as the Inspection Recommendation Action Plan, remaining Improvement Plan actions, the priorities of the Education Leeds Challenge; CYP Obsession Action Plans and Key Priority Indicator Report Cards as well as Blocks A, B and C of the Ofsted Profile used to determine the annual assessment judgement of Children's Services.</p>  |
| <p>Monitor improvement in children's social care, by establishing rigorous performance management and quality assurance systems which deliver regular monitoring, scrutiny and quality assurance of social care performance.</p>   |
| <p>The recent re-inspection of safeguarding resulted in the category 'Performance management and quality assurance' move up two grades from inadequate to good. The inspection report states "the robust approach taken to quality assurance is driving up standards. This has made a significant contribution to the improvements achieved in the overall effectiveness of safeguarding and the distance travelled since the last full safeguarding inspection in 2009."</p> <p>Quality assurance continues to be a key driver for improving performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 110 audits of child protection and LAC cases were undertaken in July as part of a thematic audit of CYPSC files. 90.9% were judged to evidence an overall acceptable level of practice. No cases were deemed to fall within either the poorest practice standards category (overall score of 1) or the highest practice standards category (overall score of 5).</li> <li>• 134 audits were carried out in August and the corrective actions identified in these are being addressed.</li> <li>• The case file audit framework is currently being further developed to include methodologies which will ensure that standards are applied consistently across</li> </ul> |

audits and that corrective actions identified as being needed are completed appropriately.

- The new case conference system has been running since mid August. The parental questionnaire about conferences continues to be undertaken. Early analysis indicates that parents are in favour of the new conference system. Initial verbal feedback on the new system has also been very positive.

Increase capacity within children's social care, in particular at team manager and social worker levels, by ensuring that there is an effective senior management team responsible for social care.

The service redesign in social care is based on social work teams working to much smaller geographic localities ensuring that relationships between professionals in clusters are much stronger. At the 'front door', the screening team has been expanded, and work is now underway with Professor David Thorpe to implement plans which will lead to social workers being more directly involved in calls at the outset. This will ensure that children's needs are more effectively identified and the most appropriate service is offered to families through early intervention and targeted services. These approaches are aimed at reducing the demand for social work services by intervening effectively at an earlier stage with families by offering the appropriate support and intervention.

As part of the service redesign in Children's Social Care, caseload targets were set in order to inform the capacity required to ensure effective service delivery. It was agreed that social workers in child protection and children in need teams would carry an average caseload of 20, and in looked after children's teams 22.

The initial target of recruiting 24 Advanced Practitioners has been met. Recruitment will continue towards a higher number of 56 Advanced Practitioners in the service redesign.

The senior leadership team has been significantly enhanced with new Head of Service posts and a new Assistant Chief Officer role.

The recent inspection concluded "Significant financial investment has been made by the local authority to increase the number of employed social workers and considerable investment has been made to train and develop staff – through the practise improvement programme (PIP), the creation of advanced practitioner posts and relevant, good quality training."

Review social workers' responsibilities and workloads to ensure that responsibilities are clearly and tightly defined, and that no staff carry too wide a range of work. This will need to involve consideration of whether a restructure of children's social care services is necessary to deliver high quality services.

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The average caseload figure in June 2011 was 23 and reflects an improvement from 2009. The average caseload figure as at 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011 is 21. For the cohort of newly qualified social workers who started in March 2011, the average caseload stands at 17, as at 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011, with more complex cases co-worked or supported by Advanced Practitioners.

There remains some variation in terms of the actual numbers each social worker has at

any given time. This is impacted upon by the current structure of assessment and care management teams, where numbers of open cases in assessment teams fluctuate with the turnover of work associated with the cycle of teams responding to their duty arrangements.

As a result of this demand led dynamic social workers in assessment teams have a level of fluctuation in their caseloads. This is monitored closely and adjustments made to duty arrangements to respond to particular pressures in teams where the numbers of cases is high. Caseloads can be actively monitored at all times through the workload manager element of iperformer on ESCR. Senior managers monitor where individual caseloads exceed 25, and commission reports to explain the reasons for this and the actions taking place to reduce caseloads.

Front line staff have reported that they feel things are better with regard to capacity and the plans outlined above are aimed at ensuring the capacity developed is sustainable and outcomes for children in Leeds continue to improve.

Develop a comprehensive programme of training, mentoring and continuous professional development for all social care staff so that they have the skills to complete high quality and timely assessments.

Leeds continues to provide a wide range of training and development to meet the needs of social care staff. We have recently;

- Rolled out action learning sets to all Team Managers and Advanced Practitioners
- Reviewed and improved the NQSW programme
- Piloted practical workshops on Section 47 / Core Assessments, Chairing Meetings, Direct Work – use of resources and Risk Assessment to enhance current skills and pre-empt training needs arising from the restructure. Further workshops are to be rolled out prior to January 2012
- Organised briefings on ‘Child Participation in Child Protection Conferences’ for social care staff from November – January 2012
- Put in place a comprehensive training programme within residential children homes to meet the DfE minimum standards and OFSTED requirements

Leeds has also started to review our current approach to social work development in line with the recent Social Work Reform Board’s proposals for a Continuous Professional Development framework and overarching professional capabilities. Within this programme of work the authority is part of a national working group on the implementation of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) from September 2012.

The Children’s Services Directorate workforce development plan is complete, and includes relevant areas of professional development as well as organisational development. The wider partnership workforce development plan is work in progress, and the CYPP is clear on three ‘ways of working’ that will inform this plan – restorative practice, outcomes based accountability and voice and influence. Building the confidence of the widest possible workforce in dealing with safeguarding issues effectively will be an ongoing priority for the city.

The Improvement Board will receive regular updates on performance against the above measures. The Chair of the Improvement Board will report to the Department for Children, Schools and Families and Leeds City Council on a bi-monthly basis.

The Improvement Board continues to meet on a monthly basis. Regular updates against the Improvement Plan are provided to the Board along with other reports and detailed performance information.

An interim improvement update, tracking progress against the Improvement Notice was discussed by the Improvement Board on 9 May. This was submitted to the DfE and informed the Progress Review Meeting with DfE on 20 May.

The chair of the Improvement Board has submitted regular reports to the Minister of State, based on the work of the Improvement Board.

In terms of reporting progress to the council, a detailed improvement update report was presented to the Council's Executive Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> June. The most recent update was considered on 2 November.