

Meeting: Children's Trust Board 30 January 2012
Outcome 1: Children and Young People are safe from harm
LCC lead: Steve Walker

Population: All children and young people in Leeds
Priority 1: Help children to live in safe and supportive families
CTB lead: Jane Held and Bridget Emery

Why is this an obsession Outcomes for children are better when they are able to live safely within their own family and community. The high numbers of looked after children in Leeds impacts on the resources available to provide preventative services aimed at supporting children to live within their families safely.



RAG: Efforts are impacting on a reduction in the numbers entering care. **DOT:** Marginal reduction in numbers of looked after children

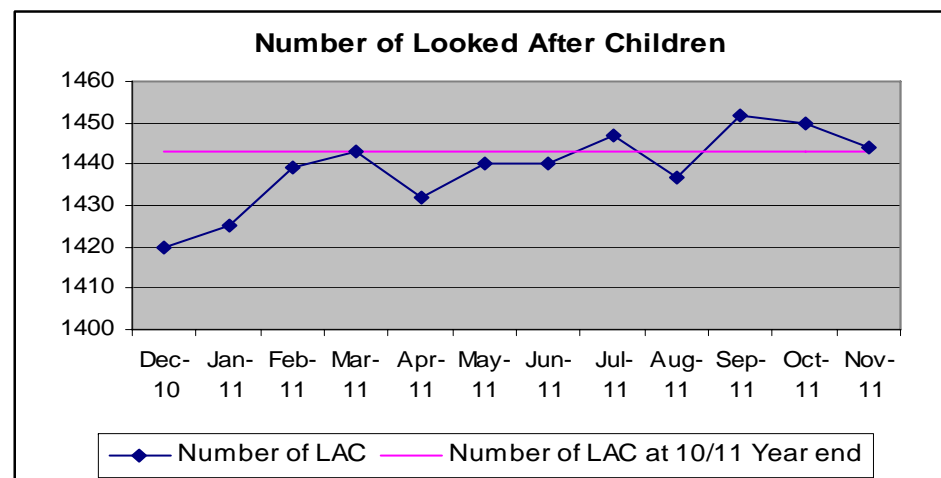
Story behind the baseline

The overall numbers of looked after children in Leeds continues to be on an upward trend with 1444 looked after children at the end of November, 24 more than 12 months previously. The rate per 10,000 dropped slightly in November from 95.3 to 94.9 (6 children) but remains in line with the Core Cities comparator group 10/11 position.

The rate at which children are entering care in Leeds has been on a downward trend since 2007/08. This trend has continued into the current year. If the rate of entry to care so far this year remains unchanged total numbers entering care for the full year would be 376.

Since 2007/08 the rate of children leaving care has also been on an overall downward trend. Although this year there are signs of a levelling off of this trend. If current rates of leaving care continue 418 episodes of care will have ceased by the end of March 2012.

Curve: Number of looked after children



Numbers entering and leaving care 2007 - 2011

	2007-08	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	April-Nov 2011
Entering	508	448	463	425	282
Leaving	503	474	387	401	279

The number of IFA's and external residential placements has continued to grow throughout this financial year although external placement numbers in the 3rd Quarter have remained fairly stable. (276 IFAs and 101 external residential placements at 18/12/11).

Work is ongoing to reduce the average weekly cost of IFAs and external residential placements through regional collaboration. Target savings are 2.5% on IFAs (current weekly average cost £780) and 5% on external residential placements (current weekly average cost £2850).

What do children and young people think As part of the review of the Looked After Children Strategy, young people from the Have a Voice Council, Corporate Carers and the LAC Operational Group are considering progress against the CYPP outcomes. The first consultation took place with young people on 14th December, focussing on the "Having Fun Growing Up" outcome. Young people contributed ideas for improving their experiences of being looked after.

Looked after young people were consulted on "The Promise" in July and September. Responses highlighted the importance of feeling listened to, being able to make decisions about their lives, being helped to keep in contact with their families, staying healthy and safe. The findings were presented to Corporate Carers in Dec 2011

What we have done

- Improved our Ofsted rating for safeguarding from Inadequate to Adequate (with Good capacity to improve) and had our Notice to Improve lifted.
- Adopted the findings of the universal review. Early Start Team is now in place in Seacroft/Manston.
- All 3 early adopter clusters and a number of other clusters have held OBA workshops on "reducing the need for children to be in care".
- Additional resources have been identified for approx. 18 posts across the city.
- Family support services have been re-modelled and will be delivered to families where there is a high risk of children entering care or custody from January 2012.
- Appointed two MST Supervisors and interviews underway for 8 therapists. Recruits will attend full MST training in January, significantly increasing capacity of the team from February 2012, to provide increased intensive support to families (where one or more children have recently become looked after) to return children home where appropriate and safe. Also agreed for the MST service to accept direct referrals from the Youth Court Team.
- Following introduction in July 2011 of new "Strengthening Families" model of child protection conferences, improved decision making has been promoted and the model is being well received by families and professionals.
- Increased resource to Independent Reviewing Team and IRO role strengthened, particularly to provide challenge and ensure plans for permanence are in place.
- A new Fostering and Adoption Recruitment and Assessment Manager appointed. Communication Strategies have been reviewed and new website is being launched in March '12. Potential fosterers and adopters searching on Google now see LCC's fostering and adoption site first. This has already generated more expressions of interest.
- Re-visited plans for children looked after (under a voluntary agreement with parents) to check plans to return home were being expedited where appropriate.

What works locally

The TSL role, being piloted in JESS, Inner East and Bramley is beginning to show some success. All three pilot clusters now have in place a list of their most vulnerable families. Using the Top 100 methodology they have identified those families that need a coordinated support package, and have identified the most appropriate lead agency.

New actions

- Undertake OBA workshops in all 27 clusters on reducing the need for children to become looked after.
- Increase use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAFs).
- It is proposed to use the Common Assessment Framework as primary assessment tool for children with complex needs.
- Implement the recommendations from the review of "Front door" practice (as agreed by LSCB) in late March 2012.
- Resources identified and business case approved for expanded Family Group Conference service. Recruitment and training now to be undertaken.
- Identify premises for the MST service in the South and West North West areas.
- Complete recruitment to an expanded Family Group Conference service.
- Develop a systematic process for reviewing children subject to Special Guardianship Orders to identify and meet post SGO support needs.
- Leeds to hold a multi-agency OBA session on developing a response to the Government's Troubled Families Initiative on 28th Feb.
- Identifying children (0-5) subject to CPPs to provide them with children's centre services, particularly 2 year olds for child care/early learning (using govt. funding).
- Following completion of the review of the Placement Service (for looked after children), the business case for a new structure to be considered by CSLT.
- Residential Review to be completed.

Data development

A review of management information needs is underway which aims to identify current gaps and agree solutions which will meet partnership and business and needs. More regular information is being made available to clusters on referrals, CAFs and requests for service.

Performance Monitoring tool developed for the new Family Intervention Service providers to be implemented in January. This will provide regular information on the effectiveness of the new service and outcomes achieved for children and families.

Partners with a role to play

Children and young people, parents, schools, health visitors, family outreach workers, police, VCFS, childcare services, Youth Offending services. Community groups, drug and alcohol services, probation, adult services, housing, media, business, GPs, transport services, mental health (CAMHS).

Children's Trust – Children and Young People's Plan Report Cards January 2012

Meeting: Children's Trust Board - 30 January 2012
Outcome 2: Children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life
LCC lead: Paul Brennan

Population: Pupils in Leeds schools (Years 1-11)
Priority 3a: Improve behaviour, attendance and achievement
CTB lead: To be confirmed at 30 Jan CTB meeting

Why is this an obsession There are strong links between attendance, attainment, being NEET and youth offending. Particular pupil groups who experience multiple poor outcomes are more likely to have poor attendance, e.g., those living in deprived areas; looked after children; pupils eligible for free school meals; pupils with special education needs and some BME groups.

Amber
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RAG: Longer-term gap to national performance **Direction of travel:** Some indicator improvements in 2010/11

Story behind the baseline

The vast majority of children in Leeds attend school regularly without the need for any additional or targeted support. However a significant cohort of children in Leeds miss an unacceptable amount of school.

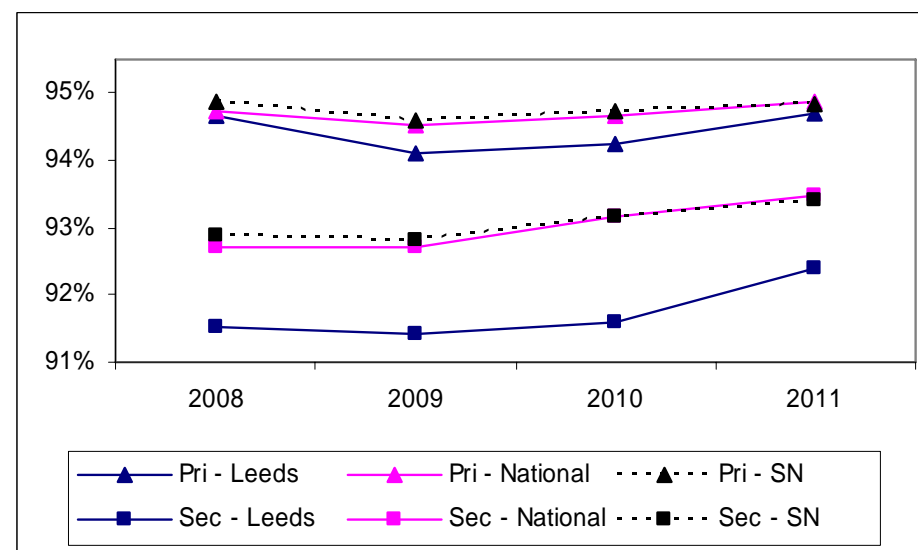
The reasons for irregular school attendance are complex and are often located in a child's home or family circumstances and the wider community, not only school.

Illness is the biggest reason for absence across all phases. Medical and dental appointments during school hours also contribute to around 5% of all absence from school. In the primary phase, it is significant that poorest attendance is seen in year 1. This is a trend reflected nationally and is therefore not just a Leeds issue.

The level of "agreed family holidays" is lower in Leeds secondary schools than nationally, whereas "not agreed family holidays" are higher. This evidences Leeds' schools willingness to challenge requests by parents to remove their children from school for holidays. Primary pupils, however, are twice as likely to be absent from school during term time due to requests for holidays which possibly reflects a disparity between parental attitudes to the importance of the primary curriculum. Many clusters are taking collective action in their 'turning the curve' action plans to develop consistency around authorising term-time holiday requests.

The number of persistently absent (PA) pupils, who miss 15% or more of school, has been falling in Leeds primary and secondary schools, but remains above national levels. There is a significant over-representation of pupils in the secondary PA cohort who are eligible for free school meals, and pupils who have special educational needs; in particular pupils whose need is classified as "School Action Plus."

Curve: School attendance rates¹



¹ Half-terms 1 to 4 of the 2010/11 academic year, the most recent period for which comparative data is available. Source: school census. SN = statistical neighbour

What do children and young people think As part of local research undertaken into the reasons for persistent absence, young people told us that the key factors in absence are: problems at home and with parents; issues with the curriculum and lessons; and bullying was also mentioned as a factor. Groups such as young carers had particular issues affecting their school attendance.

What we have done

- The Leeds Education Challenge makes a city-wide pledge to ensure that, “Every child and young person of school age will be in school or in learning.” Two activity strands of the Leeds Education Challenge – families and community engagement and the 14-19 strand - have a focus on improving attendance.
- The roll out is in progress of the Targeted Services Leaders who will be responsible for deploying the Attendance Improvement Officers employed by LCC. A pathfinder approach may be taken with some clusters testing out the model where there are already Targeted Service Leaders in post. Work is taking place on the service level agreement that would need to be in place and discussions with clusters about how they could deliver this function are taking place.
- There are a significant number of clusters who are developing best practice around support for attendance. For example, the Bramley cluster are already using the “Top 100” methodology to take a broad view of families in need and to allocate lead practitioners to best effect. Other clusters are developing multi-agency “Care and Support” meetings to deliver family support around a range of needs. Use of the Common Assessment Framework is being promoted.

New actions

As at December 2011, 21 clusters have held Outcomes Based Accountability workshops to gather a wide range of partners, to address attendance and persistent absence. From these workshops “Turning the Curve” activity plans that have been produced. A consistent theme and commitment in these plans is to early intervention. Some examples of actions identified within clusters are:

- Engaging with parents where attendance is low in nursery, or at children’s centres, to embed good practice before starting school.
- The use of parenting classes to help families create routines that support regular school attendance.
- Working with parents who may themselves have had negative experiences of education, to reinforce the importance of attendance and its positive impact on attainment.
- The use of minibuses, walking buses or door-knocking by family support workers to ensure that children set off from home and come into school.
- Reward schemes for parents who improve their children’s attendance, as well as for the young people themselves.

What works locally

Early intervention by schools at the first sign of falling attendance levels tends to be most effective, through initiatives such as first day absence calls and texting. Challenging parental responses to illness and requests for term-time holidays can also help improve attendance, as can incentive schemes that reward good and improved attendance; working directly with families through family outreach; and encouraging partnership responses to poor attendance.

Data development

A dashboard is currently being developed to report attendance monthly to clusters, including persistent absence and unauthorised absence. There are some coverage issues to resolve, so that all schools are included. Circulation is scheduled for the spring term.

Partners with a role to play Children and young people, parents, schools, health visitors, family outreach workers, police, VCFS, childcare services, community groups, drug and alcohol services, probation, adult services, housing services, Connexions, media, business, Chamber of Commerce, GPs, transport services.

Children's Trust – Children and Young People's Plan Report Cards January 2012

Meeting: Children's Trust Board - 30 January 2012
Outcome 2: Children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life
LCC lead: Paul Brennan

Population: Young people of academic age 16, 17 and 18 (age on 31 Aug)
Priority 4a: Increase numbers in employment, education or training (EET)
CTB lead: Martin Fleetwood and Diana Towler

Why is this an obsession Being in EET increases young people's confidence, prospects and economic independence and therefore supports the city's overall economic performance. By targeting groups and areas where NEET is a particular challenge, we can raise aspirations and prospects for young people who often have multiple poor outcomes. The current economic downturn presents challenges for young people looking to enter the workplace for the first time.

Amber

RAG: Gap to national performance **Direction of travel:** Good rates of young people in learning

Story behind the baseline

At the end of November there were 1926 NEET young people in Leeds who were known to the Connexions service. Leeds has a higher NEET rate than national levels. The rate of young people in learning (78.4%) is slightly above the national level. The rate in learning is important to monitor alongside NEET rates, for when raising the participation age (RPA) to 18 comes into effect in 2015.

The government monitors local authority performance based on data from November to January each year. The Leeds NEET rate for November 2011 was 8.1%, compared to 9.2% in November 2010.

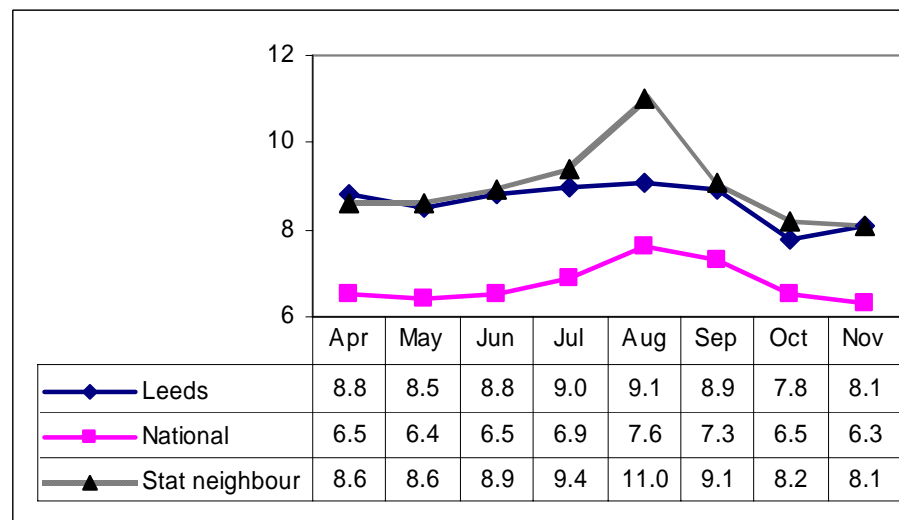
Affecting the baseline is a rise in the proportion of young people whose status is 'Not Known' to 11.4% (2770 young people), compared to 7.8% in November 2010. Where young people's status is unknown, they cannot be targeted for support. The rise in Not Knowns is in part down to national reductions in funding for Connexions services. Levels of 'Not Known' have also risen to a similar rate nationally (11.2%, Nov 11).

Young people become NEET for complex and diverse reasons. NEET levels are higher in deprived areas, and for teenage parents, young people with special educational needs, those with lower school attendance, lower levels of qualifications and young offenders. NEET rates are more than 50% among young parents and pregnant young women.

Transition between learning opportunities can trigger disengagement; as can missing out on good quality impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG). Family networks have a major influence on a young person's decision-making. Improvement activity includes work with families to ensure young people are positive about their ability to succeed, access to IAG to help choose the right learning pathway; and support at transition points.

Risks include: changes to the provision of careers education and IAG with more responsibility for schools in September 2012, but without increases in funding; reductions in post-16 funding for all providers, but that will hit schools particularly hard; and changes to which vocational qualifications count in the performance tables. Another factor is the economic downturn and its likely impact on apprenticeship and other employment opportunities.

Curve: Percentage of young people who are NEET (April-Nov 2011)



What do children and young people think A diverse group of NEET young people were consulted as part of the development of the Children and Young People's Plan. Young people said that the current economic climate had a big impact on their employability, however they also experienced other difficulties in finding employment, education or training, such as: difficulties using the systems in Jobcentres; access to IT to apply for jobs or courses; lack of confidence; struggling with interview skills; travel and financial barriers; poor reading and writing skills; and coping with complex personal circumstances.

<p>What we have done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is continuing with schools to support them in meeting new statutory requirements for careers education and IAG responsibilities. • Leeds City Council has invested over £400,000 with matched funding from Leeds City College and Jobcentre Plus as part of the YOUth Inspire programme, managed by Learning Partnerships which will support 580 young people aged 16-24 to access the support and skills training needed to help them secure a job, apprenticeship or further work-related training. • In the autumn term high schools received NEET rates for 16-18 year olds (Years 12-14) previously at their school; allowing them to see outcomes for their former pupils and focus resources on current pupils at risk of becoming NEET. • Arrangements for administering the new 16-19 bursary scheme are now in place. • To increase parental engagement, parent and carer advice pages have been developed on Leeds Pathways. There is a development plan in place to ensure that labour market information that is accessible to young people and parents is available on Leeds Pathways. This will include video clips of local employers explaining the qualities they look for. 	<p>New actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Business Partnership are making funding available for secondary schools to take up programmes that will help young people develop the skills they need to make the transition into work and improve their career management skills. • Training is being offered to primary schools about career-related learning in Key Stage 2. Some children growing up in workless households may assume that the world of work is not them; career related learning can help raise aspirations from a young age. • Plans are being developed to prepare for RPA, including identifying the needs of priority groups who do not engage with the current learning offer, through the 11-19 (25) Learning and Support Partnership and its sub-groups. • One of the priorities of the Child Friendly City programme is to increase work experience opportunities across the city; and to ensure that young people know where to go to find out about job vacancies, apprenticeships, work experience and careers IAG. Young people will be leading work to make this priority happen. • Increase understanding of the help available through Jobcentre Plus as a result of the introduction of the Youth Employment Support offer and the development of the Youth Contract.
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<p>What works locally Accurate data and tracking, increased information sharing and improved learning options have all contributed to reducing NEET. At the same time the loss of some funding and the economic downturn pose major challenges.</p>	<p>Data development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for systems and data transfer processes in preparation for the end of the Connexions service. • Improved data exchange agreements to reduce the tracking of young people who are in contact with other services, e.g., Jobcentre Plus and the National Apprenticeship Service.
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Partners with a role to play Adult social care, schools and FE colleges, Connexions, housing services, young people, parents and family, employers, 14-19 confederations, Jobcentre Plus, offsite providers