

# Children's Trust – Children and Young People's Plan Report Cards Q1 2012-13

**Meeting:** Children's Trust Board - 21 September 2012

**Population:** All children and young people in Leeds

**Outcome 1:** Children and Young People are safe from harm

**Priority 1:** **Obsession** Help children to live in safe and supportive families

**LCC lead:** Steve Walker

**CTB lead:** Jane Held and Bridget Emery

**Why is this a priority** 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.



**Indicator RAG:** 4<sup>th</sup> quartile against 2011 national results **Partnership DOT:** Progress achieved around early intervention and service redesign including management of referrals

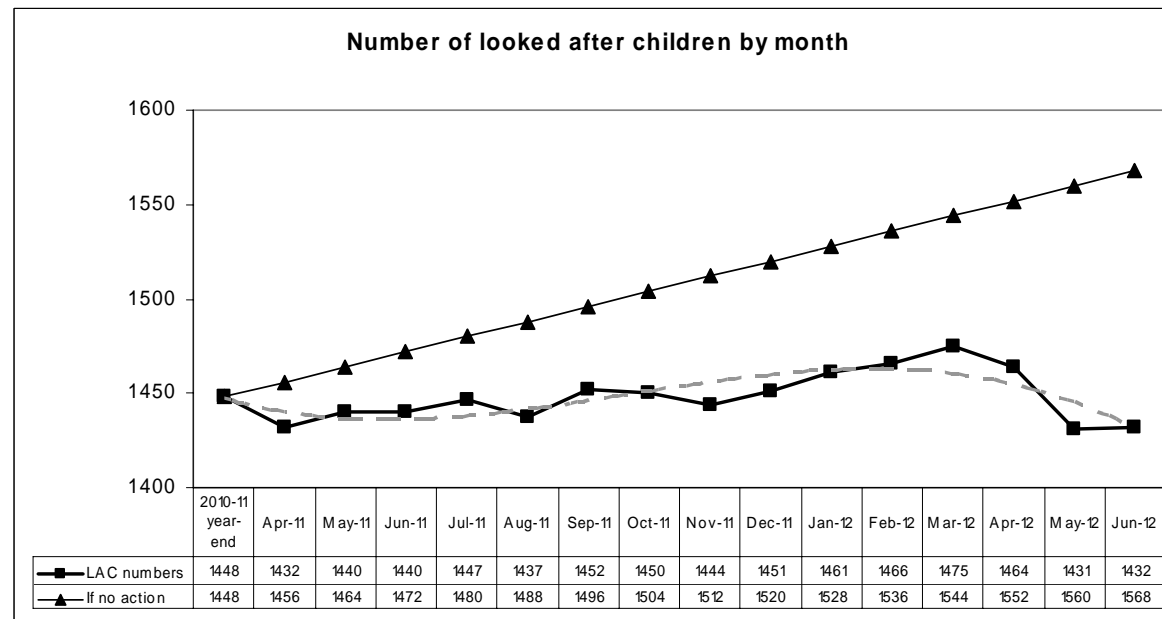
## Story behind the baseline

The number of children in care in June 2012 is at its 2nd lowest point in the last 12 months, and is 2.9% lower than the 2011-12 year-end figure of 1,475. The number of children in care remained stable for three-quarters of the 2011-12, but then rose between November 2011 and March 2012. During that period the social work teams were undergoing a major restructure, involving the transfer of around 3,000 cases and significant change for 40% of social workers. The new locality structure is now settling down and the number of looked after children has fallen each month since the end of April and is now lower than at the same time last year.

The focus on care planning has also impacted on the number of children in external placements. There are fewer children are placed in either independent fostering agency placements or external residential placements at end of June than at end of March 2012. This reduction is helping to reduce the existing budgetary pressures. It will be important, whilst ensuring that children are placed in placements appropriate to their needs, to maintain a focus on care planning to reduce drift and costs throughout the coming year.

There has been no significant change in the ethnic make-up of the LAC population when comparing June 2012 to June 2011; children and young people from a mixed heritage background are over-represented (12% of the cohort), whereas those from an Asian background are under-represented (4%), when compared to background population figures.

## Curve:



The proportion of children under five in the total LAC cohort has risen from 25% in June 2011 to 31% in 2012. This reflects the fact that, whilst fewer children are coming into care (and fewer are leaving care) than the same period 12 months ago, a greater proportion of these children are under five when they do come into care. Research is now underway to better understand the needs and circumstances that led to these children becoming looked after.

**What do children and young people think** The Children's Rights service worked with care leavers who carried out research into care leavers provision in Leeds. They presented their findings and recommendations to Leeds Corporate Carers. These recommendations are now being actioned and progress will be reported back to Corporate Carers. In addition Leeds has invited LILAC (Leading Improvements for Looked-After Children), which empowers care-experienced young people to carry out assessments of services, to assess how well we are consulting the children and young people we look after. This assessment is taking place during July.

**What we have done**

- Children's Social Work teams were re-organised to a locality structure linking teams with clusters, to develop improved relationships and communication between teams and local professionals. Initial feedback about the new arrangements from partners is positive.
- Following Professor Thorpe's recommendations, the process for receiving referrals has changed so that professionals talk directly to a social worker at the contact centre. Professor Thorpe trained practitioners, including some partners, on referral taking practices. Although the new arrangements were implemented in May they may have impacted on the number of contacts that progressed to become referrals in April as these were the lowest in over a year. By improving the quality of information, advice and conversations with professionals, more children will be supported without the need for a referral.
- Research about children who entered care between January and March 2012 is underway, focusing on those aged under 1. This will help understand the circumstances that led to the need for these children to be looked after and will inform future work with partners.
- Four of the council's children's homes are rated as 'good,' seven as 'adequate'. This is an improvement since January when one home was 'inadequate.' The inspection regime has changed to be more rigorous.
- A range of foster carer recruitment work has been undertaken including the launch of a new web site ([www.foster4leeds.co.uk](http://www.foster4leeds.co.uk)), a radio advertising campaign and links with local media generating positive articles. This has resulted in a significant increase in the registrations of interest to be a foster carer (from 16 per month in 2010/11 to 48 per month in 2011/12).

**New actions**

- Expand the Family Kinship Team to support more children to live in kinship care and reduce the need for Care Orders, with more children living under Special Guardianship or Residence Orders.
- 18 Targeted Services Leaders are being recruited to work in clusters. They will work with local partners to identify the signs that cause concern, determining which different services need to be involved and ensuring that this is delivered, so that the child or family gets the extra help they need at the right time. This will reduce the need for specialist service involvement.
- Work with the Family Rights Group to expand the family group conferencing service from three to nine conference conveners. A Project Plan is being developed for the roll out to ensure that they are targeted on cases where they will have the most significant impact; for example when there is a risk that a pre-school child may become looked after.
- Multi- Systemic Therapy has been successful in working with 11 – 16 year olds at risk of care or custody in Leeds. It has also proved effective, in a small number of cases, in returning children from external placements back to Leeds own placements and to children's families. Recruitment is now underway to expand from one to three Multi-Systemic Therapy teams working across the city. The teams are targeting children on the edge of care or custody. They will also be involved with young people who have already become looked after but where there is a prospect of a return home. A number of these young people may have been in care for some time, however, as this work progresses the service will focus on returning children and young people who have just become looked after.

**What works locally** Increasing numbers of children exiting care through better focus on adoption, Special Guardianship Orders, supporting older children into independence and re-visiting plans for children looked after under voluntary agreements with parents.

**Data development** The data development needs from the LAC obsession OBA workshops are being analysed and the output will be reviewed during the summer.

**Partners with a role to play** Children and young people, parents, schools, health visitors, family outreach workers, police, VFCS, childcare services, Youth Offending Services, 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 Q1 2012-13

**Meeting:** Children's Trust Board - 21 September 2012

**Population:** Pupils in Leeds schools (Years 1-11)

**Outcome 2:** Children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life

**Priority 3a:** **Obsession** Improve behaviour, attendance and achievement

**LCC lead:** Paul Brennan

**CTB lead:** Keith Gilert and Matthew Ward

**Why is this 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.

**Primary Green**  
**Secondary Amber**



**RAG:** Improving ratings against national & statistical neighbour averages    **Direction of travel:** Local efforts embedding with the start of evidence of impact

## Story behind the baseline

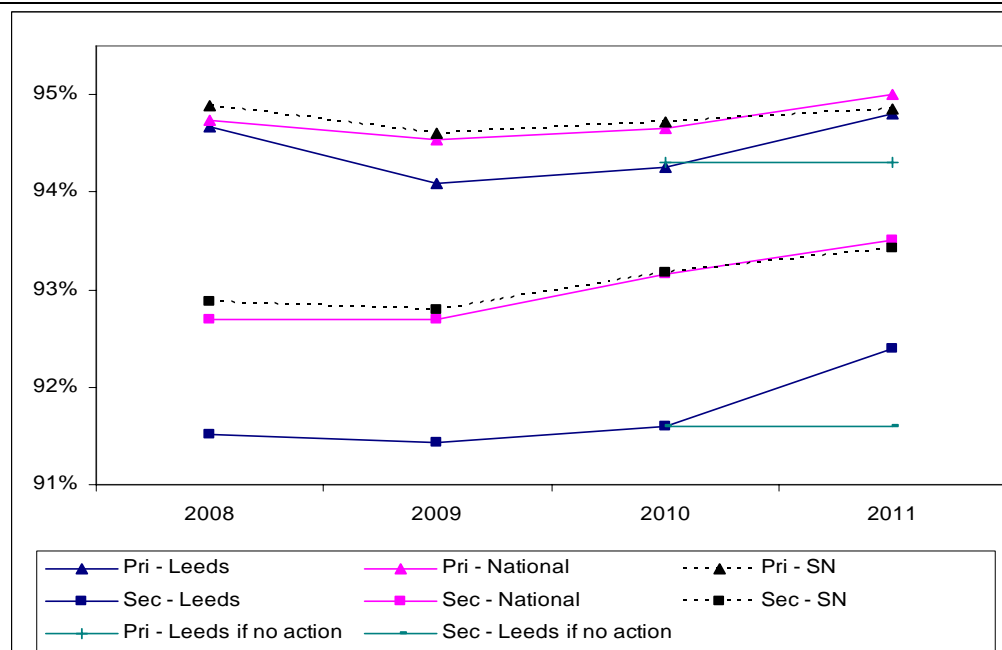
**Curve:** School attendance rates (2010-11 Half terms 1-5)

The latest data which includes comparisons with other authorities was released in mid June. It covers half terms 1-2 2011/12. (graph shows full years only)

Attendance in Leeds primary schools improved by 1.1 percentage points compared to the 2010/11 academic year. Attendance at Leeds primary schools was in-line with both the national and statistical neighbour averages. The Leeds local authority rank has improved from 92 to 61, putting Leeds into the top half of authorities nationally. Attendance in secondary schools is now at its highest level since records began, increasing by increasing by 1.7% compared to 2010/11. Attendance remains lower than nationally and in comparable authorities but the gap has narrowed as the rate of improvement in Leeds is greater than elsewhere. Leeds is still 118<sup>th</sup> out of 150 authorities for this indicator. The majority of the improvement in attendance has been achieved through a reduction in authorised absence. Rates of unauthorised absence are improving but are still above national and statistical neighbour averages.

Despite year on year improvements challenges remain. This is reflected in the data for persistent absence. (NB. pupils missing more than 15% of school) There are 1,941 (4.4%) persistent absentees in primary and 2,996 (7.7%) in secondary.

Illness accounts for almost 50% of absence with the next highest category of absence being "unauthorised- other" where no reason for the unauthorised absence is given. The latest comparative data (half terms 1-5 2010/11) shows SILC attendance to be approximately 4 percentage points lower than national, regional and statistical neighbour comparisons. City-wide SILC attendance needs to be understood in the context of the impact of attendance rates at the BESD SILC, where there are signs of improvement. Local data shows that attendance was 64% in term 2 of the current academic year, compared to 54% in the previous year, with attendance for the year to date running at 61% compared to 56% for the whole of the previous year. The number of persistent absentees in the BESD SILC shows a fall in term 2 of this year to 44 from 69 in the previous year.



**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**
- Guidance and Support multi-agency meetings are now well developed in most clusters; where partners discuss cases where low attendance is causing concerns, and agree strategies for supporting families.
  - The family and community engagement strand of the Leeds Education Challenge includes engagement with young people’s families and communities to encourage good attendance.
  - Clusters continue to hold OBA workshops to address attendance and persistent absence. “Turning the Curve” activity plans have been produced. A consistent theme and commitment in these plans is to early intervention.
  - Parents of 140 school-aged children have received evidence based parenting programmes that have improved their parenting skills, and reinforced the important of good school attendance.
  - Targeted service leaders identify families through the top 100 methodology, and enable a shared assessment, shared intervention plan, multi agency communication plan and identified lead family practitioner.
  - The Youth Service are delivering a weekly “reward session” at the Denis Healey Youth Hub for BESD SILC pupils, to acknowledge their efforts in improving their attendance and/or behaviour.
  - The 0-11 Partnership have held an OBA event about attendance with a key focus on early habits and attitudes of parents to education
  - A small investigation into the use of medical appointments during the school day has been completed with actions underway, including a planned OBA session with health commissioners and practitioners.

- New actions**
- Developing media communications for parents and carers on key messages relating to attendance.
  - Continue with recruitment of targeted services leaders and the implementation of the top 100 methodology.
  - Ensure that the plan for Raising the Participation Age (RPA) incorporates cluster-led work on improving attendance. From 2013 local authorities become legally responsible for identifying young people who are not participating, and schools and colleges become legally responsible for promoting good attendance for 16 and 17 year olds.
  - Support partnerships of schools to participate as pathfinders in the DfE’s National Exclusions Trial. Although the background to this project is not specifically about improving attendance, its objective is to improve the experience of pupils who are at risk of exclusion through earlier intervention, and these are often pupils who typically have poor attendance.
  - Deliver a project to explore in more detail the reasons for absence lying behind generic absence codes such as “unauthorised-other.”
  - The Youth Service, in partnership with IGEN, are running a Summer programme to support those young people moving from year 10 to year 11 who have been identified as likely to disengage in their final year.

**What works locally**  
Strategies to improve attendance are most successful where these are based on working holistically with a family to address all of their support needs, rather than seeing attendance in isolation. Guidance and support meetings enable such holistic responses to be developed.

**Data development**  
A dashboard is currently being developed to report attendance monthly to clusters, including persistent absence and unauthorised absence. There are some coverage and data approval issues to resolve. Circulation is scheduled for the autumn 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, IAG providers, media, business, Chamber of Commerce, GPs, transport services.

**Meeting:** Children's Trust Board - 21 September 2012  
**Population:** Young people of academic age 16, 17 and 18 (age on 31 Aug)  
**Outcome 2:** Children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life  
**Priority 4a:** **Obsession** Increase numbers in employment, education or training (EET)  
**LCC lead:** Paul Brennan  
**CTB lead:** Martin Fleetwood and Alison France

**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: third quartile up from fourth last quarter **Direction of travel:** Good rates of young people in learning and coordination of effort

### Story behind the baseline

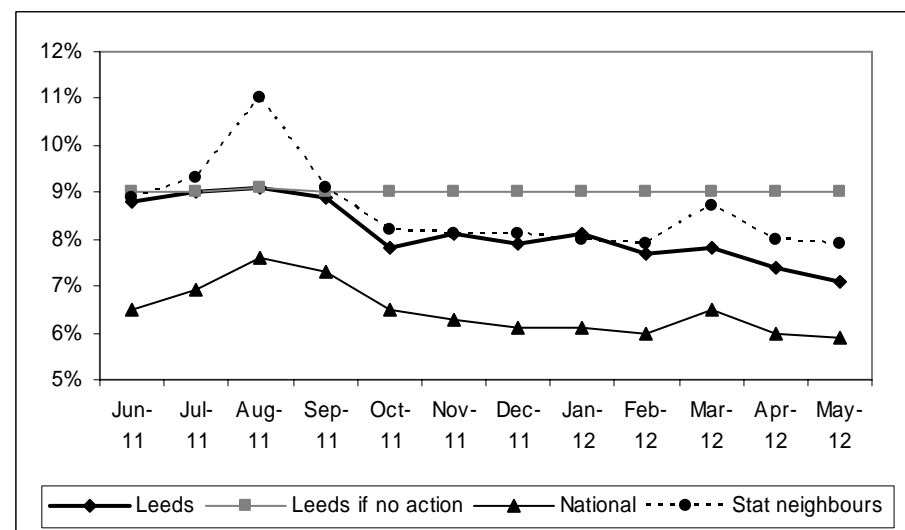
**Curve:** Percentage of young people who are NEET (June 11 – May 12)

At the end of June there were 1603 NEET young people in Leeds (7.0%). This is the "adjusted NEET" figure including some young people whose actual status is not known, but who are assumed to be NEET. The most recent national comparative data is from May 2012 and shows that although NEET levels remain higher than national, between January and May 2012 in Leeds the NEET rate fell by one percentage point compared to a fall of 0.2 percentage points nationally and Leeds' position nationally in May was in the third quartile of 149 local authorities (=104).

Levels of young people whose status is not known (10.0%) remain higher than national levels (8.9%) and statistical neighbour (6.7%) levels. The 11-19 (25) Learning and Support Partnership (LSP) have identified reducing the number of young people whose status is not known as a key priority.

The Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) means that young people will remain in education or training for an additional academic year after Year 11 from September 2013 and until age 18 from September 2015. Planning to reduce the number of young people who are NEET will therefore concentrate on increasing the number of young people in education or training. The May rate of young people in learning (79.4%) is slightly below the national level of 80.3%.

Some young people are statistically more likely to be NEET, e.g. some BME groups, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, care leavers, young offenders, poor school attenders, those attending the BESD SILC, PRUs or off-site learning, young parents, young carers, pregnant young women, homeless young people and those living away from their family. NEET rates also vary significantly across the city. Targeted and specialist support for young people in these groups, delivered by Prospects, igen and voluntary, community and faith sector partners, provides support for the most vulnerable young people from these groups who have specific barriers to engagement in EET that require specialist knowledge and/or interventions.



**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.

**What we have done**

- The quarter 4 report card detailed Youth Contract funding being awarded as part of Leeds’ City Deal. Work has started to identify priority NEET groups and their support needs, along with existing planned provision and gaps, with a view to commissioning activity to start in September 2012.
- Resources have been created on the Leeds Pathways website to support primary schools in delivering career-related learning (CRL) in Key Stage 2. CRL helps children start to think about the place work will have in their life as an adult.
- Schools have continued to receive support in preparation for their duty to deliver impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) from September 2012. A number of schools have purchased services using the approved list of careers guidance providers. A careers/ IAG network lead professional role has been advertised through the Leeds Learning Partnership to develop more peer-to-peer support for schools.
- A NEET OBA session was held with the 11-19 Partnership and the outcomes from this exercise have been used to form the basis of the 2012/13 11-19 (25) Partnership Action Plan.
- Plans have been drawn up for the council to partner Leeds City College to establish an Apprenticeship Training Agency, to create new opportunities for local young people to secure employment and skills training.

**New actions**

- A wider workforce development project to develop IAG signposting skills across the children and young people’s workforce is now underway. Delivery is scheduled to begin in the autumn term to anyone who works with children, young people and families, including council staff, schools and learning providers, and third sector partners.
- An RPA project has been established to develop support systems to help young people overcome barriers to progression and move into post 16 learning or training. This has a focus on progression pathways and support for young people attending PRUs, the BESD SILC or offsite learning, who may have specific barriers to progression related to behaviour, emotional or social issues.
- A NEET ‘clearing house’ event is being organised to take place in the Connexions Centre on the Tuesday immediately following GCSE exam results.
- A task and finish group is being established to take forward the next phase of the review of post-16 provision in Leeds.
- Exploratory work is taking place around opportunities to develop apprenticeships in youth work that could contribute to the city’s wider Youth Offer.

**What works locally**

To help reduce the number of young people registered as Not Known, the Youth Service along with a number of other organisations working with young people facilitated a NEET/Not Known Sweep day across the city. 737 home visits were made, out of which over 300 young people were contacted. As well as being able to identify the present destination of those young people, all received appropriate guidance and support regarding where they could go for help with EET issues.

**Data development**

Further work is needed around making use of data and information-sharing agreements to ensure a co-ordinated approach to sharing information about NEET young people. The Department for Work and Pensions are currently advising on future changes to enable information sharing between Jobcentre Plus and local authorities.

**Partners with a role to play** Schools and FE colleges, IAG providers, housing services, young people, parents and family, employers, Jobcentre Plus, offsite providers, adult social care, the youth service, Prospects, igen and voluntary, community and faith sector partners