

Report of Director of Children's Services

Report to Inner South Area Committee

Date: Wednesday 19 June 2013

Subject: Update Report from Children's Services



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Beeston and Holbeck, City and Hunslet, Middleton Park	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Children's Services directorate provide six monthly area committee reports in March and September. At the Area Committee meeting in March members discussed a range of issues resulting from the report including on-going high levels of demand on the Children's Social Work Service particularly in the JESS cluster (Beeston Hill, Holbeck, Hunslet and Belle Isle area) and the relatively high levels of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET).
2. Members asked for an update report for the June committee with the latest available data. This report provides a summary of information in relation to the three Children's Services obsessions for both clusters in the Committee's area to support the committees' understanding and involvement in work to improve outcomes for children and young people in the area.

Recommendation

The Area Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and consider how it can further support work in the area to improve outcomes for children and young people.

1 Background information

- 1.1 This is an update report as requested at the meeting of the Committee on 20th March. It complements information in the report to Members at that meeting.

2 Main issues

2.1 Context

- 2.2 This report provides a summary of information in relation to the three Children's Services obsessions for both clusters in the Committee's area. It includes information about key indicators covering the latest available information at the time of preparing the report. An update will be provided at the committee meeting of any key additional pieces of information which become available.

- 2.3 The JESS (Joint Extended Schools and Services) Cluster includes 4 children's centres, 14 primary schools and South Leeds Academy. The current population of 0-18 year olds is 11,132 (Jan 2013 data) and this represents a 17% growth due to population change and the movement of Sharp Lane Primary into this cluster from April 2012.

- 2.4 At the last March 2013 inner South Area Committee, Members raised concerns about the performance statistics for the JESS Cluster and member engagement in cluster arrangements. The Area Leader convened a meeting with interested parties from the Jess Cluster to discuss the role of elected members in relation to the JESS Cluster and to explore how colleagues with roles focused on the development of integrated services around the Jess Cluster and the Council's SE Area Support Team can support our local elected members in their roles on local clusters. Additionally, the meeting also explored the progress being made on the three obsessions and the challenges facing colleagues in addressing the issues for children, young people and families. The meeting agreed that:

- The channelling of elected member engagement through the Local Authority Partner's role is important and that we should employ our best endeavours to support this role as they key interface with elected members (Cllrs Blake, Gabriel, and Iqbal.) The Local Authority Partner would meet with these councillors to develop a tailored response.
- In addition to the communication role of the local authority partner and the interface with the Area Support Team. Key messages from the cluster Joint Collaborative Committee meetings will also be passed on to members through the Area Committee Summary of Key Work report and local ward briefings. The ward meetings could be attended by a representative of the cluster.

- 2.5 Beeston Cottingley and Middleton Cluster has 3 children's centres, 8 primary schools and Cockburn High School. The current population is 8,362 (Jan 2013 data) and this represents a 3 % population increase on the previous year.

3.0 Update on information and local work to impact on the three children's services obsessions

3.1 Safely reduce the number of children looked after

3.1.1 This area of work continues to be a key priority for both cluster partnerships and both have undertaken local Outcome Based Accountability workshops and produced local action plans with a range of agencies involved. For example, the session in Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton cluster in December 2012 involved 45 professionals from the area and actions arising from this are being progressed through a task group including the Local Authority Partner, Cluster Chair, Targeted Services Leader and managers from children's social work service, children's centres, health visiting and Health for All. A particular area of focus in both these clusters is the ongoing high levels of need in families with children 0-5 years old – typically between 40% and 50% of all requests for service to the Children's Social Work Service.

3.1.2 The latest data will be highlighted at the meeting. From information available covering the period to the end of March 2013 some key points are:

- The number of children looked after in the Area Committee's area has reduced slightly since the last report. There were 214 children looked after from JESS at 31/3/13 and 88 from Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton.
- The number of children on child protection plans has increased in the JESS area in recent months, with 149 on a plan at 31/3/13 (93 at 31/3/12). The number has decreased in Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton with 52 on a plan at 31/3/13 (59 at 31/3/12).
- The number of CAFs initiated in JESS decreased in 2012/13 with 70 initiated and a total of 123 open at 31/3/13 (84 were initiated in 2011/12).
- The number of CAFs initiated in Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton increased in 2012/13 with 79 initiated and a total of 111 open at 31/3/13 (60 initiated in 2011/12).
- The number of requests for service to the social work duty and advice team over 2012/13 was 3,532 for JESS (3,164 previous year) and 2,182 for Beeston Cottingley and Middleton (2,210 previous year).
- The number of requests for service leading to a referral over 2012/13 was 1,266 for JESS (1,522 previous year) and 869 for Beeston Cottingley and Middleton (1,016 previous year).

3.2 Children's Social Work Service

3.2.1 This is the professional service that carries out the Local Authority's duties under the Children Act 1989 and related legislation in relation to making enquiries about children who may be suffering significant harm; acting as key worker for those who need a child protection plan and those who are Looked After in care; and

representing the Local Authority in care proceedings. There is a legislative requirement that it is qualified social workers who carry out these functions. In addition there is a requirement to assess and provide services to children in need and in Leeds this is most often undertaken by qualified social workers but this is not a statutory requirement.

- 3.2.2 At the restructure of children's social work service in Spring 2012 almost all cluster teams across the city had seven qualified social workers; one social work assistant; an administrator; two advanced practitioners and a team manager. The data for Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton cluster indicated two cluster teams of this make up. The data for JESS cluster indicated that there should be two cluster teams but that they should each have eight social workers.
- 3.2.3 All CSWS team managers and service delivery managers in the south of the city are engaging positively with cluster arrangements. Working relationships are strong, a clear benefit of the new structure.
- 3.2.4 It is anticipated that, as new working arrangements embed in the clusters, the quality and quantity of early intervention work (such as common assessments) will increase. This is expected to lead to a reduction in requests for service made of the social work service and a consequential reduction in referrals to the service; assessments undertaken and social work caseloads. There are signs of this starting to occur in some clusters but the ongoing high levels of need and population increases have not lead to significant changes to date in workloads in the Area Committee's area.
- 3.2.5 From previous reports and discussions, members are aware that the demand on the JESS cluster social work teams in particular has remained very high. Ongoing work is taking place to more fully understand the reasons for this and how different services across the cluster can best support work with children young people and families in need in the area. In order to assist the social work teams to better manage the sustained high workload, the service has allocated an additional social worker and a half time manager to the cluster. There are therefore currently three managers (2.5 fte) managing these teams. This is helping to sustain close engagement with cluster activity as the service very much values the working relationships with colleagues.

3.3 Early Start

- 3.3.1 As indicated in the previous report to the committee, early start teams are now being embedded in each area and work is taking place to improve links in each cluster between early start teams, social work teams, cluster staff and access to targeted services such as intensive family support.
- 3.3.2 The development of the early start team in this area was a priority with early roll out of four 'preparation birth and beyond' training courses for families. Infant mortality is decreasing in the area because of the intervention programme. Social work and early start teams have set up a pre-birth referral process with 9 families referred over the last few months, offering additional support to families.

- 3.3.3 The new early start dashboard offers a city wide and cluster view of work from the universal pathway for 0-5 year olds through to targeted services. Quarter four report suggests that the number of contacts and level of support for all families has increased in the area over the last few months, with an increasing number of families with complex needs receiving a service. Although the requests for service to social work teams have increased in the area, in line with local population growth and the trend elsewhere, the number of 0-5 year olds referred to social work teams has reduced in the area over the last year.
- 3.3.4 Two nursery providers in the area have recently been supported to improve their provision for two year olds from satisfactory to good, which has provided 30 additional places for two year olds in the area.

3.4 Targeted Support

- 3.4.1 In view of the high levels of demand in the JESS cluster (along with Inner East and Bramley) targeted services support in this cluster is increasing with a Targeted Services Officer post to support the work of the Targeted Services Leader. The post is currently being recruited to and, along with some additional administrative support, will provide extra capacity for early intervention and prevention work. This will include working closely with the children's social work teams, early start teams and other cluster partners to reduce the need for cases to be escalated to social work teams and support the safe de-escalation of cases. The officer will have some capacity to work directly with families in the area who have complex and multiple additional needs as well as supporting a range of staff in different settings to undertake CAFs and support their work with families.
- 3.4.2 JESS cluster has received funding over the last two years to support targeted mental health work in schools (TaMHS) and this has contributed to the development of the JESS cluster family support team with counselling staff commissioned through Leeds Counselling. The cluster is now planning to sustain this from cluster funding. In addition a number of schools in both clusters are part of the local partnership with Place 2 Be which provides in school counselling services and volunteers. Beeston Cottingley and Middleton cluster was recently successful in its application for TaMHS in the cluster and will shortly be commissioning a specialist mental health provider. With support from cluster funding this will provide additional support for children and young people in the cluster over a two year period initially.

3.5 Reduce the number of young people who are NEET

- 3.5.1 In previous reports the number of NEET in Inner South has been around 7.5%, compared with a city figure of 6.0%. Data for 31/3/13 shows 234 young people NEET in Inner South, representing an increase to 8.6%. In JESS there were 163 NEET young people (9.9%), with 71 in Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton (6.1%). These compare with a city level of 5.5% on 31/3/13.
- 3.5.2 A comprehensive report outlining the range of work being done to tackle levels of NEET across the city was recently presented to the Children's Trust Board and this is available to any members who would like a copy. The report highlighted that to successfully address NEET and achieve our ambition to become a child friendly NEET free city we must tackle a range of complex inter-related issues affecting the

most vulnerable. Our work with young people around the development of the Child Friendly City, our review of post-16 provision, the development of the Leeds Youth Offer and the major programmes that are now underway around the Youth Contract and Families First initiatives are coming together to support our collective ambition for all young people aged 16-19 to be productively engaged in education, employment or training.

- 3.5.3 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. In addition to efforts to increase participation in education or training we are also focusing on providing employment opportunities and ensuring that young people have the skills to succeed in the workplace. Ensuring there are jobs for all our young people will be the major challenge over the coming years, especially in the most deprived communities.
- 3.5.4 Both clusters are supporting a range of work to help prevent and reduce the number of young people who are NEET and this complements area based work on NEET across SE Leeds supported by a range of services (this includes a SE Leeds Outcomes Based Accountability session which recently took place).
- 3.5.5 In particular clusters contributed to the recent South East NEET OBA event held under the auspices of the South East Area Leadership Team. The draft South East NEET Reduction Plan was recently presented to the Area Leadership Team for information and comment. The plan identifies the need to develop work with partners to address a range of issues, such as:
- Awareness and information
 - Partnership working
 - Data Sharing
 - Sharing good practice and research
 - Provision

Area Support Team will use Ward Briefings to update Members on the development of the plan and will also provide an update at the September Area Committee.

3.5.6 Examples of other work include:

- JESS is completing its fourth year of the raising aspirations programme which begins with targeting children in primary school who are at risk of being NEET later on. In total 120 children from years 6, 7, 8 and 9 are engaged in local activities that aim to challenge their confidence and self belief while raising their aspirations.
- Working with the South Leeds Academy, Igen (Connexions) and Learning Partnerships, the Jess Cluster NEET Sub Group are planning to use some Youth Contract funding to work with 16 and 17 year olds who are NEET. The aim is to successfully engage young people aged 16 and 17 in order to provide them with work based experience as a stepping stone towards employment or further training. Two programmes each for 15 young people are being planned.

- IGEN are undertaking targeted work in high school and in the community.
- Beeston, Cottingley and Middleton cluster is funding an information advice and guidance worker 3 days per week to work with young people in Cockburn High School.

3.6 Reduce school absence in primary and secondary schools

- 3.6.1 Both clusters have a focus on maintaining and improving school attendance and reducing persistent absence. Attendance working groups are supporting this with the involvement of children's centres, primary and high schools and the attendance service.
- 3.6.2 At the time of preparing the report there was little updated published information available since the report to the Area Committee in Spring 2013. Members may wish to look at attendance data in more detail in the autumn report which should cover attendance information for the 2012/13 school year. This section therefore informs members about managing attendance responsibilities and some key pieces of work currently underway.

Managing Attendance responsibilities

- 3.6.3 All children of compulsory school age are entitled to an education that is appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude. This right is embedded in law – both in the Education Act 1996 and Human Rights legislation. In order to secure regular attendance at school (because outcomes for children and young people who do not attend school regularly are far worse than for those that do attend), parents are held responsible for their child's regular attendance at school or otherwise. Failure to secure their attendance can result in legal enforcement action being taken. In Leeds our Attendance Advisers are granted the power to discharge this statutory duty on behalf of the local authority.
- 3.6.4 All schools are responsible for their own attendance levels and although there is no longer a legal requirement for a school to set a target the Ofsted framework also sets out that when evaluating the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school, inspectors "*will consider pupil attendance and punctuality at school and in lessons*".
- 3.6.5 Every school should have a current, effective attendance policy detailing the procedures and systems for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes for poor school attendance. There should be a clear escalation of intervention within the school which is understood by all teaching and non-teaching staff.

Children's Services approach to managing attendance

- 3.6.6 Poor school attendance is often the symptom of much wider issues and in Children's Services we are working towards a model of delivery in which the lead family practitioner (from whichever discipline they may come) is the best person to

understand the needs within a family and how those needs can be supported. This means that attendance improvement officers are part of a wider workforce who can support families to overcome barriers to regular attendance.

- 3.6.6 There are 4 attendance improvement officers and one attendance advisor working in Inner South and these are closely linked in to each of the clusters. Attendance improvement officers bring expertise and specialist knowledge and have close working relationships with schools, they also have specialist skills to work with families, including individual family case work – taking a lead family practitioner role - and fast track to attendance initiatives providing a less intensive intervention where attendance issues are emerging or are not yet problematic.
- 3.6.7 The attendance improvement officer's strengths in the area of family support and expertise on attendance are complemented by Attendance Advisors who not only have a statutory enforcement function, but also support the clusters to be aware of national developments, changes to legislation and development of whole school/cluster policy; they support schools to prepare for Ofsted and to act as a critical friend to support the development of improvement action plans.
- 3.6.9 In Leeds we currently have a six stage process which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the school, local authority (non-statutory role) and local authority (statutory role). Each cluster has a guidance and support structure which is the main referral route for attendance cases from school requiring additional support.
- 3.6.10 The status of schools does have a bearing on services that can be provided by the local authority. Academies are funded directly for the provision of support services for attendance and therefore do not receive any non-statutory provision from the local authority. A service level agreement is in place for Academies which sets out the statutory provision and allows Academies the opportunity to buy in additional traded services.

Statutory Enforcement

- 3.6.11 Where efforts at working with families to improve a child or young person's attendance have not been successful, the local authority is obliged to make use of statutory enforcement tools to take legal action against parents. This represents a relatively small proportion of the total work with families and is only sought when all other avenues have failed to secure an improvement in attendance.
- 3.6.12 The range of such tools spans the use of Penalty Notices to Education Supervision Orders. The evidence base for their impact is a challenge as these families are those with the most deeply entrenched problems. The use of Fast Track to Attendance Initiatives is often successful as a very swift early intervention where a warning of the level of attendance is sufficient and they are widely used. Education Supervision Orders are an order that is placed on the child and the local authority is appointed by the court to supervise that child's education either at school or at home for a specified period of time. Education Supervision Orders are often successful when the parent is willing to engage with services but feels unable to bring about changes without significant support.

3.6.13 Although the evidence that the more punitive measures are not effective is hard to establish, their deterrent effect should not be discounted. When custodial sentences (which are extremely rare) have been publicised many schools reported increased attendance and that parents had an increased awareness about their responsibilities and the consequences of failing to meet those responsibilities. In a Child Friendly City with a focus on working restoratively with families we seek to avoid prosecution where possible and the Local Authority must consider applying for Education Supervision Orders before prosecuting parents.

3.6.14 Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Section 444 has two separate but linked offences; section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so.

Examples of work taking place in the area to support high levels of school attendance are:

- Cluster attendance working groups meet regularly. The schools and children's centres share good practice and ideas to improve attendance as well as scrutinising attendance data.
- Development of cluster attendance policies to support a consistent approach to attendance and punctuality issues.
- Parenting support programmes and referrals to intensive family support services such as Signpost, Health for All and our in house Family Intervention Service.
- Schools, attendance staff and other partners delivering 'attendance blitzes' with visits to parents of pupils absent on the day of the blitz.
- Support for targeted cohorts of pupils or whole schools with attendance reviews. This involves discussions with pupils, parents, teaching and pastoral staff regarding attendance to inform practice improvements at school level.
- Fast track interventions – targeted interventions involving issuing of penalty notices – at primary and secondary level.
- Targeted transitions work and summer activities to help young people moving from primary to secondary school.
- At the time of preparing the report a good practice attendance event was being planned for mid June to help share good practice across both clusters.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 There are no corporate considerations in the report which provides information and updates to the Area Committee.

4.2 Consultation and Engagement

4.2.1 This report is for the Area Committee and refers to clusters which all have a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

4.3 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.3.1 Equality issues are implicit in the information provided. The information shown reflects different levels of needs and outcomes in different localities. Additional equality analysis of the information provided is undertaken.

4.4 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.4.1 Information in the report relates to city priorities for children and young people and local priorities in the clusters.

4.5 Resources and value for money

4.5.1 There are no new resource implications in this report.

4.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.6.1 This report is not eligible for call in due to it being a council function.

4.7 Risk Management

4.7.1 The information reflected in this report is monitored through Leeds City Council performance, and where appropriate, risk management processes.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 This report provides a summary of information in relation to the three Children's Services obsessions for both clusters in the Committee's area to support the committees' understanding and involvement in work to improve outcomes for children and young people in the area.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 The Area Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and consider how it can further support work in the area to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Background documents¹

There are no background documents associated with this report.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.