

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

**Venue: Bailey House, Rawmarsh  
Road, Rotherham.**

**Date: Friday, 4 June 2010**

**Time: 9.30 a.m.**

### **A G E N D A**

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for Absence.
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Questions from the press and public
6. Matters Referred from the Youth Cabinet
7. Communications
8. Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel - Work Programme 2010/11 (report attached) (Pages 1 - 9)
9. Youth Service Provision - Proposed Review (report attached) (Pages 10 - 17)  
(Summary and findings of 2008 Scrutiny Review of Future Challenges of the Youth Service)
10. Machinery of Government - Update (report attached) (Pages 18 - 49)
11. Children and Young People's Services - Safeguarding and Looked After Children Self-Assessments (report attached) (Pages 50 - 104)
12. Children and Young People's Services - Fostering Inspection Self-Assessment (report attached) (Pages 105 - 152)
13. DCSF Progress Report (copy attached) (Pages 153 - 155)

14. Children and Young People's Services Notice to Improve - Progress Update (report attached) (Pages 156 - 169)
15. Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 9th April, 2010 (copy attached) (Pages 170 - 176)
16. Minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services held on 7th April, 2010, 20th April, 2010 and on 28th April, 2010 (copies attached) (Pages 177 - 186)
17. Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Board held on 21st April, 2010 (copy attached) (Pages 187 - 195)
18. Minutes of meetings of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 26th March, 2010, 16th April, 2010 and 30th April, 2010 (copies attached) (Pages 196 - 215)

**Membership:-**

Chairman – Councillor G. A. Russell

Vice-Chairman – Councillor License

Councillors:- Ali, Burton, Dodson, Donaldson, Fenoughty, Kaye, Rushforth, Sharp and Sims

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1. Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>2. Date:</b>	<b>4 June 2010</b>
<b>3. Title:</b>	<b>Work Programme 2010/11</b>
<b>4. Directorate:</b>	<b>Chief Executive's All wards</b>

**5. Summary**

To discuss the work programme for the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel for the 2011/12 municipal year.

**6. Recommendations****That the Panel**

- a. receives the draft work programme and comments on its content;**
- b. identifies areas for future consideration to be fed into the draft work programme**
- c. identifies areas for review to be undertaken during 2011/12**

## 7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Each scrutiny panel must plan its forward work programme on an annual basis structured in line with the Panel's terms of reference. This includes scrutiny of:

- Integrated Children and Young People's Service and their governance arrangements;
- Strategic partnerships related to the integrated services;
- Educational and training opportunities for children and young people;
- Children and Young People's Social Care and Health, including improving services to vulnerable children and young people

In addition, Members are reminded that the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel has specific responsibility for health scrutiny in relation to children and young people.

7.2 In previous years, the panel has structured its work programme around the five themes of 'Every Child Matters'. These are as follows:

- Being safe
- Being healthy
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

In addition, monitoring meetings have been organised to examine performance and budgetary issues relevant to the service areas on a quarterly basis.

An overview of the work covered by the panel over the 2009/10 municipal year is attached as Appendix A.

7.3 As part of the previous year's work programme, the panel undertook the following scrutiny reviews:

- PSHE education in schools (to be submitted to Cabinet July 2010)
- School Closures due to extreme weather (to be submitted to Panel)

In addition the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel completed a review of corporate parenting arrangements. Cabinet is currently considering its response. Should the recommendations be accepted, scrutiny of looked after children issues may revert to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel.

7.4 Members will be aware of the notice to improve and the particular pressures on key services. In order to bring members up-to-date with current safeguarding responsibilities, it is proposed that July's scheduled meeting be designated as a training session with input from safeguarding practitioners.

7.5 All Panel members and co-optees have been contacted for suggestions about the work programme for 2010/11. On the basis of issues requested during the previous year and suggestions coming forward, a draft work programme has been developed. The draft work programme also includes the priority areas identified in the draft Children and Young People's Single Plan

- Keeping children and young people safe
- Prevention and early intervention
- Tackling inequality
- Transforming Rotherham learning

The draft work programme is attached as Appendix B

A number of issues have been put forward as potential issues for further review.

- Transition from children's to adult services
- Alcohol and substance misuse – impact on children and young people

Members comments are sought on the draft.

7.6 The work programme has been populated until the end of 2010. There are a number of issues that have been identified by members that have yet to be scheduled. In addition, with the election of the Coalition Government, there may be issues arising from their legislative and policy programmes that the panel may wish to examine.

### **8. Finance**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, recommendations arising from the panel may have financial implications should they be implemented.

### **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

9.1 The work programme is flexible and issues may be referred to the Panel which are not known about at this stage. The work programme therefore, must be realistic in terms of the Panel's capacity to properly examine issues that come before it. If additional items are added, the panel may have to re-prioritise which issues it wishes to scrutinise.

### **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Scrutiny panels have a key role in scrutinising the effectiveness of services. The areas identified for future scrutiny should complement the priorities identified in the Community Strategy, Corporate Plan, Local Area Agreement and the Every Child Matters agenda.

### **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

This report has been brought at the request of Cllr Ann Russell

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## Appendix 1

### **Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel**

Chair: Cllr Ann Russell

Vice Chair: Cllr Neil License

Who to Contact: Caroline Webb, Scrutiny Adviser – 01709 822765

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The Panel has twelve councillors and a number of co-optees. The co-optees represent various groups including Parish Councils and Voluntary Sector Organisations. The Panel also co-opts four Parent Governors. Cllr Shaun Wright, Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services, has also contributed to many meetings. The Panel meets around ten times a year.

Rotherham Youth Cabinet (a group of young people democratically elected from the borough's secondary schools) has a standing item on each agenda.

This open invitation gives the Youth Cabinet the chance to focus the Panel's attention on areas of concern for young people. In 2009/10 this led directly to the Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) Review. There has been widespread agreement that this innovative way for young people to feed views into the Council has led to service change and improvement.

### **Issues Considered During 2009/2010**

The landscape for Children and Young People's Services has changed considerably over recent years. Lord Laming's response to the death of Baby Peter Connelly has raised the profile of Safeguarding for vulnerable young people. In Rotherham we have reflected this national shift by taking an active role in ensuring service improvements by closely monitoring Safeguarding. These efforts were increased in light of the Notice to Improve which was issued on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009. The Panel has adopted the "critical friend" mantra in challenging, and checking, the response of the Council and has consistently monitored safeguarding performance and outcomes.

As well as responding to Safeguarding issues the Panel has also welcomed the opportunity to shape some of the key policies and strategies that could have a real impact on young people across Rotherham. In particular the Panel has welcomed the shift towards preventative and early intervention services – highlighted by the Early Intervention Strategy. The Panel has also fed into the Children's Plan 2010 – 2013. The Panel also received reports on the longstanding issue of Child Poverty which remains a problem in Rotherham.

The Panel has received a range of reports on health issues for young people. The Panel also had an excellent meeting which focussed on Sexual Health - with SHIELD (Yorkshire HIV Support Group), the Sexual Health Strategy and Teenage Pregnancy being discussed. The Panel has also continued to investigate the services around Children and Young People's mental and this culminated with a well attended visit to the STEPS service. The half day visit really allowed members of the panel to appreciate firsthand how young people accessed and experienced the service.

### **Case Study**

The PSHE Review was the major piece of work undertaken by the Panel on the Enjoying and Achieving theme. The Review was initiated by members of the Youth Cabinet and over two hundred young people completed a survey at Rotherham Show. The Review Group also consulted PSHE Teachers, Parent Governors and Senior Teachers. The Group also observed a PSHE lesson.

The review concluded that the quality of PSHE varied considerably across Rotherham. The key themes that emerged from the Review include:

- There was a widespread consensus that PSHE is a really important subject.
- That young people need a timetabled space for PSHE and to be taught by trained and confident teachers.
- The need for Governing Bodies to take greater ownership of the way PSHE is delivered.

The Review Group has decided to consult Headteachers and Governors before submitting the final report to PSOC and Cabinet.

### **Looked After Children's Scrutiny Sub Panel**

Chair: Cllr Ann Russell

The Looked After Children's Scrutiny Sub Panel was established in late 2005 to look specifically at improving services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Looked After Children and Care Leavers consistently have worse outcomes in terms of health, educational attainment and employment prospects than other young people. The sub panel meets quarterly and its membership is drawn from each of the five Scrutiny Panels. There are also a number of co-optees including foster carers and school governors.

### **Issues Considered During 2009/2010**

The Care Matters Agenda has continued to inform the work of the sub panel. The panel has taken an active role in overseeing the Inspection of Children's Homes and Fostering Services. The Panel has also organised training for teachers and governors who are working with Looked After Children. The Sub group has taken a keen interest in improving the educational attainment of Looked After Children and has received reports on attendance and access to higher education.

### **Case Study**

The major Looked After Children's Review focussed on "Corporate Parenting." The term "corporate parent" applies to councillors and officer who have a statutory responsibility to the young people in care. The Review began gathering evidence in December 2009. It included work with the Interim Director of Safeguarding, Children and Young People's Services and a meeting with Looked After Children Council. The Group also completed an internal audit with the help of a National Children's Bureau's Self Assessment Toolkit.

## **Looking Forward**

Many issues offer considerable challenges to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel in the coming year. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people will remain the main focus of attention and the Scrutiny Panel will continue to closely monitor the performance of acute safeguarding services. A special safeguarding meeting has been scheduled for later in the year in which new elected members will be inducted to some of the issues surrounding safeguarding.

The panel intends to review the Locality Teams: The Story so Far to see what impact this major restructuring of Children and Young People Services has had across the borough. The transferral of the Learning and Skills Council to the Local Authority will mean that Council has a new duty to secure suitable education and training for all resident 16-19 year olds, 16-25 year olds who have learning difficulties and disabilities and young people in offender institutions. The panel has also noted that many of the time limited projects end in March 2011 and we intend to review the potential impact that this could have on children and young people services in Rotherham.

Arising from a recommendation made by the Corporate Parenting Review, it is possible that the functions previously carried out by the Looked After Children Scrutiny Panel will be transferred to a new Corporate Parenting Board. While the future of the sub panel is somewhat in doubt, what cannot be underestimated is the way in which the panel raised the profile of Looked After Children and Care Leavers over its five year tenure. As Chair I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to the work of the panel.



Issues to be considered - Work Programme 20010/11

Month/	Issue to be considered	Standing Items
<b>June 4th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work programme</li> <li>• Machinery of Governance (deferred from April)</li> <li>• Future challenges for youth service-update</li> <li>• Self Assessments                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fostering</li> <li>Safeguarding</li> <li>Looked After Children Services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice to improve</li> </ul>
<b>July 2nd</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAC issue</li> <li>• Notice to improve</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>
August recess		

<b>Month/</b>	<b>Issue to be considered</b>	<b>Standing Items</b>
<b>September 4th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on scrutiny reviews: road safety outside schools</li> <li>• Imagination Library</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• 14-19 strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAC issue</li> <li>• Notice to improve</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>
<b>October 1st</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on scrutiny review: Support for newly arrived children in schools</li> <li>• Transforming Rotherham Learning (update)</li> <li>• World Class Primary Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAC issue</li> <li>• Notice to improve</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>
<b>October 29th</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on implementation of early intervention and prevention strategy (including parenting strategy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAC issue</li> <li>• Notice to improve</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>

Month/	Issue to be considered	Standing Items
<b>November 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAA targets – focusing on impact of strategies childhood obesity teenage pregnancies sexual health</li> <li>• Child poverty needs assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAC issues</li> <li>• Notice to improve</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>

**To be scheduled:**

- ❖ child and adolescent mental health services
- ❖ alcohol and substance misuse
- ❖ safeguarding update
- ❖ provision of apprenticeships
- ❖ transition from children’s to adult services
- ❖ young carer’s strategy

**Monitoring the impact of scrutiny reviews**

- ❖ support for newly arrived children and young people in schools
- ❖ road traffic safety outside schools
- ❖ future challenges of the youth service
- ❖ anti-bullying

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> June 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Proposed Review Youth Service Provision</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Children and Young People’s Services</b>

**5. Summary:**

A previous Scrutiny Review of the Youth Services recommended a future review of Youth Service provision, including with reference to buildings used by Rotherham Youth Service, in order to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Provision as envisaged by the Government agendas within *Youth Matters* and *Aiming High: a ten year strategy for positive activities*. This report lays out progress to date and the a methodology and timetable to create a model across the Borough that meets existing demands and ensures an effective value for money delivery, in line with key recommendations from the 2008 Scrutiny Review “Future Challenges for the Youth Service”.

**6. Recommendations:**

- That the Scrutiny Panel considers the report and comments on the proposals herein.
- That the Scrutiny Panel receives a further Report when the review of Youth Services, commissioned by the Cabinet Member, has reported back.

## 7. Proposals and Details:

A Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel Review – "Future Challenges for the Youth Service" was finalised in November 2008. The Scrutiny Review was triggered by the Government publications '**Youth Matters**' and '**Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities**', and the legal duty place on local authorities to secure youth provision, particularly in the context of the Council's long standing commitments to its Youth Services. Youth Matters and associated guidance and publications are part of the Government drive to improve the lives of our children within 'Every Child Matters' and the subsequent Children's Act 2004. The Scrutiny Review made nine key recommendations and progress has been considerable in the past twelve months, particularly in addressing the Government determination to develop a range of new targeted initiatives whilst at the same time ensuring that our Youth Services maintain a strong balance with regard to universal provision.

One of the key recommendations of the Review was:

***'That the Cabinet Member for Children and Young Peoples Services commissions a strategy to modernise Youth Service facilities within the Borough reflecting the need to provide facilities across each locality.'***

A considerable amount of background work has taken place with regard to this recommendation, including benchmarking against similar authorities and detailed discussions with the Transforming Rotherham Learning initiative in order to ensure congruence with Rotherham's Building Schools for the Future Programme. In April 2010, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People considered a report which laid out our findings, which included:

- There is inconsistency and inequity in the level of provision available to young people across the borough, although the actual level of resource allocated in financial terms to each locality is remarkably consistent.
- Provision is not always based on need.
- Some centres are in the wrong place.
- Some centres are understaffed with limited sessions of opening. Additional load is also being placed upon centres as a result of the drive for Friday evening and weekend opening.
- Whilst a good deal of progress has been made in terms of building condition under the Premises Strategy, there are some centres in need of further support. Most buildings were in reasonable condition, however there are some key buildings that need major work.
- Although the buildings were in generally reasonable condition there are issues with how attractive they are to young people in terms of decor and equipment.

On the basis of the report, Cabinet Member agreed two key recommendations:

1. That a strategy for the next stage of the Youth Service review be commissioned.
2. That a Business Case for the Outdoor Learning Service is prepared.

The Strategy will focus on:

- Integration in the Area Planning Process in Area Assemblies
- The development of a Youth Work 'Quality Charter' to benchmark provision in the voluntary and community sectors.
- The identification of gaps in provision in the locality, including an audit at Area Assembly and Parish Council
- The expressed wishes and needs of local young people
- Equality of access to a consistent Youth Offer Borough wide
- The priorities of local communities
- Building requirements in terms of the Early Intervention and Support agenda
- Workforce development requirements, including the creation of "Centres of Excellence", high achieving Youth Centres where trainee youth workers are placed for the duration of their training.

The Strategy will be informed by:

- The use of the buildings by young people; frequency and numbers
- The number, condition, location and suitability of the buildings
- The cost of running the buildings and levels of staffing
- Personal knowledge and understanding of the provision and local communities.
- Premises condition reports and the outcomes of Youth Service Systems Inspections.
- Staffing Team Trees and financial data, married to attendance figures to arrive at an indicative Unit Cost for each centre, i.e. a cost per attendance per young person.
- The outcomes of Voice and Influence work by local young people, these to include work in partnership with Area Assemblies and those from the recent Borough wide young people's conferences.
- The Govt. requirements that all local authorities in England are expected to "*secure....access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure time facilities for the improvement of their well being and sufficient facilities for such activities*" ( S,6: Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Outdoor Education:

A specific element of Youth Service facilities are those that provide Outdoor Learning, Crowden, Habershon House and Ulley. Rotherham is unusual in that we

have retained our Outdoor Learning provision whilst many other local authorities have, over the past few years, closed theirs. In general terms this has been achieved by setting income targets that require the provision to be self sustaining, however this has become more challenging each year, despite the continued popularity of our provision, particularly with Schools. Work is required to consider the best way to deliver this provision for our young people in the future.

A small working group of Officers under the chair of the Director of Community Services has been tasked with completing the strategy to modernise the youth facilities across the borough and report back to the Cabinet Member with a full options appraisal and clear recommendations by September 2010.

Additionally, and specifically to Outdoor Education, the Outdoor Learning Manager is currently devising a robust business plan for the whole of Outdoor Learning, including a detailed marketing plan and clear processes for review.

**8. Finance:**

The work will be completed within existing budgets.

**9. Risks and Uncertainties:**

The modernisation and change of emphasis in the delivery of youth services, with an increased focus on targeting services, has placed the Youth Services at the very centre of Rotherham's drive toward prevention and early intervention. Youth Services play a key or leading role in a number of performance areas, most notably teenage pregnancy rates, NEET reduction, positive activities and links to anti-social behaviour, and homelessness. Failure to ensure that resources and buildings are provided in the most effective model could mean reduced performance.

**10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:**

**11. Background Papers and Consultation:**

- Future Challenges for the Youth Service - Scrutiny Review - May 2008
- Cabinet Reports re Scrutiny Review – November 2008 and April 2010
- Youth Matters - Government Strategy Document
- Aiming High for Young People - Government Strategy Document

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**1. SUMMARY AND FINDINGS – SCRUTINY REVIEW: ‘FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR THE YOUTH SERVICE’**

1.1 The review was completed in May 2008 and was chaired by Cllr Barry Kaye. Members of the Youth Cabinet participated in the review. The findings were presented to Cabinet in July 2008 and its response was received in November 2008. An update of progress was brought to the panel in October 2009. This is the third update to the panel.

**2. FINDINGS**

2.1 The review group was satisfied using the evidence from inspection reports, the Joint Area Review and Peer Review that the service was effective and provided good value for money. This view was also confirmed by visits to local projects and Members’ knowledge and understanding of provision within their wards.

A series of common questions were posed to the officers, a representative from the National Youth Agency and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services

- How will the move towards more integrated services impact on service delivery
- How can youth services be delivered effectively to reflect the rural/urban split of the borough?
- How do we achieve a balance of generic and targeted service at the current level of resourcing?
- Is the focus on the 13-19 age group, the right one?
- How do we engage with partners for example parish councils, private or voluntary sector providers

Young People’s Services had been subject to a base budget review in late 2006. The questions posed in the base budget review about the distribution of resources were pertinent to this review.

2.2 One of the key challenges with the development of the Every Child Matters agenda and move towards greater integration is to ensure that the role of non-formal education is not lost and that youth work is recognised as having an intrinsic value in itself. With greater demand for targeted support, there is a real risk that generic work will be ‘squeezed’; either through diminished budgets or less emphasis on youth work standards as part of a multi-agency approach. It is important that the integrated Children and Young People’s service has a clear vision for its youth services that retains its identity and a balance of both open-access work and support for those in greater need.

“Every Child Matters” and “Youth Matters” seeks to bring about radical changes to the way that services are delivered to young people that will take time and patience to establish. Integrating services for young people is a national policy but it is being interpreted differently in different parts of the country. This ranges from co-location and better links between those delivering services to young people,



right through to the delivery of all services to young people through locality based wholly integrated teams. The review group were unclear how integration would work in practice but want to ensure that the professional discipline of youth work is valued in the same way as other professional disciplines within the integrated teams.

- 2.3 The move towards locality work brings opportunities for a local 'youth offer'. This should highlight gaps (and potential duplication) of local services and ensures that the needs of young people are central to area planning, influencing the development and delivery of provision. At present, it is unclear how the Area Assembly plans link to the planning function of the youth service (or indeed the wider locality teams).
- 2.4 An important consideration for the review group is how youth services can be delivered effectively to reflect the rural/ urban split. Although there is anecdotal support amongst Members for a widening of provision, it is unlikely given budgetary pressures, that significant additional investment will be forthcoming. Therefore alternatives should be explored. The review group are keen to see how the proposals for extended schools involve youth work services.
- 2.5 Members visited various youth facilities during the review and as part of their ward work. They are aware that a number of them are in need of repair or substantial work to make them compliant with disabled access requirements. There is significant capital investment required to do this. At present, a generic service is provided across 36 sites. It is difficult to reconcile how this level of service can be maintained when balanced against the state of the facilities and the increased demand of targeted youth support.

A concern expressed by a number of members is that youth services are not a seven day a week facility. Anecdotally, members have raised issues about youth clubs being occasionally shut during the holiday period when demand may be at its peak and evenings sessions cut because of staffing shortages. By consolidating staffing in fewer (and newer) facilities, other authorities have offered a seven day a week service. These centres have been supported by mobile units and detached work.

- 2.6 The (previous) Government signalled its intention to fund the building of one new facility in each Parliamentary constituency, alongside additional funds released from the Big Lottery Fund. However, it is likely that any developments would be in collaboration with external providers.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services (Cllr Shaun Wright) was keen to see generic services provided within localities and would not support any closure of facilities. He expressed a desire that if we were successful as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF), new facilities could be developed on the BSF secondary school sites. He suggested that the BSF programme was more likely to be able to accommodate local needs with youth centres being open to the wider community.

A witness suggested that the Government was keen to see an integrated capital strategy in partnership with either private or voluntary providers. He cited the redevelopment of Crowden Outdoor Education Centre in conjunction with the Youth Hostel Association as being an example of best practice. Should the

authority wish to pursue the development of youth facilities via BSF, there could be scope to build on this innovative practice.

- 2.7 There are good levels of partnership working with voluntary sector groups and the Authority is amongst the best in the Country in attracting external funding. The externally funded projects are usually of a specialist nature, however the reliance on external revenue means that although there may be an identified need, the project may not necessarily be long term.
- 2.8 The review group expressed concerns about the 13-19 age balance and whether this was the correct focus. Parish Councils have run successful junior clubs and Area Assemblies have run diversionary activities, often with the support and advice of youth service staff. However, it was acknowledged that there was not a consistent approach applied across the borough, with the viability of projects often being dependent on individual relationships rather than planned provision.
- 2.9 There is a lack of clarity about what provision is being offered by Parishes, voluntary groups or other organisations. The 'Directory' of Services should map provision, however it is difficult to ascertain its quality. It was suggested that work could be undertaken to establish a local 'quality mark', to establish that standards are applied with regards to health and safety, safeguarding and curriculum requirements. Training and development could also be offered to other providers to share good practice.
- 2.10 There is increased demand for targeted support, particularly to address anti-social behaviour. However, there appears to be an expectation that this will be met through current resources, rather than additional funding attached to the specific intervention. Although some Area Assemblies have identified resources to develop diversionary activities, youth work to address anti-social behaviour is met largely through Young People's Services budgets. This places pressure on the service to meet its agreed priorities

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Cabinet response in italics*

- 3.1 That Children and Young People's Services develops a vision for Young People's Services as part of integrated teams; reflecting the importance of retaining a balance of non-formal education and generic working as well as providing targeted services to those most in need. **(Accepted)**
- 3.2 That the current level of support given to Young People's Services is maintained. **(Deferred)**
- 3.3 That the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services commissions a strategy to modernise youth service facilities in the Borough, reflecting the need to provide facilities across each locality. The strategy should address
- how we maintain the balance of generic and targeted services at current resource levels

- how we will meet the Government's proposals around developing an integrated capital strategy and potential partnerships with voluntary or private sector providers
- whether access to facilities can be widened to ensure that there is provision at peak time and during holiday periods
- the feasibility of maintaining the current number of buildings, or whether services can be provided in localities in other ways.
- the accessibility of facilities via public transport

**(Accepted)**

- 3.4 As part of the 'Youth Offer', the Young People's Services conduct an audit of provision at Area Assembly and Parish Council level to identify gaps or duplication of services. Each Locality Team should develop relationships with the Parish Councils in their area to establish whether services are being provided, the level of need and if there is scope for greater partnership working. **(Accepted)**
- 3.5 That further work is undertaken to integrate the Area Planning process in Area Assemblies with the work of the Locality Teams to identify needs, circumstances and the aspirations of children and young people in their area. On the basis of their views, agree priorities, plan provision and identify the resources available across the partner agencies and the contribution that each will make. **(Accepted)**
- 3.6 That agreement be sought with partners and Directorates to address how youth work interventions to respond to issues of anti-social behaviour are funded. **(Accepted)**
- 3.7 The focus of the service should remain on the 13-19 age group. Recognising that there is a need and desire for work with younger children, that Children and Young People's Services assess the feasibility of working in partnership with voluntary sector and Parish Councils to provide services for children and young people. **(Accepted)**
- 3.8 That work is undertaken to develop a Youth Work 'Quality Charter to benchmark provision in the voluntary and community sectors. Local groups would be awarded the Charter after being assessed as meeting minimum standards in terms of curriculum, health and safety and safeguarding. The Charter could be advertised in the Directory of Services. **(Accepted in principle)**
- 3.9 That resources are identified to support the further development and maintenance of the Directory of Services. **(Accepted in principle)**

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4th June 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Machinery of Governance – Up-date</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Children and Young People’s Services</b>

**5. Summary:**

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act became operational on 1st April 2010 brings about the most radical change in post-16 learning for almost a decade. It has:

- dissolved the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and place upon local authorities (LA) a new duty to secure sufficient, suitable education and training provision for all resident 16-19 year olds, 16-25 year olds who have learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and young people in young offender institutions
- established the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) that will have responsibility for funding 16-19 education and training, and for overseeing the allocation of post-16 resources to Academies
- created a Skills Funding Agency that will have overall responsibility for the performance and resourcing of Further Education (FE) colleges and, through the new National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), for securing sufficient apprenticeships, for all young people who are suitably qualified and who want one
- recognised, for the first time, Sixth Form Colleges as a distinct legal category and make them the responsibility of the LA

**6. Recommendations:**

**The Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Panel is asked to:**

- **note the transfer of 16-19 responsibilities from the LSC to the LA**
- **endorse the preparations made by officers for the adoption of these new responsibilities and commissioning powers**
- **agree that the Strategic Director, Children and Young People Services will draw down funds from the YPLA for the purposes detailed in this report.**

## 7. Proposals and Details:

These legislative changes are the final piece in a programme of reforms that confer on LAs the responsibility for all aspects of the learning, development and care of children and young people 0-19.

The assumption of its new 16-19 powers provides an opportunity for Rotherham Borough Council to create a learning system that:

- is more responsive to the needs of individual post-16 learners, particularly the most vulnerable, those most likely to disengage from learning and the least well qualified
- improves choice for young people, parents and carers so that learners have the opportunity to study in school, in FE, or with other providers or employers
- shapes learning provision to better meet the needs of employers and those sectors of the local economy that are central to the economic transformation of the city, including an expansion of apprenticeships
- places a premium on high quality provision capable of driving up post-16 participation and achievement
- encourages innovative delivery and inspirational teaching so that all young people in the borough see the relevance of learning and are motivated to remain in education and training beyond the age of 16.

Rotherham Borough Council and its partners in the delivery of 16-19 learning are confident that they will be well placed to meet the challenges associated with:

- the raising of the age of participation in education and training to 18, which comes into force in 2015
- reducing the differential between national averages and the proportion of 19 year olds in Rotherham achieving Level 2 (equivalent to at least five good GCSEs) and Level 3 (equivalent to at least two A levels) qualifications.

The transfer of powers from the LSC confers on Rotherham the responsibility for the outcomes and well-being of all 16-19 year olds resident in Rotherham (and those young people up to the age of 25 who have LDD) to an extent that has not been the case since 1993 when funding for 16-19 learning was removed from LA control.

Preparations for the transfer are being made at a number of levels:

- **At national level**, the Local Government Association and LSC have jointly funded the Raising Expectations Action Programme (REACT) team and a series of expert groups which are advising and providing training for LAs on the specifics of the transfer. Rotherham has made good use of this support and has attended training sessions.
- **At the regional level**, a Regional Planning Group for Yorkshire and the Humber is in place to: oversee local arrangements for the transfer, manage the allocation of YPLA funds and secure out of area specialist learning provision including that for young offenders and learners with LDD. The Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services is a member of this group.

- **At the sub-regional level**, the four local authorities in South Yorkshire (SY) have created a SY Planning Cluster comprising representatives of their 14-19 teams. This recognises the fact that 96% of 16-19 year old learners resident in SY pursue their learning with providers also located in the sub-region.

The cluster has made the short-term appointment of a coordinator to facilitate joint working in preparation for the transfer and created task and finish groups drawing on officers with specialist knowledge in finance, human resources, legal and governance, data and curriculum who are linked to REACT's expert groups. A sub regional implementation plan (Annex A) is in place which is monitored on a monthly basis (Annex B). The work of this group will be monitored by the governance arrangements set out in the Sub Regional Proposal (Annex C)

- **At the local level**, the 14-19 Partnership has reviewed the role and remit of all existing groups to ensure that they reflect the changes. Officers have been shadowing the LSC and have worked in partnership to develop the Statement of Need 2010/2011 (Annex D). In Rotherham, arrangements for the transfer are being led by a 14-19 Machinery of Government Change Team, that has specialist officers drawn from across the Council and the LSC. Currently four staff will be transferring from the LSC to Rotherham Borough Council in order to ensure that there are enough resources and skills to support the additional responsibilities being placed on the LA. In conjunction with support from Human Resources an induction programme is being developed for each of these members of staff.

Government Office, Yorkshire and the Humber oversees the progress made by LAs in preparation for the transfer and its most recent check (February 2010) judged the South Yorkshire sub regional group to be well advanced.

The specific details of the transfer, such as, how funds will flow from the YPLA to the LA and then on to providers, are described in a national commissioning statement which is currently subject to consultation. In the meantime, officers are working closely with the LSC and REACT teams to ensure that all the measures that can be put in place to affect a smooth transfer are in place.

## **8. Finance:**

There are a number of potential financial issues for Rotherham to manage as a result of the transfer of LSC funding and responsibilities. LSC allocations for 16-19 learning in Rotherham, under existing arrangements, give an indication of the amount of funding involved as £37 million

The 16-19 funding will continue at, or around, the above funding levels in 2010/11. However, the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (now The Department of Education) are currently undertaking a review of future 14-19 funding levels and funding methodology and there are, at this stage, no confirmed figures and no guarantees that all aspects of 16-19 learning will be resourced at the same level in subsequent years.

LSC funding to school sixth forms currently flows to 11-18 schools via the LA. This arrangement will continue following the transfer of responsibility and these schools

will be expected to contain their sixth form costs within their agreed 16-19 funding allocations.

The Skills Funding Agency will be the sponsor body for FE colleges and funding will flow to them via the LA.

Thomas Rotherham College elected in December 2009 to adopt the new legal category of Sixth Form College. As a result of this Rotherham will become the sponsor body for this institution and will fund it accordingly from the annual 16-19 allocation made to the LA by the YPLA.

The LSC's national budget for learners with LDD has, historically, been overspent. Rotherham has both learners who learn out of the town in specialist, residential provision and a growing number of young people with learning needs that will have to be met by providers in the town. The LSC has launched a national review of LDD funding and Rotherham will seek to utilise this in its own plans to ensure that the available funding is deployed most effectively and efficiently in the interests of all learners with LDD. Any further financial implications arising from this process will be reported as they arise.

#### **9. Risks and Uncertainties:**

The relevant legal powers will result from the Act. The Act will transfer responsibility for commissioning post 16 education and training to LAs from April 2010. LAs will commission 16-19 education and training from colleges, supported by the YPLA. Legal advice will be required at that stage regarding the drafting of funding agreements. Some provision will be subject to a competitive procurement exercise in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2006.

The DCSF's National Commissioning Framework which is currently being consulted on will set out the core systems for planning, commissioning, procuring and funding and will provide a structure within which Local Authorities will be able to meet their new statutory requirements.

#### **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:**

Developments are consistent with:

- The Community Strategy (Local Strategic Partnership)
- The Corporate Plan (RMBC)
- The 14-19 Learning Plan
- The Economic Master Plan (RMBC) which takes into account the City regions developments and the economic relationship between Rotherham and Sheffield.
- Rotherham Productivity Plan (Work and Skills Board)

#### **11. Background Papers and Consultation:**

White Paper Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver'  
The Apprenticeships, Children, Skills and Learning Act 2009

#### **Contact Name:**

Karen Borthwick      Assistant Head of School Effectiveness Service (11-19)



## **South Yorkshire**

### **16-19 Transfer and Sub-Regional Developments**

#### **Action Plan**

**April 2009 to July 2010**

**Final Draft**



## 1. Introduction and Context

This action plan has been developed jointly by the South Yorkshire Cluster (4 South Yorkshire Local Authorities (LAs)), following the successful Phase 2 submission in February 2009. It has been drawn up to support the transfer of 16-19 responsibilities from the LSC and to develop an effective, sub-regional model for the strategic commissioning of 16-19 provision. The establishment of the South Yorkshire Group has the formal approval and active commitment of the Chief Executives, the Directors of Children's Services (DCSs) and the Leaders, or Mayor in each LA.

The 4 Councils in South Yorkshire have a long and demonstrably successful record of collaborative working in economic development and 14-19 provision through developments such as :

- Objective 1 and European Social Fund (ESF) measures which have meant joint bids and similar financial and recording procedures
- Joint working at Directors of Children's Services level in the Dearne Valley across Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham
- Joint actions supporting economic growth in Sheffield and Rotherham
- Joint action at a political level where South Yorkshire (SY) elected members meet to tackle issues which are of common interest for example the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

The 4 LAs have significant dealings with schools and sixth forms (e.g. through Building Schools for the Future (BSF) in Sheffield and Barnsley), and with FE providers (e.g. Sheffield, the establishment of Longley Park 6FC, and Rotherham, the merger of Rother Valley College and Rotherham College of Arts and Technology.) In terms of enterprise, both Doncaster and Sheffield have won Local economic Growth Initiative (LEGI) bids which involved both schools and FE.

## 2. Overall responsibilities

This plan sets out how the South Yorkshire Cluster will support the delivery of the key objectives set out in the DCSF Children's Plan and 14-19 reform programme:

- to ensure that all young people participate in education or training that stretches and challenges them until at least their 18th birthday i.e. the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA)
- to give young people the knowledge and skills that employers and the economy need to prosper in the 21st century
- to close the achievement gap by the age of 19 so that all have an equal opportunity to succeed, irrespective of gender, race, disability or background.
- to deliver the national entitlement to the learning pathways: Foundation Learning Tier, Vocational (Apprenticeships), Applied (the 17 lines of Diploma), General (GCSEs and A levels),
  - to secure sufficient, motivating, accessible high quality provision in support of this at every level, for every line of learning and for all learners, including the most vulnerable
  - to undertake strategic commissioning for the 14-19 phase in relation
    - to the balance, mix, sufficiency and quality of provision offered by academies, school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, FE colleges and other providers
    - universal and independent information, advice and guidance
    - the work of the education business partnerships
- to consult the provider network on local priorities, the needs and aspirations of learners and institutions and the balance and mix of provision across the sub-region
- to decommission provision where there has been a demonstrable failure to address issues of quality, or where it is judged to represent wasteful duplication or poor value for money
- to express this process in an annual 16-19 Commissioning Plan based on an indicative regional YPLA funding allocation.

### 3. Organisational structure, Governance and accountability

There are similar 14-19 structures (Children's Trust, 14-19 Partnerships) in place across the sub-region with a duty to cooperate. Elected Members, Chief Executives, DCSs, and South Yorkshire Officers meet regularly across South Yorkshire. All South Yorkshire Council Leaders are signed up to South Yorkshire Cluster. Each LA participating operates statutory legislation in terms of Children Trusts, the requirements for drawing up Children and Young People's Plans and 16-19 strategic commissioning. Organisational arrangements for the LAs and the cluster to meet their new responsibilities are set out in Appendix 1 These include the following:

- Establish a clear set of arrangements and lines of accountability within each LA to discharge its 16-19 strategic commissioning function
- Ensure comprehensive and useful analysis is provided by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) re :
  - cross-border travel
  - low incidence provision that cannot be provided for easily in each LA
  - the needs of vulnerable groups that are best addressed collaboratively, including young offenders and some young people with specific LDD needs
  - identifying issues which impact on the commissioning plans of the 4 LAs
  - learner progress, provider performance and gaps in provision
- Create expert **groups** which bring together experts from the 4 LAs and LSC to ensure a smooth transfer of planning functions
- Establish a sub-regional **South Yorkshire 16-19 Partnership Group** with representation from academies, schools with sixth forms, sixth form colleges, FE colleges and other providers to inform and help shape South Yorkshire-wide provision planning.

### 4. Remits and Responsibilities

#### 4.1 South Yorkshire Executive

This group comprises the 4 South Yorkshire Directors of Children's Services. Responsibility for chairing will rotate annually between the 4 LAs. A representative of the SRG will be in attendance. This group is responsible for:

- ensuring there is sufficient, high quality and accessible provision and support to meet the needs of all learners, particularly the most vulnerable and including learners with LDD up to the age of 25.
- overseeing the work of the SRG and progress towards its strategic objectives and targets.
- overseeing the performance of the provider network, including academies, in the sub-region and taking action to address areas of weakness.
- approving the cluster's Statement of Need and 16-19 Commissioning Plan
- resolving disputes and conflicts of interest that cannot be dealt with satisfactorily by the SRG
- reporting to the South Yorkshire Chief Executives' meeting, as a minimum, twice a year to seek ratification for the 16-19 Commissioning Plan and to provide an annual report and involving SY elected members as appropriate.

#### 4.2 Sub regional Planning Group (SRG)

This group comprises the key officers from the respective LA 14-19 units who work together to drive the implementation of the Action plan. The SRG meets at regular intervals and is held accountable by the South Yorkshire Executive. The SRG is responsible for:

- setting stretching sub-regional strategic objectives and targets to be achieved collaboratively by the 4 South Yorkshire LAs.
- approving the sub-regional statement of need and composing the annual South Yorkshire 16-19 Commissioning Plan
- agreeing arrangements for cross-border learner flows
- agreeing sub-regional arrangements for low incidence or specialist provision which cannot be met with the boundaries of an individual LA

- resolving any disputes and conflicts of interest that might arise in the sub-regional planning of provision.

The SRG will also ensure that the 16-19 Commissioning Plan accords with national policy and regional priorities is fully reflective of the strategic objectives and planning undertaken by contributory LAs and adheres to the following planning principles:

- the needs and aspirations of all learners, particularly the most vulnerable, are met including specialist provision suitable for learners with specific needs e.g. LDD
- the current and future needs of the national and local economy are addressed
- the pattern of provision is of high quality, contributes to the raising of attainment at 19 and is affordable
- gaps in provision are identified and filled; and wasteful duplication is avoided
- the right of the learners to choose to travel to provision beyond the boundaries of the LA in which they are resident is respected and facilitated
- all provider sectors are treated equally and engaged in the annual planning cycle
- commissioning promotes flexibility, collaboration and looks across both sector and LA boundaries in the interests of the learner
- learners' and employers' views and choices have real influence in what is commissioned and where
- infrastructure plans and capital expenditure are shaped by learner and employer needs, by agreed priorities for social and economic transformation and are aligned with other renewal programmes including the Primary Capital Programme and Building Schools for the Future
- planning is based on standard and comprehensive data set and analysis used consistently by the SRG
- the sub-regional plan both reflects and informs the strategic priorities of the Regional Planning Forum, the Young People's Learning Agency, the National Apprenticeship Service and the Skills Funding Agency.

## 5. Dispute resolution

Each LA's 14-19 unit will seek, through effective and inclusive consultation, to resolve any disputes or conflicts of interest arising from 16-19 commissioning within its administrative boundary. It will apply, in a fair and transparent manner, the values and planning principles agreed by the cluster and the provider community. Any dispute or conflict of interest that cannot be resolved in this manner within the LA boundary will be decided by the DCS, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member, as appropriate.

The SRG will be responsible for resolving any disputes or conflicts of interest arising from 16-19 commissioning at the sub-regional level and where cross-border issues arise. It will apply in a fair and transparent manner, the values and planning principles agreed by the cluster and the provider community. Any sub-regional dispute or conflict of interest that cannot be resolved by the SRG will be referred to the South Yorkshire Executive.

In the unlikely event that the matter cannot be resolved at this level, it will be referred to an adjudication panel made up of at least three DCSs without a direct interest in the matter and drawn from the Regional Planning Forum. Any LA that does not accept the judgement of the RPF adjudication panel can appeal to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. The decision of the Secretary of State will be final and binding. The composition of the Cluster Commissioning Plan will be a staged process governed by an annual planning cycle (see Appendix 2).

## 6. Stages in the commissioning process

### Stage 1: Contributory planning at the level of the individual LA

This will commence with each participating LA determining its own priorities for strategic commissioning in recognition of the fact that each LA will be responsible, within its administrative

boundaries, for:

- securing the quality and quantity of provision
- intervening where performance data or external inspection indicates the need to do so, and consulting the cluster before action is taken
- adjusting its commissioning plans in light of cross border concerns
- responding to accountability mechanisms such as the new Comprehensive Area Assessment and Scrutiny by elected members.

Each LA's 16-19 strategic commissioning priorities will result in a local **16-19 Statement of Need** and will be a key component of its **14-19 Plan**. This plan will be drawn up annually by the LA in consultation with the full range of providers and support agencies represented on its **14-19 Partnership Board** and approved by its Children's Trust. The 14-19 Plan will, in turn, reflect the priorities set out in the local **Children and Young People's Plan** and its **Local Area Agreement** targets.

### **Stage 2: Composition of the Cluster 16-19 Commissioning Plan**

The emphasis on local responsiveness needs to be combined with appropriate arrangements to ensure that the interests are respected of those learners and employers who wish to access provision beyond the boundary of the LA in which they are resident. The cluster will therefore seek:

- to combine the Statement of Need and the 16-19 planning priorities for each participating LA as a single, annual sub-regional 16-19 Commissioning Plan
- to reconcile differences and discrepancies in contributory LA plans according to a set of agreed values, principles and protocols
- to submit the combined South Yorkshire Cluster Plan for moderation and ratification by the Regional Planning Forum.

The South Yorkshire Cluster recognises that FE providers and national agencies, such as the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), require a single planning conversation with the cluster. For this reason each LA will commission provision on behalf of the cluster from that FE college located within its administrative boundaries. Rotherham MBC will commission provision from Dearne Valley College on behalf of the cluster. The cluster will nominate one LA to undertake the planning dialogue with the NAS on its behalf.

## **7. Identification of Priorities for the Action Plan**

Following the successful Phase 2 submission a letter was sent to DCSs by Sue Baldwin, Director of Young People's Participation DCSF in response to the South Yorkshire Phase 2 submission with specific feedback for the South Yorkshire Cluster. Extract from letter dated 19 May:

*"The panel considers that at this stage in the process your proposal is developing well with key areas on the agenda being covered i.e.*

- **staff capacity issues**
- *links to the wider **economic development** agenda t*
- *the challenge of ensuring that **cross border flows** are collaboratively managed*
- *the need to develop closer involvement with and to develop **strategic relationships with providers** as a critical success factor to secure not only 16-19 commissioning but also the 14-19 reforms.*

*The panel welcomes your outlined approach which is clearly building on the good track record of collaboration and strategic working between the local authorities. There was also good evidence that the collaborative approach was ensuring all partners are supported to fully engage in the Sub regional development process."*

Other priorities were identified during the consultation phase as part of the Phase 2 submission including the following:

- Clarify the relationship between sub-regional, regional and national bodies: YPLA, NAS and SFA

- Produce a detailed explanation of how financial accountability will be managed in future.
- Consider how the Youth Councils can contribute to the work of the SRG
- Establish a common agreement on the frameworks used to monitor, evaluate and review data and quality systems. This action has already been included in the draft action plan which is due to be finalised in mid-March
- Review how commissioning fits with existing boards and networks e.g. common data sets to ensure consistency
- Build on existing good practice and strong relationships between FE and partnerships across the region to ensure that consultation is meaningful and review current system of representation to enable secondary headteacher representation
- Build on LA skills audit of staff from LSC and LA to establish appropriate CPD programme to reflect identified need and identify Workforce training funding (WTF)
- Build up shared understanding of specific issues such as LLDD.
- Develop a common approach to Education Business Partnerships and employer engagement
- Ensure the Area Wide Prospectus (AWP) is integrated into planning process along with learner tracking mechanisms. Review arrangements for Common Application Process to take account of cross border issues and explore how the AWP's can further support and inform learners.

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

Monitoring will be carried out by the SRG at its regular meetings through termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSs, Chief executives and elected members, reports from all expert groups. These will inform Agenda items at 14-19 Partnerships (or equivalent group) and Children's Trusts and will be reported at GOYH Progress Checks in each LA.

## 1.0 ESTABLISH APPROPRIATE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Area of Activity	Specific Activity	Timescale	Responsible	Success Criteria	Monitoring
<b>1.1 ACCOUNTABILITY</b> <b>Strengthen shared governance arrangements, ensuring on-going political sign-off, clear decision making and accountability arrangements are in place</b>	1. Clarify sub regional and LA roles and responsibilities alongside SFA, YPLA and NAS against ASCL legislation re SSF, FE, 6FColleges, Academies and WBLPs including financial management.	by Apr 10	LAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed set of protocols and structures established to meet the needs of commissioning process –</li> <li>All groups linked into commissioning processes. Links with Children’s Trust and Work and Skills boards are clear. Representation is in place with roles and responsibilities understood by all partners.</li> <li>Legal and statutory duties are identified and adhered to.</li> <li>Formal procedure enables appeals to be lodged and disputes settled.</li> <li>Risk assessment procedures are embedded in the commissioning process to ensure decision making takes account of all relevant factors.</li> <li>All stakeholders are clear about their responsibilities and roles in the commissioning process.</li> <li>Commissioning is open and transparent and line with principles of accountability</li> <li>Commissioning carried out efficiently during 2009-10.</li> <li>Mix of provision through high quality provider base is working towards the delivery of the entitlement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSs, Chief executives and Elected members.</li> <li>Reports from all expert gps</li> <li>Agenda items at 14-19 Partnerships (or equivalent group) and Children’s Trusts</li> <li>GOYH Progress Checks in each LA</li> </ul>
	2. Reconfigure 14-19 Governance arrangements to align with MOG requirements locally, sub regionally including review and clarification of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>current representation on local 11/14-19, roles and responsibilities and terms of reference of key 11/14-19 groups to ensure fit for purpose.</li> <li>link between LAs, Work and Skills Boards, Children’s Trust and 14-19 structures</li> <li>governance and responsibilities for EBPO arrangements in context of South Yorkshire Skills Strategy and Education Business Partnership organisations.</li> </ul>	by Oct 09	LAs		
	3. Create an effective and accountable 16-19 commissioning process and structure in each Local Authority.	by Apr 10	LAs		
	4. Agree values, principles and protocols for 16-19 planning to assist strategic commissioning.	by Oct 09	SRG		
	5. Confirm the commissioning process is approved and monitored in line with LA governance protocols and procedures	by Dec 09	LAs		
	6. Clarify arrangements for dispute resolution at : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. sub region, region, cross region levels</li> <li>ii. provider level</li> </ul>	by Dec 09	LAs		
	7. Develop risk analysis relating to 16-19 commissioning processes	by Dec 09	SRG		
	8. Ensure SRG maintains cross authority DCS, Member and Chief Executive support.	ongoing	SRG		

<p><b>1.2 LEARNER VOICE</b>  <b>Ensure that the grouping is focused on outcomes for young people by understanding their needs and aspirations</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review local current arrangements for Learner Voice to include feedback on provision and choice.</li> <li>2. Consider proposals for sub-regional Young Person's group, possibly virtual, to add value by consulting young people e.g. on cross border issues and build on representation already in place.</li> <li>3. Collate learner preference data from 2008-09 Common application process data as pilot to inform 2010 priorities.</li> <li>4. Implement learner voice arrangements to inform 2011-12 commissioning decisions.</li> <li>5. Review impact and effectiveness of Voice and Influence (and its resources) to engage and involve young people in future youth engagement activity.</li> <li>6. Commission Connexions to carry out annual young people's needs survey/report.</li> </ol>	<p>By Nov 09</p> <p>by Mar 10</p> <p>by end Sept 09</p> <p>by Jul 10</p> <p>by Jul 10</p> <p>by Jul 10</p>	<p>LAs</p> <p>IAG gp</p> <p>Data /IAG gp</p> <p>SRG</p> <p>IAG gp</p> <p>IAG gp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views and opinions of current and future learners are taken into account to inform the commissioning process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from provider learner satisfaction surveys to inform commissioning provision.</li> <li>• Reports from Data group</li> <li>• Reports from IAG gp</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.3 QUALITY</b>  <b>a. Articulate how demand will be met by a supply base committed to quality.</b>  <b>b. Articulate how the commissioning process will be quality assured</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review national guidelines and links between Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and Framework for Excellence, other self assessment models including school Sixth forms (Datadashboard) and the role of SIPs.</li> <li>2. Build on existing 14-19 Quality Toolkit frameworks across the sub region to establish monitoring and evaluation procedures linked to QA standards and consult with providers through the provider networks.</li> <li>3. Audit current range of providers to ensure breadth and quality against quality measures which adhere to national and local guidelines.</li> <li>4. Review LA procedures for assuring quality in the commissioning process</li> <li>5. Establish provider quality subcontracting protocols/arrangements (particularly with Third sector organisations) to enable a broader provider base</li> </ol>	<p>By Dec 09</p> <p>by Mar 10</p> <p>by Dec 09</p> <p>by Dec 09</p> <p>by Dec 09</p>	<p>Quality (provision) gp</p> <p>Quality (provision) gp</p> <p>LAs</p> <p>LAs</p> <p>Quality (provision) gp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to high quality service provision is evident to all partners.</li> <li>• Effective framework enables SRG to regularly review and report outcomes with auditable procedures for determining provision. There is clarity to determine the quality of 16-19 provision.</li> <li>• There are agreed QA standards across all aspects of commissioning. This process is aligned with national PIs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSSs, Chief executives and Elected members.</li> <li>• Reports from Quality (provision) gp</li> <li>• Agenda items at 14-19 Partnerships (or equivalent group) and Children's Trusts</li> </ul>

## 2.0 FURTHER DEVELOP COLLABORATION AND STRATEGIC CONTRIBUTION

Area of Activity	Specific Activity	Timescale	Responsible	Success Criteria	Monitoring
<b>2.1</b> <b>WIDER STRATEGY</b> <b>Ensure commissioning fits with wider strategic priorities for Economic development both locally and regionally.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align 16-19 commissioning processes with Economic Strategy by developing an overview of economic development to reflect the new environment.</li> <li>Establish Inter-relationship with YPLA and NAS and regional planning. (see 1.1.1)</li> <li>Make appropriate links with RDA -YF, GOYH and other relevant agencies.</li> <li>Ensure YPLA data packs provide analysis of social and economic performance alongside cross border economic issues.</li> <li>Produce local employer Engagement/ Enterprise plan to inform transfer of responsibilities for Education Business links.</li> </ol>	<p>by Dec 09</p> <p>Autumn 09</p> <p>Autumn 09</p> <p>Autumn 09</p> <p>Autumn 09</p>	<p>SRG</p> <p>SRG</p> <p>SRG</p> <p>Data gp</p> <p>LAs/Employer Engagement gp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data packs provide useful analysis to inform planning.</li> <li>Learning and skills agendas are actively linked and are making a tangible difference to the area's social and economic outcomes.</li> <li>16-19 commissioning meets both learner demand and economic need and is working towards delivery of the 2013 entitlement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSS, Chief executives and Elected members.</li> <li>Agenda items at 14-19 Partnerships &amp; Children's Trusts</li> </ul>
<b>2.2</b> <b>COMMUNICATION STRATEGY</b> <b>Secure further understanding of the FE sector and strategic relationships to enhance strategic commissioning role</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold half day conference to set up expert gps.</li> <li>Consult on appropriate mechanisms and cycles for consultation within each sector.</li> <li>Determine if additional structures needed for secondary headteacher representation on sub-regional basis.</li> <li>Produce communication strategy with regular briefings to stakeholders (representatives from schools, FE, WBLPs, HE, Economic Development, Vol Com and Adult Learning/Skills sectors) and mechanism for feedback e.g. South Yks Listening Board.</li> <li>Strengthen provider voice through WBL Provider Forum in LAs re Apprenticeships</li> <li>Confirm named arrangements for effective communication with RDA -YF and GOYH.</li> <li>Ensure appropriate member briefing and approval of decision making process.</li> <li>Organise provider briefings state of play conference to inform commissioning plans.</li> </ol>	<p>by Jul 09</p> <p>by Nov 09</p> <p>by Nov 09</p> <p>by Dec 09</p> <p>by Nov 09</p> <p>by Nov 09</p> <p>ongoing</p> <p>by July 10</p>	<p>SRG</p> <p>SRG</p> <p>SRG</p> <p>SRG</p> <p>LAs</p> <p>SRG</p> <p>LAs</p> <p>SRG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication strategy in place which ensures greater understanding by all sectors of the process.</li> <li>Communication with other key groups at regional and LA level is established.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSS, Chief executives and Elected members.</li> <li>Agenda items at 14-19 Partnerships (or equivalent group) and Children's Trusts</li> </ul>



### 3.0 ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATE RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

Area of Activity	Specific Activity	Timescale	Responsible	Success Criteria	Monitoring
<b>3.1 STAFFING (personnel, finance, data)</b>  <b>Establish staffing and infrastructure requirements to deliver the planned changes</b>  <b>Ensure continuation of programme of planned arrangements to work with LSC staff</b>	1. Carry out skills audit of staff (LSC/ LA) involved in the change team.	by Sept 09	SRG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRG established with a clear role, remit and membership agreed by all stakeholders.</li> <li>Expert Groups in place with representation of key staff</li> <li>reporting to SRG.</li> <li>Staff appointed to the LA s with clear roles with agreed job descriptions and person specifications.</li> <li>Robust Performance management in place.</li> <li>CPD programme developed from staff audits and requirements at national, regional and local levels</li> </ul>	<p>Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSSs, Chief executives and Elected members.</p> <p>Agenda items at 14-19 Partnerships (or equivalent group) and Children's Trusts.</p> <p>Reports from HR gp and other expert Groups.</p>
	2. Review current LA structures and develop a 14-19 commissioning team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare, consult and determine proposals for LA staffing (transitional from Sept 09 and fully operational by Apr 10) in consultation with LSC and following publication of LA blueprint.</li> <li>Identify with LSC the number and range of staff to transfer to LA ensuring staff are linked to identified needs of LA.</li> <li>Establish an LA transitional 14-19 unit with personnel fit for purpose with skills set, employee specifications and job descriptions to cover: governance, planning, quality, commissioning, data, finance, LLDD and HR.</li> </ul>	by May 09	LA s		
	3. Workforce training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify any WT Funding for staff to undertake professional development re MOG and 14-19 developments.</li> <li>Design CPD programme for implementation:</li> <li>Ensure induction of new staff and support development activities for staff with new roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>Consult providers and other partners on CPD issues relating to MOG changes and 14-19 developments</li> </ul>	by Oct 09	LAs		
	4. Establish expert groups at LA and SRG levels and create protocols to align joint working to maintain effective dialogue. Link developments to existing work in eg EBPO transition working group, NEETs gps and identify further areas where S Yorks wide work is required.	by Sept 09	SRG		
	5. Co-opt expert representations from provider groups to LA change/transition teams.	by Sept 09	LAs		

<b>3.2 SHARED SERVICES</b> Investigate shared services arrangements to maximise the effectiveness of the grouping	1. Investigate the benefits/ disadvantages of shared services including collocation of specialists.	by Mar 10	SRG and Expert Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure in place which is in line with national and regional requirements and informed by recommendations from the Expert Groups</li> </ul>	Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSs, Chief executives and Elected
<b>3.3 COMMISSIONING CYCLE</b> Establish commissioning cycle Finalise necessary arrangements to enable SRG to work to model (b)	<b>Business cycle 09-10 and future planning</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce 16-19 Commissioning Strategy documents outlining operating procedures and annual business planning cycle.</li> <li>Establish needs in relation to MIS, Finance and any other aspects. Create an MIS system to support the commissioning process.</li> <li>Produce a local area statement of need (Local LA/LSC commissioning statement, ensuring intelligent account taken of national statement of priorities to inform sub-regional and local allocations. See 2.1.1</li> <li>Receive and analyse indicative allocations</li> <li>Engage in dialogue with providers for final allocations</li> </ol> <b>Finance</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek clarity re LA responsibility for revenue, capital and financial assurance</li> <li>Establish financial and budgetary MS (see business cycle)</li> <li>Implement agreed funding formula to identify level of funding for providers.</li> </ol> <b>Data</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify role of YPLA in production of data.</li> <li>Establish more robust database especially for L2 and L3 at 19, vulnerable groups, LLDD.</li> <li>Investigate resources to assist management of commissioning process.</li> <li>Analyse and gather data to inform the commissioning process.</li> <li>Develop protocols for sharing sub-regional and LA data at institutional level.</li> </ol> <b>Transport</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on expertise of 14-19 S Yks transport gp to deliver improved access to provision.</li> </ol>	by Oct 09 by Oct 09 by Nov 09 by Jan 10 by end Mar 09 by Oct 09 by Nov 09 by Apr 10 by Apr 10 by Dec 09 by Dec 09 by Apr 10	SRG Data and Finance gps LAs/LSC LAs/LSC + Finance gp LAs/LSC Finance gp Data gp Transport gp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioning strategy in place and agreed with all stakeholders.</li> <li>Commissioning decisions which deliver the entitlement fit within the budget.</li> <li>Agreed action plan informs the process</li> <li>Systems in place and fully operational and ensure effective process</li> <li>LA responsibility for revenue, capital and financial assurance is clear and ensure 16-19 functions are financially assured.</li> <li>MIS system in place which informs the process.</li> <li>Robust data in place to support planning and challenge underperformance.</li> <li>Protocols are in place and all stakeholders signed up to use</li> </ul>	Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSs, Chief executives and Elected members.  Agenda items at 14-19 Partnerships (or equivalent group) and Children's Trusts.  Reports from HR gp and other expert Groups

**4.0 FURTHER DEVELOP APPROPRIATE POLICY AND PLANNING MECHANISMS**

<p><b>4.1 DELIVERY OF WIDER 14-19 AGENDA</b></p> <p><b>Refine planning to ensure that the SRG approach to commissioning will help deliver the wider 14-19 agenda, including delivery of the entitlement and raising of the participation age</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review 14-19 Education Plans in each LA against new requirements including 4 progression routes.</li> <li>2. Establish link to IYSS in each LA. Set up expert sub groups to support needs of post 16 vulnerable groups LAC, Care leavers, Teenage parents, YOT, LLDD - Youth Justice and OLASS (Offending Learning and Skills Service) see 4.2</li> <li>3. Use data and other information to produce cycle for planning including early capacity check to influence provision. (see 3.3)</li> <li>4. Ensure travel plans take account of cross border issues. (see 3.3.12)</li> </ol>	<p>by Jul 09</p> <p>by Oct 09</p> <p>by Dec 09</p> <p>by Dec 09</p>	<p>LAs</p> <p>SRG + LLDD gp</p> <p>Data gp</p> <p>Transport gp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14-19 Education Plan agreed with all stakeholders and identified as at least good through external judgements</li> <li>• Clear strategies for IYS with plans to address the needs of post 16 vulnerable gps are in place.</li> </ul>	<p>Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSs, Chief executives and Elected members. Agenda items at 14-19 Partnerships and Children's Trusts. Reports from expert Groups</p>
<p><b>4.2 TRANSITION</b></p> <p><b>Ensure progression towards an effective transition strategy and plan to achieve operational excellence</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Produce joint SRG action plan with timeline for transition and for 3 years.</li> <li>2. Fully involve providers of Integrated Youth Support Services in planning and commissioning process – clarify contribution of staff – use IYS data (September Guarantee, NEETs) to inform planning and commissioning from Sept 09</li> <li>3. Update action plan in the light of national, regional and local developments following consultation on 16-19 planning.</li> </ol>	<p>By Jun 09</p> <p>by Dec 09</p> <p>by May 10</p>	<p><b>SRG</b></p> <p><b>LLDD gp</b></p> <p><b>SRG</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SR Action Plan is reviewed and updated</li> <li>• Next phase of developments is initiated.</li> </ul>	<p>Termly reports and briefings from SRG to DCSs, Chief executives and Elected members. Reports from LLDD gp</p>
<p><b>4.3 IAG</b></p> <p><b>Clarify how the grouping can collectively support (in a way that is future proofed) raising participation and attainment even where there are no shared travel to learn patterns</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review current arrangements for IAG and establish scope for integration into planning process against national standards.</li> <li>2. Ensure AWP prospectus in integrated into planning process alongside learner tracking mechanisms. Explore how AWP can further support and inform learners.</li> <li>3. Review arrangements for Common Application Process to include reports on learners' projected needs as early capacity check of provision.</li> <li>4. Further develop AWP and CAP to take account of cross border issues</li> <li>5. Set up collaboration on specialist provision.</li> </ol>	<p>by Oct 09</p> <p>by Dec 09</p> <p>by Dec 09</p> <p>by Mar 10</p> <p>by Apr 10</p>	<p><b>IAG gp</b></p> <p><b>IAG gp</b></p> <p><b>IAG gp</b></p> <p><b>IAG gp</b></p> <p><b>IAG gp</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young People are well informed about choices available. Mechanisms for AWP and CAP are in place</li> <li>• AWP and CAP are rated highly by external parties and young people.</li> <li>• Individual institutions recognise their role and responsibilities in enabling access to high quality IAG</li> </ul>	<p>Reports from IAG gp</p>

Local Authority

Cluster

Function

**Children's Trust**  
*Responsible for:*

- ECM outcomes
- Overseeing delivery of the Children and Young People Plan
- Approval of the local statement of need
- Overseeing delivery of the 14-19 Plan and associated targets

**14-19 Partnership**  
*Responsible for:*

- Overseeing delivery of the 14-19 strategy and related targets
- Overseeing composition of the local statement of need and the annual 16-19 Commissioning Plan
- Ensuring that 14-19 provision and the support services that underpin this are equal to the needs and aspirations of individual learners, particularly vulnerable and under-achieving young people

**14-19 Unit / Team**  
*Responsible for:*

- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing provision in relation to agreed strategic objectives, targets and learners needs and aspirations
- Composing the local statement of need and the local 16-19 Commissioning plan
- Consulting stakeholders represented in the 14-19 Partnership and the 16-19 Planning Group in the composition of the statement of need and the 16-19 plan
- Negotiating cross-border provision with local providers
- Taking action to address weak provision in accordance with national procedures

**16-19 Planning Group**  
*Responsible for:*

- Reviewing provision annually and making recommendations re gaps or wasteful duplication to the 14-19 Unit
- Ensuring that 16-19 provision is sufficient to deliver the LA's attainment and participation targets for 19 year olds, the September Guarantee and the specific needs of vulnerable and low achieving young people
- Applying the agreed tests to advise the 16-19 commissioning team whether 16-19 provision in an existing institution should be expanded, or whether new provision should be commissioned

**LA Officer Group**

- Data
- Finance
- OD/HR
- Infrastructure
- IAG & IYS
- Inclusion/LLDD/SEN
- Employer Engagement
- Quality (provision)
- Quality (commissioning process)
- Transport

**Regional Planning Forum**  
*Responsible for:*

- Overseeing Regional targets and strategy.
- Approving Sub-regional cluster plans.
- Commissioning low incidence and specialist provision
- Adjudicating disputes that cannot be resolved at Cluster Level
- Ensuring 14-19 plans reflect wider economic need and are consistent with 19+ planning
- Negotiating the annual regional budget allocation and ensuring that Cluster plans reflect this

Strategic Oversight

**South Yorkshire Executive (DCSs)**  
*Responsible for:*

- Agreeing Sub-regional strategic objectives and targets to be achieved by the Cluster.
- Approving and overseeing the Sub-regional statement of need and the delivery of the Cluster's annual 14-19 plan.
- Agreeing arrangements for cross-border learner flows
- Agreeing any Sub-regional arrangements
- Resolving any Cluster disputes that cannot be resolved by the Cluster Planning Group
- Involving SY CEs and SY elected members as appropriate

Strategic Leadership

**South Yorkshire Sub Regional Planning Group**  
*Responsible for:*

- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing provision in relation to Sub-regional objectives, targets and learners' needs and aspirations.
- Creating the Sub-regional statement of need and annual 16-19 Commissioning Plan.
- Addressing current need, the requirements of low incidence and specialist demand and cross-border learner flows to shape the 16-19 Commissioning Plan.
- Seeking opportunities to share planning functions, promote excellent and specialist provision and to market make where need is not being met across the sub-region

HR

Data Group

Finance Group

IAG: On-line Prospectus, Common Application Process & IYS

Employer Engagement Group

Quality (provision) Group

Transport (Low incidence, specialist provision and travel) Group

LLDD/Inclusion/SEN

Quality (commissioning process) Group

Local Statement of Need

14-19 Plans

Annual cycle

Single provider conversation

Quality of provision

Learner and data learning

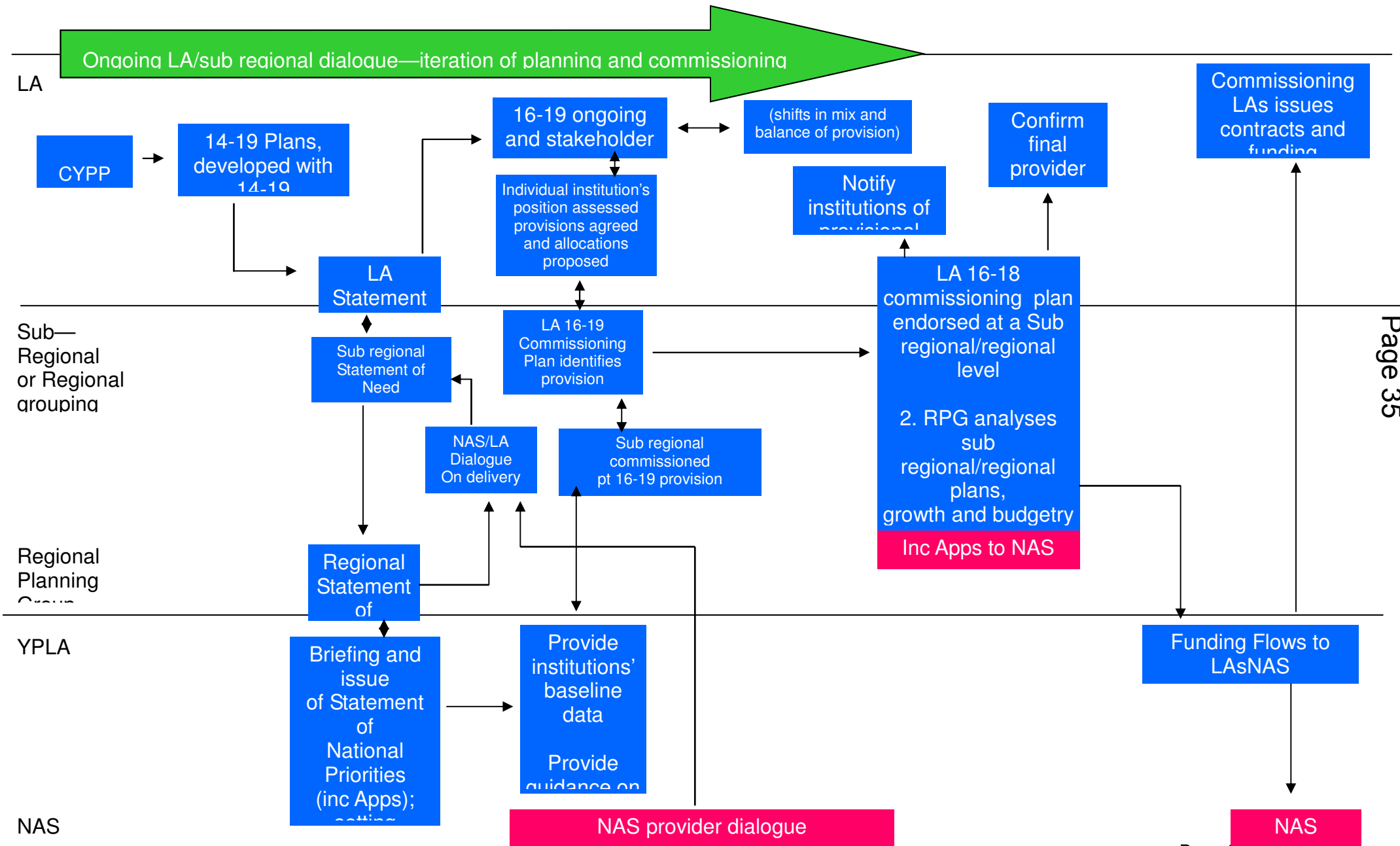
Travel to learn patterns

ECM outcomes and priorities

Learner Voice

## South Yorkshire Regional Group 16-19 commissioning process

April May June July August September October November December January February March April May June July August September



Page 35

## **16-19 Transfer and Sub-Regional Developments**

### **Overview of progress on the South Yorkshire Action Plan April 2009 - July 2010**

#### **1.0 Appropriate governance structures**

##### **1.1 Accountability**

The South Yorkshire (SY) Cluster Phase 2 submission (February 2009) was signed off at political level with elected officers, Leaders groups, Chief executives and Directors of Children's Services in each Local Authority (LA). The submission contained protocols for dispute resolution. Further work will be carried to assess the need for an additional Memorandum of Understanding to reassess protocols once the final National Commissioning Framework (NCF) (currently out for consultation to 5 February 2010) has been published. All LAs are in the process of writing cabinet papers for discussion during January/February 2010 for each Cabinet to confirm delegated powers to spend funding, now the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act has been passed. A DCSF external review was carried out at the Sub Regional Group (SRG) meeting on 19 October 2009. A Government Office Yorkshire and Humberside (GOYH) representative has been in attendance at several Sub Regional Group meetings.

##### **1.2 Lead commissioning arrangements**

Rotherham has been designated as lead for Dearne Valley College. Doncaster has been designated as lead for Young Offending provision.

##### **1.3 Learner voice**

The SRG through its expert IAG group is investigating how to use existing excellent practice in each Local Authority to consult with young people.

##### **1.4 Quality**

Some initial work has begun to scope out matters relating to quality in preparation for a national quality network event in Sheffield December 16. Datadashboard and ALPs information has been shared with providers either individually or shared.

#### **2.0 Collaboration and strategic contribution**

##### **2.1 Wider economic strategy**

The Phase 2 submission and action plan outlines steps towards integration with other structures, recognising the need to embed arrangements in Local Strategic Partnership structures and make strong links to the work of the City Region. Contact has been made with a Yorkshire Forward RDA representative to attend SRG meetings. Information about the Post 16 transfer changes has been discussed at local Work and Skills Boards and regular updates have been given to 14-19 Partnerships in each LA. The SY Employer Engagement expert group is undertaking preparation for joint commissioning arrangements for Education Business Partnership as part of its brief.

##### **2.2 Communication strategy**

###### **2.2.a Within South Yorkshire Sub region**

A conference was held on 6 July 09 at Tankersley Manor which was attended by over 80 Officers from the 4 LAs and SY LSC, alongside GOYH to launch the SY Action plan. Subsequently, expert task and finish groups have been created to drive forward the actions (see section 5.). The SRG meets monthly and takes feedback from the Sub Regional Expert groups. The 4 Local Authorities have funded a

consultant post for 10 months to drive forward and coordinate the implementation of the plan. Links have been made with the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) sub regionally and the SY YPLA Senior Officer designate is now a member of the SRG. The SY National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) representative will have a regular standing item on the SRG agenda from January 2010. Regular updates are given at 14-19 Partnerships to keep strategic partners updated on progress. Briefings have taken place with elected members.

### **2.2.b Managing the transition within each LA and across SY**

In each LA, a 14-19 Change team of key personnel from the LA and the LSC has been established to manage the transition. The groups meet regularly to consider the business cycle and data transferring from the LSC. Members of the team also link up closely with counterparts from across the South Yorkshire sub regional cluster in expert groups : Data, Employer Engagement, Finance, HR, Information Advice and Guidance (IAG), Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD) and Transport.

### **2.2.c Across Yorkshire and Humberside (Y&H) and beyond.**

All LAs are represented on the Regional Planning Forum. SY provider representation has been secured for the Regional Provider group (1<sup>st</sup> meeting Nov 25) as follows : SY FE Colleges : Heather McDonald (Sheffield College) /Sue Ransom (Dearne Valley College)

SY Sixth Form Colleges : Mo Nesbitt (Longley park, Sheffield)

Work Based Learning : Andy Heseltine ( Yorkshire Training Partnership Ltd)

Voluntary Sector : Andrew Coulthard (VC Train)

Schools with sixth forms : Eunice Newton (Aston, Rotherham), Pippa Dodghson (Hall Cross, Doncaster)

The SRG also feeds into regional activity, including presenting the SY Action Plan at a GOYH event on 16 October. Links have been made with the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) regionally through the Regional Forum and Regional Providers' Forum. The SRG consultant has set up links with other SRG leads in Y&H. Contact has been made with Derbyshire LA to discuss cross border issues.

### **2.2.d Meetings with providers**

Workshop sessions have been held in each Local Authority: '*Populating the Statement of Need*' to bring providers up to date on the transfer arrangements and to consult on the Statements of Need. Members of the Sub Regional group represented South Yorkshire LAs at an AOC event in Leeds in September. A further session for all South Yorkshire Providers, organised by the LSC is being held on 9 December at Barnsley Football Club on behalf of the Sub regional cluster.

## **3.0 Availability of appropriate resources and capacity**

### **3.1 Transfer of Staffing**

Each LA held early discussions during May with the LSC about staffing issues, including sharing details of current and future 14-19 structures. LAs have engaged fully with LSC re transferees and all LAs are working on integration of LSC staff into new 14-19 structures. Where transferring staff have been identified, arrangements have been made for welcome, induction and hotdesking. There is some disquiet over the significant number of outstanding vacancies. SY LAs have been involved in interviews for Band 3 and 4 vacancies but no appointments were made in 2 Local Authorities. The role of specialists has not yet been fully defined and does not cover full range of specialisms. Transferring staff have been appointed with some areas of specialist knowledge but LAs have yet to make secure arrangements through HR to agree scope of their role other than in the host LA. Capability issues have not been highlighted. Support is available from LSC to carry out the allocations process to the end of March 2010 but there is some disquiet about what happens after that point. LSC Staff will transfer across formally on 1 April 2010. Within each LA, LA/LSC

Change teams/management groups have been created to keep actions on track (v. 2.2.b). These teams include LSC staff. The Sub regional HR group is supporting HR transfer issues.

### **3.2 Shared services**

Proposals are being discussed in the Employer Engagement expert group for joint commissioning of Education Business Partnership responsibilities, and in the IAG group for the Area Wide Prospectus and Common Application Process. Joint discussions concerning LLDD and cross boundary issues are also being held.

### **3.3 Statement of Need**

A major task during the Autumn has been the creation of Statements of Need (SONs) in each LA. This document sets out priorities to respond to the Regional Statement of Commissioning. There was some concern about the format of the template which did not easily allow the information to flow naturally and show clear priorities. There was also some pressure on timescales to allow full consultation with strategic partners in 14-19 Partnerships. The transfer of work to LAs with LAs leading during 2009-2010 in a shadowing process was predicated on the assumption that the transfer of LSC staff would be completed by 31 July. In the event, that did not happen. This has meant that the bulk of the work on drawing up the LA statement of need has fallen on the LAs. Nevertheless, it has proved useful in identifying areas where the LA is inheriting a funding deficit or difficulties on transfer. These include :

- rebasing the funding for 16-19 year olds in mainstream special schools;
- the lack of control over out of city placements for LLDD;
- the transition from the mix of core and ESF funded for 'Foundation Learning', in the move from e2e to Foundation Learning.

All providers and partners were given the opportunity to contribute to these key documents, which will be the basis of determining allocations in the spring, at workshop sessions in each LA. A South Yorkshire session has been organised for 9 December at Barnsley Football Club to share final versions with South Yorkshire providers.

All SoNs have covered Apprenticeships and the priority to secure more places in the public sector. This has been passed to NAS through the LSC. All LAs have also commented on the need for better data on Apprenticeships and, in particular, that the new GO 14-19 Progress Check indicator and associated target needed further work.

### **3.4 Working with REACT**

The sub regional group has established close links with the REACT team and represented the Y&H region in June October at national REACT sessions. LA staff will also attend regional REACT training sessions in January 2010.

## **4.0 Appropriate policy and planning mechanisms**

The SY Action plan was drawn up by the Sub Regional Group of Officers and associated expert sub groups. The plan determines specific tasks, actions and a timeline to drive forward the implementation of the transfer and is now being implemented with monitoring proposals now agreed. It has been distributed across SY partners and REACT has shared it with other regions as a national exemplar of good practice. A presentation was made at the October GOYH event in Leeds where it was shared with other areas in the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

All SY LAs have revised or refreshed their 14-19 Plans and associated plans e.g. re Curriculum, NEETs, vulnerable groups and Raising of the Participation Age. All LAs have also submitted proposals for Gateway 4 which also contain details of planning towards the entitlement. Barnsley is taking part in national pilot trials for the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) between September 2009 and March 2010.



## 5. South Yorkshire Expert groups

All groups are now reconsidering their remits in the light of the **REACT High Level Guide** and the **National Commissioning Framework**.

**Data** meetings on 14 Sept and 18 Nov and Regional group meetings on 5 Oct and 6 Nov. The Data Group has created a brief of what data is required and its purpose to address issues around the LSC Data packs and Apprenticeship data.

**Employer Engagement** meetings on 23 Oct and 25 Nov. The Group has agreed its remit and now discussing which priorities in the existing contract are likely to roll forward. Parallel Employer Engagement strategies are being developed in each LA, prior to setting up commissioning arrangements.

**Finance (Transactions)** meetings on 13 Nov and 11 Dec (following Regional Q&A session with YPLA Director of Finance Peter Newsome). The Group is compiling an issues log. The LSC has shared details of providers with Finance officers for payment systems to be set up ready for April 2010.

**HR** meetings on 4 Sept, 3 Nov and 10 Jan. The Group has compiled list of risk issues concerning Staffing transfer, including issues of pensions.

**IAG** meetings on 21 Sept and 19 Nov. The Group has agreed its remit and is discussing AWP/CAP commissioning and re-tendering process, National Strategy IAG and the sub-regional responses, Statutory Guidance for impartial IAG, Equality Impact Assessment, RPA and IAG, LLDD and S139A and the new January Guarantee alongside the REACT IAG issues paper.

**LLDD** meetings on 24 Sept and 11 Nov. The Group has secured the services of an external consultant to scope out issues for LAs. Group is also considering REACT LLDD paper and has compiled a list of risk areas for consideration in each LA.

**Transport** Various SY transport groups have met. SY ETOG has compiled a series of questions to discuss at their meeting on 9 Dec.

**Quality frameworks** This group is not yet established. A presentation has been prepared by SY to consider at the national Quality network, run by Sheffield LA on Dec 16, and raise issues for debate about Quality frameworks such as the Framework for Excellence, Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework and local quality toolkits, in the context of the NCF consultation.

N.B. National Commissioning Framework (NCF) consultation by 5 Feb 2010  
<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00933-2009&> and confirm the commissioning process is in line with LA governance and protocols and procedures, ensuring a clear line is drawn between consultation and commissioning. Identify key decisions and timings.

Regular updates from REACT including the monthly High-Level Guide for Local Authorities <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=4920946>

Meryl White [meryl@white-emc.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:meryl@white-emc.fsnet.co.uk)  
On behalf of the South Yorkshire Sub Regional Cluster  
December 2009

**Local Authority**

**Cluster**

**Function**

**CYPS Board**  
*Responsible for:*

- ECM Outcomes
- Overseeing delivery of the Children and Young People Plan
- Approval of the Local Statement of need
- Overseeing delivery of the 14-19 Plan and associated targets

**Regional Planning Group**  
*Responsible for:*

- Overseeing regional targets and strategy
- Approving Sub-regional cluster plans
- Commissioning low incidence and specialist provision
- Adjudicating disputes that cannot be resolved at Cluster Level
- Ensuring 14-19 plans reflect wider economic needs and are consistent with 19+ planning
- Negotiating the annual regional budget allocation and ensuring that Cluster plans reflect this

(Monthly)

Strategic Oversight

**14-19 Board**  
*Responsible for:*

- Overseeing delivery of the 14-19 strategy, and related targets.
- Overseeing composition of the local statement of need and the annual 14-19 Commissioning Plan
- Ensuring that 14-19 provision and the support services that underpin this are equal to the needs and aspirations of individual learners, particularly vulnerable and under-achieving young people.

South Yorkshire DCS/ rotation of Chair  
*Responsible for:*

- Agreeing Sub-regional strategic objectives and targets to be achieved by the Cluster
- Approving and overseeing the Sub-regional statement of need and the delivery of the Cluster's annual 14-19 plan
- Agreeing arrangements for cross-border learner flows
- Agreeing any Sub-regional arrangements
- Resolving any Cluster disputes that cannot be resolved by the Cluster Planning Group

(Half-termly)

Strategic Leadership

**14 – 19 Team**  
*Responsible for:*

- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing provision in relation to agreed strategic objectives, targets and learners needs and aspirations
- Composing the local statement of need and the annual 16-19 plan

South Yorkshire Cluster Planning Group  
*Responsible for:*

- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing provision in relation to Sub-regional objectives, targets and learners' needs and aspirations
- Creating the Sub-regional statement of need and annual 16-19 Plan
- Addressing current need, the requirements of low incidence and specialist demand and cross border Learner flows that help shape the 16-19 Plan
- Seeking opportunities to share planning functions, promote excellent and specialist provision and to market where need is not being met across the Sub-region
- Link to the YPLA
- Links to NAS

(Monthly)

Operational Planning

Organisational Support

**16-19 Planning Group**  
*Responsible for:*

- Reviewing provision annually and make recommendations re gaps or wasteful duplication to the 14-19 Commissioning Team
- Seeking to ensure that 16-19 provision is adequate and sufficient to deliver the city's attainment and participation targets for 19-year olds, the September Guarantees and the specific needs of vulnerable and low achieving young people
- Applying the agreed tests by which it will be determined whether to advise the 14-19 commissioning team that 16-19 provision in an existing institution should be expanded or whether new provisions should be commissioned

**Officer Support Group**

- Finance
- OD/ HR
- Planning
- Data
- Curriculum
- Infrastructure
- Support
- Inclusion

**Sub-regional groups**

- On-line prospectus. CAD and IAG
- Data Hub
- Finance
- Low incidence specialist provision and travel

**Local Statement of Need**

**14-19 Plans**

Annual

Single Provider Conversation

Quality of Provision

Learner and Date Learning

Travel to learn Patterns

ECM outcomes and priorities

Learner Voice

**DRAFT 3****Rotherham's 16-19 Statement of Need for 2010/11****Introduction**

1. This Statement sets out Rotherham's 16-19 education and learning priorities for 2010/11 to help inform how funding will be allocated (referred to as '*commissioning*' in this Statement) to post-16 education and learning providers to:
  - ensure that good quality provision is in place to meet the needs of all 16-19 year olds (up to 25-years old for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD));
  - to achieve Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets; and
  - to prepare the ground for delivering the Statutory Curriculum Entitlement of apprenticeships, diplomas, foundation learning tier (FLT) and general education
  - to raise the participation age to 17-years old by 2013 (rising to 18-year olds by 2015).
  
2. In March 2008, the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) published its White Paper – '*Raising Expectations Enabling the System to Deliver*' setting out the transfer of 16-19 funding and planning to local authorities (LA), from September 2010 to put them in the lead to deliver:
  - full participation for all 17-year olds in education and learning by 2013 (rising to 18-year olds by 2015);
  - the 17 Diploma entitlement in every area for every young person and an apprenticeship for every young person who wants one.

The new '*System*' aims to provide a more integrated approach to provision of services 0-19; to bring schools, the Further Education (FE) and Work-Based Learning (WBL) sectors together in one coherent 14-19 phase; to provide clear local leadership and accountability for the whole 14-19 phase and; to integrate wider learning and support services for young people to ensure the right opportunities are available in each area.

3. As part of the new planning and funding responsibilities for LAs the Learning and Skills Council, working in partnership, is required to submit a Statement of Need to Region by 23 October 2009 to inform post-16 funding allocations that will be made to Rotherham for 2010/11 based upon the DCSF's National Statement of Priorities (i.e. the parameters, targets and resources available from central government).
  
4. This Statement of Need builds upon Rotherham's 14-19 Learning Plan 2008-13, which all partners have agreed and are currently working to achieve. However, it must be recognised that the 14-19 Learning Plan was prepared prior to the Machinery of Government announcements and will, therefore, need refreshing during 2009/10 to account for these changes. Having said this, it is the intention that the 14-19 Learning Plan provides the foundations for this Statement to ensure that partners work collaboratively to develop and implement the Statutory Curriculum Entitlement for young people and thereby increase participation, improve retention and raise attainment.

5. This Statement is intended for use by post-16 education and learning providers (i.e. FE Colleges, schools, third sector organisations and work-based learning providers) and wider partners (Sub-Regional Group (SRG) – comprising the three other local authorities in South Yorkshire, the Regional Planning Group (RPG) [comprising Government Office and Yorkshire Forward, the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), Connexions, the Chamber and Business Education South Yorkshire] to inform planning, funding and delivery of post-16 provision.

### **Principles**

6. Given the pressures on public finances and the current economic downturn, RMBC and its partners face some tough decisions over the coming years to reconfigure current provision to deliver the new Statutory Curriculum Entitlement in preparation for raising the participation age to 17 by 2013 (and 18 by 2015), whilst at the same time closing the gap to achieve national average level 2 and level 3 attainment at 19 and reducing the number of young people not in education or training NEETs. It is important, therefore, that future planning assumptions and subsequent funding allocations are based upon a clear set of principles to ensure fairness, transparency and consistency, as not all decisions will be considered desirable by all partners.

- The aspirations, interests and needs of all learners, particularly the most vulnerable, will be paramount to planning and to ensuring that post-16 funding follows learners, rather than institutions.
- An entitlement to every 16-19 year old in Rotherham to an education or learning place with a clear progression pathway and a commitment to eradicate waiting lists.
- Open and transparent partnership working that involves all parts of the education and learning sector based upon collaboration, integrity, trust, collective responsibility and shared goals.
- Provision that is affordable, represents value for money and avoids wasteful duplication.
- Learners' and employers' views having a real influence on what is commissioned and where.
- Provision aligned to the broader infrastructure plans, capital expenditure, renewal programmes and priorities for social and economic transformation.
- Planning based on agreed, standard, comprehensive data and analysis used consistently by partners to reflect and to inform priorities.
- Commitment to high quality provision with the 'acid-test' question – If this was my child, would it be good enough?

7. In addition, RMBC's post-16 planning and commissioning will be based upon allocating resources efficiently by only funding high quality provision; directing funding to provision that has successfully attracted increased numbers of learners in priority areas over the past two years; supporting and encouraging successful providers to grow; investing to fill provision gaps and ensure breadth and choice; meeting local and national priorities and; enabling providers to focus on the core business of delivering to learners and employers.

## 2009/10 Key Conclusions Impacting on 2010/11 Planning

### Participation

8. During the past 12-months (2008/09), the number of learning places grew substantially, which led to Rotherham registering its lowest ever NEET return of 6.9% in January 09. A consequence of this was that there was a shortfall in LSC mainstream funding in Rotherham in spring 2009. This had detrimental impact on participation and has led to a steady increase in NEET, as the capacity of FLT provision to recruit young people throughout the year reduced. Early indications at the start of 2009/10 are that post-16 providers are full to capacity based on their allocations this year. As a result, there is a need to ensure that Rotherham has the capacity in its post-16 provision to achieve full participation in 2010/11 or, at the very least, to maintain 2009/10 participation levels.

- The Nov 2008 – Jan 2009 NEET measure was 6.9% i.e. 727 young people (national average = 6.7%), which represented a 2.3% reduction compared to the same period in the previous year. Yorkshire & the Humber saw a 0.3% reduction in the rest of the Region
- Since Jan 2009, there has been a month-on-month increase in NEET with Sept 2009 NEETs standing at 8.3% (795 young people)
- There were a further 400 young people whose correct status was unknown
- The Rotherham Local Area Agreement (LAA) target for 2011 is to reduce NEET to 7.1% or better.
- Participation by age in 2008/09 was for 16-year olds 3,612 (85.3% of the cohort), for 17-year olds 3,121 (78.8% of the cohort) and for 18-year olds 2,396 (64.9% of the cohort)
- Current FE and School Sixth Forms (SSF) recruitment stands at 7,842 compared to a funding allocation of 7,442, a net difference of + 420 (SSFs is 2,174 (+ 122) and FE is 5,668 (+ 298))
- For the 2009 September Guarantee, 97.6% of the Y11 cohort and 95.3% of the Y12 cohort have received a confirmed offer, which means that 288 16/17 year olds have still to have a confirmed offer
- 7,347 16-18 year old Rotherham residents participated in LSC funded programmes in 07/08, a 4.4% increase on 06/07 (7,034 learners). SSF share rose by 4.4% from 1,550 (06/07) to 1,618 (07/08). Part year data for 08/09, indicates a further 10% rise with 1,781 Rotherham 16-18 year olds participating in SSFs. FE share rose by 4%, from 3,783 (06/07) to 3,935 (07/08). Part year data for 08/09 indicates the same level of participation at 3,935

9. Although there has been an increase in post-16 learning at both colleges and schools, Rotherham is below the national average on 16-19 year old resident participation in learning, with vulnerable young people disproportionately affected.

This is because:

- a) Young people have poor literacy and numeracy levels at each transition point, resulting in them being unable to access, or sustain a positive progression pathway at L2 or L3.
  - 3,178 16-18 year olds identified as “skills for life” learners studying for literacy and/or numeracy qualification in 07/08
  - 40.9% of 16-year olds attained L2 including English and Maths at 16 in 2008, which meant 2,654 young people did not attain this level. For those in receipt of

FSMs only 14.6% achieved at this level compared to 44.1% for the rest of their peer group.

- 93.3% attained L1 English and Maths was 93.3%, which meant 300 young people did not attain this level
- 46% of the current 16-18 cohort are not qualified to L2, 21% (1,711) are qualified to L1, 6% (492) are qualified to entry level and 19% (1,576) have no qualifications \*4

b) Young people in community NEET 'hotspots' do little post-16 provision located in their communities, which results in increased 'travel-to-learn' distances for young people living in some of Rotherham's most deprived communities. Almost half of the NEET cohort reside in just 6 of the 21 wards in Rotherham (Rotherham East, Boston Castle, Valley, Rotherham West, Maltby and Wingfield)

c) A lack of availability in sufficient numbers of flexible starts and learning opportunities within existing provision to address identified NEETs needs and European Social Fund (ESF) progressions, which means that these young people are adversely affected by any shortfalls in mainstream funding, as providers run out of places and cease recruitment.

Rotherham's ESF NEETs Response Fund has been very successful since its inception in Aug 2008 with 255 young people NEET engaged and 76 (30%) progressing into mainstream EET and only 91 (35%) leavers to NEET and the over 100 still on programme. However, the progression and leaver figures are skewed by a lack of mainstream LSC funded provision between Feb-Jul 09, which led to only 9 young people progressing into EET and 47 young people returning to NEET during this period.

d) Demand for apprenticeship and employment opportunities outstrips supply, especially in construction, hairdressing and retail due to industry requirements. However, there is a need in Rotherham to increase participation and ensure that L2 at 19 and L3 at 19 attainment levels are achieved. Increasing supply in these areas would, not only support, but also equip young people with the necessary key skills to support progression per se. There are 487 (75%) NEET 16-18 year olds who are awaiting an employment/training place either L2 or sub-L2

e) A significant number of 18-year olds are NEETs, because:

- they lack L2 qualifications, despite one or two years of post-16 learning, which hinders their progression;
- of a lack of apprenticeship opportunities for those with L2 qualifications; and
- of limited prioritisation of 18-year olds through Jobcentre Plus for fast-track to New Deal.
  - 18-year old participation in 2008/09 was 2,396 (64.9% of the cohort) compared to (85.3% for 16-year olds and 78.8% for 17-year olds). 229 18-year olds in employment without training, 103 are NEET and 962 are in an unknown situation
  - Estimated that there are currently 1,260 Rotherham 18 year olds (28% of a cohort of 3,841) are below L2

f) LDD, especially those with Emotional Behavioural Difficulties and Moderate Learning Difficulties, are over represented in NEET, because there appears to be a lack of:

- specific, bespoke post-16 provision relevant to needs;
- ‘wrap around’ transitional and retention support; and
- progression pathways.
  - Out of 408 16-18 with identified LDD, 79 are NEET (14.1%), 23 (4.1%) are not available to the workforce and 73 (13.1%) have a not known status
  - It is recognised that a great deal more work is required in the collection of hard evidence to target resources effectively meet the specific provision needs of post-16 young people with LDD.

g) The number of teenage parents in Rotherham and the lack of tailored provision to meet their specific needs, resulting in their over representation on the NEET register.

Out of 201 16-18 teenage parents, 85 are NEET (42.3%), 77 (38.3%) are not available to the workforce and 76(37.8%) have a not known status

10. There is significant competition for learning places in Rotherham. This is due to two key factors – firstly, Dearne Valley College was established as a provider of choice for the three Boroughs making up the Dearne; and secondly, the Borough is a net importer of learners from neighbouring Boroughs due to the good quality provision within travel-to-learn distances. However, it will be important to continually assess any impact of post-16 infrastructural changes elsewhere in South Yorkshire on demand for provision in Rotherham and to respond accordingly.

In 2008/09 Rotherham was a net importer of 1,055 learners:

- Of the 7110 16-18 year olds Rotherham residents participating in learning, 1,131 learn outside of the Borough
  - 3,935 are in FE (3,597 at Rotherham Colleges and 338 at Colleges outside Rotherham)
  - 1,761 are in SSFs (1,703 at Rotherham schools and 58 at schools outside Rotherham)
  - 1,414 in Work Based Learning (WBL) (679 at Rotherham Providers and 735 at Providers outside Rotherham).
- However, Rotherham imports 2,186 learners from outside the Borough into its post-16 providers:
  - Of the 5,115 learners in Rotherham’s FE colleges, 1,517 reside outside the Borough
  - Of the 2,046 learners in Rotherham’s SSFs, 317 reside outside the Borough
  - Of the 1,034 learners in Rotherham’s WBL providers, 352 reside outside the Borough \*1

11. The 16-19 cohort in Rotherham will decline, as will be the case across the rest of South Yorkshire, which could impact on the degree of demand from imported learners from other Boroughs into Rotherham.

Cohort projections for Rotherham indicate that the 16-18 population is declining. According to the **ONS** (in full) projections there will be a 400 decline in cohort

numbers in 2010/11 that will take the cohort to between 9,800 and 9,850. Further falls are projected in future years from 2011-16 of circa 100 pa. Additionally the overall South Yorkshire cohort is forecast to fall by 3,900 during this period. However RMBC school cohort data suggests that those leaving pre-16 education in 2010/11 will be similar to 2009/10 leaver numbers at 3,400. However in future years, it declines

12. There is an identified need to improve the quality of existing Information, Advice and Guidance and to embed national IAG standards across all providers so that young people fully understand their progression pathways through to 19 and are fully aware of the opportunities and risks of their chosen pathway to avoid unsuccessful transition at 17 and 18.

17-year old participation is lower than that for 16-year olds by 8%. The drop out rate between 16-year old learners when they reach 17 is significant, estimated at an average of 500 per year

### Achievement

13. Although there is an improving trend in L2 and L3 achievement, Rotherham still lags behind the national average with the following key factors:

- Although there has been year-on-year increase in 16 year old participation in learning, there is a mismatch with outcomes at L2 and L3 for these learners at 19.
- Significant numbers of 17-year olds who are NEET at sub L2, which limits their EET opportunities.
- Achievement rates of young people on FSMs lags way behind that of their peers.
  - In 07/08 the proportion of Rotherham residents achieving a L2 at 19 was 68% (2,492 out of a cohort of 3,681)
  - Attainment to L2 at 19 for young people on FSMs was 46% compared to 75% for non-FSM. This inequality gap has grown since 06/07. There is an average of 455 Rotherham learners per cohort year in receipt of FSM
  - The L2 at 19 LAA Target for 2010 is 74.1%, which equates to 2,824 out of a cohort of 3,811. By 2008 2,325 had achieved Level 2 by age 17. The National PSA Target for 2011 is 82%, whilst the 2020 Leitch Target is 90%
  - The Number of Rotherham residents currently studying for a L2 (08/09) was 1,920, an increase of 2%
  - In 07/08 the proportion of Rotherham residents achieving a L3 at 19 was 39.1% (1,439 out of a cohort of 3,681)
  - Attainment to L3 at 19 for young people on FSMs was 18% compared to 44% for non-FSM. The inequality gap has remained constant
  - The National PSA Target for 2011 is 54%, whilst the 2020 Leitch Target for 2020 is 65%
  - The number of Rotherham residents studying for a L3 (08/09) was 3,852, an increase of 11%



Only 56.7% of 17 year olds are qualified to L2, which means that 1,594 are without a L2. It is estimated that a similar number are in this situation in 2009 \*

#### Provision

14. Independent inspection has confirmed that Rotherham has a good quality post-16 provider base. As a result, significant numbers of non-Rotherham residents seek post-16 learning opportunities in the Borough. However, there is a significant mismatch between provider quality and L2/L3 outcomes.

- Latest inspection evidence for overall effectiveness of Rotherham's three colleges highlights that one college is good and two are at satisfactory. It also highlights that 78% of SSFs are good or outstanding with the rest satisfactory.
- FE 07/08 Success Rates show :
  - DVC 82.9% up 11.1% from 05/06
  - RCAT 74.1% up 7.3% from 05/06
  - TRC 81.3% down 0.3% from 05/06
  - Ave Rest of SY 73.0% up 1.9% from 05/06
- WBL 07/08 Success Rates = 64.2% compared to and England average of 65.5%
- Ave Points per Entry at 18 = 197.7 (07/08) an increase of 6.6 points since 2006. The England average is 206.2, the same as 2006
- Minimum Levels of Performance/Provider Risk assessment/Training Quality Standard (TBC)

15. Continuing year-on-year improvements in KS4 attainment levels will require providers to constantly monitor and review the proportion and academic/vocational balance of their L1, L2 and L3 provision to ensure it meets the needs of young people.

58.3% of Y11s achieved 5+A\*-C in 2008, an 8.4% improvement from 2005 when 48.9% of the cohort achieved this level. The proportion achieving English and Maths at C or above improved by 4.8% in this period to 40.9%

16. There is insufficient Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) provision in the Borough both in terms of breadth and volume, which current ESF monies has been supporting. However, this is unsustainable in the long-term, especially in relation to FE taster provision.

- In 07/08 there were 2,382 FLT enrolments at Rotherham providers, an increase of 7%. However this represents only 9.5% of all enrolments with providers in that year
- In the same period, 385 young people enrolled onto e2e, an increase of 21.5%

17. The majority of young people who are NEET are seeking employment and apprenticeship opportunities, especially those at 18 who are at L2. However, there has been a significant reduction in the number of apprenticeship and employment vacancies for 16-19 year olds with greatest demand in construction, hairdressing and retail.

See 9d above

18. Although numbers of young people entering **JWT** in Rotherham has declined over the past 12-months, a significant minority of the cohort enter **JWT**, which has implications for Rotherham being able to meet **RPA** to 17 by 2013. There is a need therefore, to build on the success of Training Pays to convert these employment opportunities into work with learning, preferably apprenticeships.

The number of young people in employment without training remains significant but has fallen to 7.4% of 16-18 year old cohort (estimated at 780 residents) due to the lack of employment opportunities. (Source - Connexions)

19. Plans are well progressed for Maltby Academy from 2010/11, which due to significant improvements in KS4 achievements in Maltby School over the past few years, it is anticipated that a target of 200 participants learning at the Academy will be achieved. This will provide a much needed post-16 provider base in a community NEET 'hotspot' where attainment levels have been improving.

The current number of learners at Maltby School is 174 compared to an allocation of 155 places

(NB: Data has been provided from the following sources:

- a) LSC Data Pack May 09,
- b) LSC **ILR** F04 07/08,
- c) DCSF Aug 08
- d) Connexions Database Aug 09,
- e) Connexions Database Sept 09)
- f) LSC Stock-take: Oct 09,
- g) Fisher Family Trust 2008 extrapolated to 2009 by LSC,
- h) **EMBC** ESF ILR data returns to the LSC,
- i) ONS and RMBC data,
- j) LSC LAA and Mid-Year Estimation of Progress for Rotherham Oct 2009).

### **Commissioning Priorities**

20. RMBC's post-16 commissioning priorities are essentially about ensuring stability for learners and providers during 2010/11, as planning and funding responsibilities transfer from the LSC to the local authority from 1 April 2010. As a result, RMBC does not envisage significant change to the current provider base in Rotherham and would want to commit, as a minimum, to current participation levels. In return, RMBC expects full co-operation from all providers to prepare the ground to raise the participation age to 17 by 2013 and to deliver the Statutory Curriculum Entitlement of apprenticeships, diplomas, FLT and general education.

21. This will involve RMBC working with partners to refresh the 14-19 Plan during 2009/10 to reconfigure current provision, identify better collaborative arrangements and to utilise resources efficiently in order to deliver the new Entitlement and raise the participation age and attainment levels at 19.

22. To address the issues set out in the key conclusions above, Rotherham proposes the following five key commissioning priorities for 2010/11:

- i) Increase the breadth and depth of FLT provision through providers with a proven track record of meeting **MLP** and judged by independent inspection as good or outstanding. Priorities for this growth will be to:
- Address literacy and numeracy needs of Rotherham residents
  - Increase participation in community NEET hotspots of Rotherham East, Boston Castle, Valley, Rotherham West, Maltby and Wingfield
  - Improve responsiveness to young people who are NEET by offering flexible start dates.
  - Achieve progression pathways into apprenticeships
  - Increase sub-L2 access for vulnerable young groups (e.g. LDD, teenage parents, young offenders, care leavers, carers and young people of Gypsy, Romany and Slovak origin).
  - Engage young people in JWT into learning.
- ii) Improve the breadth and volume of apprenticeship opportunities to achieve L2 and L3 at 19 targets and to address a Government Office Progress Check target for the LA,, which currently has a risk rating of red, by:
- Supporting and expanding **SME** capacity to recruit young people and to offer them a broader vocational experience by commissioning from the 12 organisations accessing £7m of Government funding to set up new Apprenticeship Training Agencies and Group Training Associations to help small businesses to offer apprenticeship places.
  - Increasing the number of public sector apprenticeship opportunities, particularly at L3, across a range of vocational areas.
  - Improving the conversion rate into apprenticeship opportunities of employers employing young people in JWT.
- iii) Successfully implement the Maltby Academy and its ability to deliver 200 places to:
- address an identified provision need at Sub L2, L2 and L3 in this community NEET hotspot where the travel-to-learn area is greatly diminished by the lack of availability at the nearest SSF (Wickersley) and SFC (Thomas Rotherham College); and
  - Ensure full participation at 16, 17 and 18 across the breadth of provision to achieve L2 at 19 and L3 at 19 outcomes.
- iv) Ensure that any growth in provision is targeted at community NEET hotspots and is supported by clear progression pathways to L3 by 19 in order to address the lack of participation and achievement of young people in some of Rotherham's most deprived communities.
- v) To enhance the availability of high quality local LDD provision for those aged 16-25, with a focus on developing 'collaborative learning communities' with specialist schools taking a lead working with their mainstream providers, as part of the Transforming Rotherham Learning agenda .
23. Finally, RMBC will endeavour to target any additional 16-19 monies coming into the Borough in 2010/11 within scope of this Statement to impact on the priorities set out above.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Friday, 4th June, 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services - Safeguarding and Looked After Children Self-Assessments</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services</b>

**5. Summary**

This report provides an overview of the current position of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Services based on Office for Standards in Education's (Ofsted) Inspection ratings. The report outlines areas of good performance, improved outcomes and plans to address areas of concern.

**6. Recommendations**

**That Scrutiny note the progress in improving outcomes for Children and Young People and the plans for further improvement.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

- 7.1 The Office of Standards in Education carry out full inspections of all Local Authority arrangements for Safeguarding and Looked After Children every 3 years.
- 7.2 The inspection is 'Announced' in that Local Authorities are given up to 10 working days' notice prior to the inspection. The inspection is very rigorous and involves all partner agencies that deliver services to children, young people and families. The inspectors are based within the Local Authority for 10 working days. A number of people, including children and young people, parents and partner agencies, are interviewed. The inspectors, in addition, scrutinise systems and processes including reading significant documents sent prior to the inspection and case files during the period of the inspection.
- 7.3 The findings from the inspection are graded; Outstanding, Good, Adequate and Inadequate.

Outstanding are assessed on the basis of very clear, exceptional and evidenced sustained outcomes.

Good is based on evidence of improved outcomes.

Adequate is based on statutory requirements are met and services are on track to improve.

Inadequate are those areas where there are little or no evidence of continuous improvement and outcomes.

- 7.4 As part of preparation for the inspection a self-assessment exercise was conducted in order to identify those areas of good progress and those areas where further work is required.

The findings from the self-assessment are:-

**Safeguarding** - Overall grade is 'Adequate'

From the 11 areas of assessment:-

1 is graded 'Good'

6 are graded 'Adequate'

4 are graded 'Inadequate'

The 4 'Inadequate' areas are:-

- (a) Partnership - Due to the number of serious case reviews judged as 'Inadequate'.
- (b) Service Responsiveness - Due to the need to demonstrate that the Safe and Well Protocol and the CAF are effective and understood by agencies.
- (c) Assessment and Direct Work with Children - Due to the variable quality of assessments and social work vacancies.
- (d) Case Planning and Recording - Due to the need to demonstrate impact of quality assurance work.

The grades were based on the need to evidence that plans and processes are embedded and demonstrate clear improvements and outcomes.

There is an action plan in place to address those areas highlighted as 'Inadequate'.

7.5 The overall grade for Looked After Children in 'Adequate'. There are no areas judged as 'Inadequate' within the assessment.

7.6 Both the self-assessments will be updated each month and the grades revised as appropriate based on progress of those areas of further improvement.

## **8. Finance**

The finance to deliver the requirements in the self-assessment is within the Children and Young People's budget. There is also funding from the Department of Education (£150,000) and the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) (£125,000) to assist with staffing and quality assurance work.

## **9. Risk and Uncertainties**

Failure to address those areas highlighted as 'Inadequate' will impact on the rating of the inspection and could lead to an overall rating of 'Inadequate'. This could have negative impact of the Council's CAA rating and could lead to external intervention. It should be noted there is uncertainty over the future of CAA under the new Coalition Government.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The Ofsted Unannounced Inspection in August 2009 highlighted several issues with regards to performance management, breadth of workloads, capacity and quality assurance.

The areas identified as 'Inadequate' in the Safeguarding Self-Assessment relates to performance management, recording and service provision. The Improvement Panel established following the Notice to Improve, is monitoring progress on service performance. A progress report is provided to the Panel every 2 weeks.

## **11. Background and Consultation**

- Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children - Schedule of Inspection; Grade Descriptors
- CYPS Improvement Plan
- The Shape We Are In - Safeguarding Self-Assessment (Appendix A)
- The Shape We Are In - Looked After Children Services Self-Assessment (Appendix B)

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**safe**  
**healthy**  
**achieve and enjoy**  
**positive contribution**  
**economic wellbeing**

# The SHAPE We Are In

## Safeguarding Self Assessment

May 2010



## **Overall Assessment of Safeguarding**

**Safeguarding children and young people is our number one priority. Our overall rating for this self assessment is adequate, although we do meet some good criteria. We are ambitious and are determined to work to achieve an overall rating of good/outstanding.**

### **1. Ambition and Prioritisation**

**Our overall rating is adequate, although we do meet some good criteria.**

**Safeguarding is our top priority and this is reflected in the refreshed Children and Young People Plan for 2010 – 2013 which has ‘safe’ as one of its ‘four big things’. We have made a very conscious decision to focus on Safeguarding Children and Young People. Safeguarding children is essential to provide a firm foundation on which to build and deliver against the Every Child Matters outcomes.**

Our Safeguarding Children Board is independently chaired and representation across the Children and Young People’s Partnership is strong. The Council and key partner agencies provide strong and visible leadership in promoting the welfare of children across all services including at the Children’s Trust Board and the Safeguarding Children Board. The senior leadership team has been effective in ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and led by the Chief Executive-chaired Improvement Panel, have made significant initial improvements to help achieve the targets in the Notice to Improve. The Strategic Director makes regular visits to social work teams and Residential Units. The Assistant Chief Executive has also recently visited units and the Lead Member and his Advisers also visit Residential Units twice a year to meet the children and young people and staff.

The Children’s Trust Board and Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board (RLSCB) have recently reviewed and revised their Constitutions. All key partners are represented on these boards as well as other key decision making forums and are fully signed up to the information sharing protocols.

The Council and NHS Rotherham jointly commissioned the Children First Review which resulted in changes e.g. to the structure of the senior management team in CYPS creating the post of Director of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting. The Director of Children and Young People’s Health is employed by NHS Rotherham but is based with the Council, reports to the Strategic Director and is a member of the Directorate Leadership Team.

The CYPS Lead Member has regular contact with staff at different levels and recently took the Council Leader to visit a Locality Team. He has also set up a LAC Trust and undertaken fundraising activities. There are twice monthly meetings with Lead Members and his advisors and informal meetings with directors. The CYPS Scrutiny Panel and LAC Scrutiny Panel have active member involvement and have recently reviewed Elected Members’ roles as



Corporate Parents against the National Children's Bureau audit tool. Elected Members involved with these groups make regular visits to children's homes.

The RLSCB has a Policy and Procedure Group and has recently commissioned a policy officer to review and update procedures, meaning the Board has recently agreed several new procedures including serious case reviews and guidance for Madrassas, Mosques and Supplementary schools. Tri-X has now been commissioned to maintain and update procedures and work is ongoing with neighbouring authorities to work on sub-regional policy consistency. In addition, the Board has agreed a revised constitution which also confirms board member responsibilities. It receives monitoring data and had its business plan approved by the Children and Young People's Board.

Learning from Serious Case Reviews is a priority and the RLSCB has strengthened expectations of the SCR panel, meaning more challenge to agencies, including requesting the re-issuing of staff instructions in light of recommendations.

The Safe and Well Protocol has been revised and a new Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy has been launched. There has also been multi-agency CAF training and more CAF co-ordinators appointed. There are clear links with the Transforming Rotherham Learning Strategy, which supports raising achievement through such multi-agency work.

The views of children, young people and families are fed in to service delivery and planning in a number of ways. The Tell Us and Lifestyle surveys both collect a variety of safeguarding and health related data, Care Leavers have an exit interview and information from complaints and responses is collated and disseminated. The refresh of the CYPP included focus groups with Youth Cabinet, Young Carers, LAC and their carers and Young Offenders.

Staff views are also used to engage them in changes and new services, for example through the fieldwork review and PDR process. Division of roles in fieldwork teams is being tested in localities after staff discussion and input.

The concept of risk assessments is well embedded, for example, when considering placements and changes to case conferencing reports is improving assessment quality.

We operate ambitious but realistic target setting across all our performance indicators and in addition we have targets for data quality and input, which are detailed in our data quality strategy. The CYPP links are also made with the Local Area Agreement targets.

The priorities in our CYPP run through other plans and strategies providing a golden thread and multi agency planning takes place in our Learning Communities to ensure safeguarding is everybody's business. We are aware from value for money exercises and CIPFA benchmarking that Rotherham CYPS is under-resourced and the risks this presents. The Council has shown its commitment to safeguarding and has identified an additional £3.1m for

CYPS in the 2010/11 budget. This has been almost wholly allocated to safeguarding and corporate parenting with the remainder being allocated to prevention and early intervention.

We have met all the readiness assessments for ContactPoint and are fully prepared to meet our deployment slot in the DCSF programme later in 2010.

### **Examples of Improved Outcomes**

- The RLSCB, SY Police and other agencies presented evidence to the Licensing Review Board to revoke a nightclub licence following issues relating to young people.
- Integrated Safeguarding Unit includes staff from health and the Police
- Designated LAC Nurse and Health Practitioner for Care Leavers based in LAC Team.
- Co-location of multi-agency teams in localities and 0-19 learning communities
- Joint working partnerships, eg, social worker school placements
- Leadership Development programme through the National College to underpin multi-agency work in Learning Communities
- Health-led campaign on safe sleeping after issues raised by Child Death Overview Panel.
- Locality managers have regular meetings with headteachers and are involved in Learning Community Change Teams – has helped reduce number of pupil exclusions
- Joint information sharing protocols are well embedded and a secure data sharing portal has been developed
- Review of Council PDR process and additional manager training
- Social care staff training and development programme developed in partnership with Sheffield University
- Police represented at case conferences and strategy meetings
- LSCB has proactively identified emerging issues and taken proactive action eg e-safety
- Online secure portal available for managers to access 'real time' performance management information.
- Joint Friday and Saturday night operations between Youth Offending Services, Young People's Service and Safer Neighbourhood Team. 22 operations completed after extra funding identified.
- Children's complaints leaflet refreshed in consultation with LAC and rated as "excellent" by Customer Service Excellence Assessors.
- Clear budget monitoring with input from budget holding managers and Financial Services support
- Contact Point Team is fully accredited, training is underway and roll out programme is in place for new DCSF go live date later in 2010.
- Joint commissioning such as CAMHS and Aiming High using the joint commissioning framework.
- Roll out of ICS core assessment involved presentations to more than 100 staff and feedback to inform review of forms after six month trial

- New health pathway for LAC created by health and social care joint agency group
- Safeguarding Unit representation on multi-agency panels including MARAC and Child Protection Health Forum.
- Joint working with police and cases to bring people to court over child sex offences (has resulted so far in two convictions).

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Lessons learned from serious case reviews are shared through multi-agency briefings
- To expand quality assurance activity in the performance management framework CYPs directors are carrying out case file audits
- The Performance Management Framework has been strengthened and is now more robust and we will continue to drive improvements through quality assurance
- Improve monthly analysis of case audit files to determine practice improvements.
- Strengthen relationship between schools and social care as part of fieldwork review and through work in Learning Communities
- We have carried out a review of Corporate Parenting arrangements and will establish a Corporate Parenting Board.
- We have a planned corporate parenting briefing for newly elected members in May
- Extend the coaching and mentoring of staff by court practice consultants and DCSF funded improvement managers to ensure improvements are embedded into custom and practice.

## **2. Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development**

**We have assessed ourselves as adequate, recognising that we need to embed our performance management framework.**

**Our revised performance framework is in place and we now have more robust systems in place for consistent monitoring of the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding. Our workforce strategy is reflective of the importance of safeguarding and specific work is targeted to the social care workforce from a recruitment and retention perspective and also from a learning and development perspective.**

Following recommendations from the unannounced inspection, there are now daily and weekly performance reports available via a secure portal along with a Safeguarding and Child Protection Performance Book. The number of managers using this is monitored and is increasing. A weekly report of key facts is e-mailed to Directors, Chief Executive and Lead Member and a monthly updated performance book gives comparison information with other

authorities and progress against key targets. We have met several of our safeguarding targets and are on course to meet Improvement Notice targets.

Several arrangements are in place to ensure early identification of weakness and actions to correct them. These include performance clinics; audit of IRO reports and action taken; Directorate Leadership Team and Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting manager meetings have a standing item on performance; performance reports to the Council's Strategic Leadership Team meetings; and NHS Rotherham performance management of designated staff and named professionals. Our performance targets are in line with National on all NIs with the exception of four measures (NIs 73, 94, 115 and 118) all of which have shown improvement.

External challenge and the positive response to it is reflected in inspection challenges, APA 2008, the DCSF Notice to Improve, CYPS Improvement Panel, the independent chair of the RLSCB along with the Board itself and the Children First Review. Each of these has instigated, or led to, changes to service provision in Rotherham. The Children's Trust Board enables challenge across the partnership and the RLSCB's revised constitution includes a performance and quality sub committee.

Our well developed complaints procedure ensures complaints are dealt with efficiently and lessons learnt are acted on. It encourages close working with Adult Services, NHS services and schools. LAC helped to improve the quality of leaflets for young people. There is a separate procedure for case conferences, compliant with Working Together best practice.

Young people are closely involved in service assessment and consultation to ensure their needs are met. This includes, Youth Cabinet, LAC Council, participation through care leavers team, Children's Rights Group, Orchard Stars, Parent-Carer surveys, involvement in RLSCB e-safety group and consultation on CYPP.

Staff are supported and developed through the One Children's Workforce Strategy along with a Social Work Recruitment and Retention Strategy to tackle staffing issues and ensure the appropriate professional skills and qualifications. Team and Locality Managers work closely to respond to demand and take immediate action to tackle pressures when they arise. There are regular meetings with trade unions to discuss issues and a prompt response to any grievances. Staff confidence in leaders and managers is good but morale is sometimes affected by day-to-day difficulties with vacancy levels and staff turnover. Sickness levels compare favourably with other areas in the Council. The embedding of the performance management culture is welcomed by most staff and managers, although there are times when they are held to account for poor quality work or performance.

The Council's safe recruitment policies are monitored by the Safeguarding Unit with a robust recruitment system in place. The Children's Rights Group is involved in some recruitment processes and all schools have at least one person trained on Safer Recruitment.

## Examples of Improved Outcomes

- Budget monitoring in place and financial reports are reported internally, to RLSCB and Elected Members.
- Weekly Resource Panel takes safeguarding into account
- Following the unannounced inspection, the Council allocated additional admin resources to deal with 16,000 pieces of data to clear a backlog in six weeks. This helped inform the Business Process Mapping.
- Assessments classed as “terminated” were checked by Locality Managers to ensure children were safe. The classification has now been removed.
- Re-issuing of guidance to social care team managers around timely visits to children subject to a plan.
- Priority given to all children with a child protection plan to allocate them to a qualified social worker. Compliance rate is high.
- Assessments undertaken in time since the Notice to Improve:  
Initials - 66% in Dec 09 to 76% in Feb 10 (performance above stat neighbours)  
Core – 80% overall but 100% for those completed in Feb 10
- 95% initial case conferences in 2008-09 were held within 15 working days of the S47 investigation and 100% review conferences took place within the timescale.
- All new staff attend the CYPS Welcome Days and all new managers attend a new manager induction session.
- Three-day supervision training is available to Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting and health staff.
- Good joint working with Kirklees and the local community to develop a safeguarding protocol and procedure for Madrassas
- NHS Rotherham now uses Performance Plus alongside Council
- Local authority provides performance information to schools to monitor progress against targets and identify need
- Laptops and virtual private network tokens issued to fieldwork and LAC teams
- The recent well attended Child Poverty Conference
- Youth Service quality assurance and re-awarding of national Quality Mark
- The Safer Rotherham Partnership’s Prevent Agenda
- Anti-bullying strategy launched after feedback from Tell Us Survey and scrutiny panel review
- High rates of criminal charges relating to schools led to joint work between police and schools and a reduction in charges.
- Fieldwork review included input from staff and LAC Council to inform changes such as need for improved access to services.
- Agreement from Council to employ ten more agency social workers
- Agreement to increase staffing levels in residential units following meeting with Ofsted
- South Yorkshire Police’s introduction of a dedicated Sexual Exploitation Officer. The Council’s commitment to provide three

workers for future operations following lessons learnt from Operation Central and the appointment of a new Safeguarding coordinator/conference chair.

- Creative partnership with Sheffield University for staff development
- Social care recruitment and retention is supported through our lead on a regional approach to the CWDC “Return to Social Work” scheme, participation in the “Step up to Social Work” scheme, a review of the “Grow Your Own” scheme
- Participation in CWDC Social Work Peer-to-Peer Manager Support Programme and CWDC Support to Front Line Managers scheme. NQSW expected to undertake the NQSW Programme
- Practice Education is at the heart of effective Social Work workforce planning and recruitment, and Rotherham CYPS has policy documents to support an effective experience for all students on placement in Rotherham. External provision, eg, in Voluntary Sector is monitored.
- Application of CWDC standards for foster carers has resulted in some deregistration
- Five out of six Locality Managers are undertaking a MA in Integrated Working and Leadership
- Fieldwork team managers are experienced in safeguarding and tailor support according to individual staff need.
- Following staff focus groups 14 staff were supported to undertake Post Qualifying (PQ) opportunities in 2009/10.

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Increase rate of conversion of referrals to initial assessments. Currently at 60% but expected to increase through roll out of CAF and revised Safe and Well thresholds.
- Our ability to respond to new demands has been impaired by the high vacancy levels and staff turnover, which is being addressed through our recruitment campaign and dedicated microsite – The current vacancy rate (as at April 30, 2010) stands at 25.3% for social workers and 20% for team managers.
- Our increased focus on management overview, audit and quality assurance is supported through additional resources for QA activity linked to coaching and mentoring.

## **3. User Engagement**

**We have assessed ourselves as adequate in this area as we need to show clear evidence of links between user feedback and service delivery changes**

**The service consistently works to involve children and young people, their parents and carers in planning service delivery and provision.**

Children and young people and their parents were involved in the consultation for the new CYPP including: article in Rotherham News; every LAC written to;

survey to all foster carers and adoptive parents; community engagement events; Mosque Liaison Group meeting; sessions with young offenders, young carers, Orchard Flyers and Youth Cabinet.

The Lifestyle Survey and Tell Us surveys both give young people a chance to tell us about their lives but also their views on issues such as personal safety. In addition there has been work with the Rights 2 Rights Service, Parent Partnerships and an AHDC consultation.

The Orchard Parent and Carer Survey 2009 showed positive results in the numbers of parents who were aware of their child's care plan and risk assessment along with those who were aware they could access their child's records. These results have been passed on to teams to give positive feedback as well as to discuss and address areas of improvements.

### **Examples of Improved Outcomes**

- Concerns raised in the Lifestyle Survey around town centre safety on public transport were fed into SYPTTE's strategic planning.
- School specific information from the Lifestyle Survey is fed back to schools to use in planning. Survey information has also been used to inform the new CYPP
- Parents surveys re: case conferences highlighted parents appreciate venues close to where they live so a decision was taken to expand the search for alternative venues for conferences
- Feedback from the AHDC consultation led to improvements to the Orchard Centre, Eastwood Adventure Playground and the commissioning of new and extended short break providers.
- Good involvement of children in case conferences and all are involved in their LAC reviews.
- All children and young people aged 11 or over now receive individual invitations to child protection conferences along with a young person's guide which gives details of the variety of ways that they can be involved if they do not wish to attend in person.
- As at February 2010, 97.71% of LAC contribute to their statutory reviews
- Comments from young people resulted in a new consultation document for LAC reviews and on-going work on foster carer review documents
- Exit interviews for care leavers provide valuable feedback

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- We are improving advice and information for children following results of Tell Us 4 survey which indicated the number of children saying information was "helpful" was lower than national average
- We are developing an independent visitor/advocacy scheme to enhance and extend children's attendance at case conferences
- Invitations to case conferences are being amended to remind professionals that all reports must be available at least 48 hours prior to conference

- We are implementing our Aiming High for Disabled Children Communications Strategy

#### **4. Partnerships**

**Whilst we can show that our Safeguarding Children Board is more effective, our performance with regards the number of Serious Case Reviews rated by Ofsted and the number of action plans puts us in an inadequate position.**

The RLSCB has completed the review of its constitution and process in order to ensure highly effective safeguarding arrangements. This includes clarity around Board member responsibilities, and terms of reference for sub groups.

The Board has two out of four Serious Case Reviews rated adequate or better from April 2007 to July 2009. Two further reviews have been completed, one rated adequate and one inadequate. The inadequate rating has been challenged by the Board and is being re-evaluated by Ofsted. The SCR sub-committee oversees delivery of IMR and SCR Action Plans with monthly review meetings.

There is close monitoring of external contracts and those will include safeguarding issues. This includes contracts targeting young carers, Connexions, CAMHS and teenage pregnancy. Quarterly performance management meetings are held with all providers of substantial commissioned services to pick up issues and more serious ones are picked up with providers immediately. All commissioned services are set challenging but realistic targets and there are currently no services causing concern.

#### **Examples of Improved Outcomes**

- Case conference chairs contact agencies involved with children/families which don't attend conferences to ask for a written report within seven working days and can re-convene a meeting
- Rotherham Teenage Pregnancy Strategy had led to a downturn in rates and the strategy includes additional safeguarding work such as care pathways and sex and relationships education awareness
- Integration of multi-agency locality teams has improved information sharing and joint working on safeguarding issues
- Single Point of Access to CAMHS has significantly reduced waiting times for assessments and reduced inappropriate referrals
- The joint Safeguarding Unit is commissioned by RLSCB to deliver multi-agency safeguarding training. From September 08 to September 09, 298 staff from 28 statutory, voluntary and community organisations attended courses.
- Positive relationships between provider Safe@Last and the performance team have led to reduced spend year-on-year but with outcomes maintained or improved.



- More coordinated work through integrated CAMHS and related agencies development at Kimberworth

#### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Implementing guidance from Working Together 2010 and this is built into learning and development activity
- We continue to develop multi-agency training and to maximise funding from partner agencies
- We are revising our evaluation of training courses to ensure that learning and development is effective
- We are exploring block purchase arrangements for LAC placements and examining the possibility of sub-regional commissioning
- Whilst we can show that RLSCB is becoming more effective, we recognise that our performance in respect of SCRs as rated by Ofsted and sign off of action plans needs to further improve.

## **5. Equality and Diversity**

### **Our overall rating is good**

#### **The Council has achieved Level 5 of the Local Government Equality Standard and we have good practice especially in respect of Roma Slovak community**

We are very practiced in meeting the needs of children and young people from minority ethnic groups and this is evidenced in some of the innovative work undertaken within services and by partner agencies.

There has been some particular strong work around the Roma-Slovak community including the employment of a Roma-Slovak worker in Clifton, following a successful negotiated internship, and negotiated links with social services in Czech Republic and Slovakia. A specialist health worker and Slovakian speaking teachers and learning mentors are also employed.

The annual Audit of Need provides a robust profile of children and young people supplemented with voice and influence work and consultation across CYPS to inform service planning and delivery. Fieldwork and placement reviews include needs analysis. In response, eight areas of additional focus were identified for the CYPF including:

- understanding and responding to the needs of migrant communities,
- post 16 options for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities,
- and Looked After Children

NHS Rotherham's five year strategy to improve the borough's health includes a concentrated plan to reduce health inequalities and reshape services based on current and future needs.

The results of both the Lifestyle and TellUs surveys are analysed by age, gender, ethnicity and disability – although due to low numbers on some groups it is not possible to draw full conclusions from the evidence.

### **Examples of Improved Outcomes**

- The draft CYPF identifies “four big things” to target – one of which is ‘Tackling Inequalities’
- Establishment of a health team for EU migrants, asylum seekers and refugees based with a multi-agency locality team where most families reside
- NHS Rotherham task and finish group to explore how health services can engage with EU migrant families
- Senior officers visited Slovakia in 2009 to meet with local health and social care providers
- Good practice in integration of Roma-Slovak children in schools, although attendant pressure on overall attainment standards
- Roma-Slovak community children receive support through paid for school lunches
- Database to track Roma-Slovak children missing from school
- The local communities are responding positively to our appointment of a Roma-Slovak worker and this has led to improvements in safeguarding and links with our workforce strategy
- Use of specific logging codes enables health visitors and school nursing to give scope of need and ensure good allocation of resources.
- Foster carer recruitment has an element targeting the Asian community
- The Aiming High project provides excellent work with disabled children and their carers/families
- Additional funding from Aiming High secured for joint project with Rotherham Ethnic Minorities Alliance to promote increased access to short breaks by BME families with disabled children.
- Rotherham met all Aiming High indicators and was therefore awarded additional funding

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Currently developing a full service offer for full breaks with Aiming High
- Our data quality in terms of recording ethnicity needs to improve and we are tackling this through our quality assurance and audit

## **6. Value for Money**

### **Our overall rating is adequate**

The Council and CYPF undertook an extensive Value for Money exercise in 2009/10 to inform the 2010/11 budget using Audit Commission toolkits to carry out the. This identified that social care received significantly less funding in comparison to statistical neighbours. As a result an additional £3.1 million

has been invested for 2010/11. Data also shows that in-house fostering and residential costs are lower than average with the overall unit cost of LAC provision rated as high performance and value for money. Increases in the LAC placement budgets are:

- In-house residential homes £313K
- External residential provision £279k
- Independent fostering provision £1.2m.

There is monthly budget monitoring and weekly placement updates from commissioning.

There has been a rigorous review of external placements at director level to tackle the increasing numbers of external placements and the lack of a clear commissioning plan. Now, all new and extended placements are authorised by the Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Director. This review also led to assessment data better informing effective commissioning. Whilst the needs of the child are paramount and we will not compromise these, we aim to achieve a balance of cost and quality.

Work is ongoing with the DCSF Commissioning Support Programme to identify opportunities to increase value for money through sub regional and regional commissioning and we actively participate in these regional forums, supported by a robust audit of need.

Our 2010/11 budget has been set on the basis of identified savings which can be reinvested into services as well as the Council's additional investment.

RLSCB has a multi-agency budget commitment which is part of its business plan and finance updates are given to the RLSCB and Children's Trust Board.

### **Examples of Improved Outcomes**

- The RLSCB Board agreed to fund the Tri-X policy management package – a significant cost saving over completing the work in-house
- RLSCB fund additional admin support for sub group meetings and co-ordinate cost effective multi-agency training to avoid inconsistencies
- There is local commissioning of Serious Case Review overview authors, IMR and safeguarding training, care placements, continuing care, young carers, RLSCB members and legal support.
- Lead officer for safeguarding training is jointly funded by RMBC and NHS Rotherham. Comprehensive programme of training implemented and developing to meet assessed needs. E-learning is also used to provide basic awareness training.
- Continuing Care protocol between RMBC and NHS Rotherham ensures LAC provision is jointly commissioned and resourced.
- £313k investment to increase staffing in residential units is reducing use of agency staff
- Use of Section 17 to avoid need for care

- Use of Special Guardianship Orders to enable permanency without need to be LAC
- Additional admin support through internal secondment, additional hours for part-time staff and agency support has freed up social work time.
- Joining The CIPFA Benchmarking Club assists us with comparative analysis and trend data.

**What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- We recognise that crisis intervention costs are higher than prevention and early intervention and we have re-launched our strategy and CAF
- We are examining placements to ensure they continue to be appropriate and examine where they can be safely ended

## **7. Service responsiveness, including complaints**

**Our overall rating is inadequate**

**Partners have recognised issues around thresholds and the Safe and Well document has been reviewed and re-launched. CAF training has also been re-launched and CAF co-ordinators are being appointed based on learning community areas to support staff across agencies. A portal for CAF is also being developed to improve management information and communication.**

There is a good working relationship between communications leads in all partner agencies. There has been particularly close working between RMBC, NHS Rotherham and SY Police Communications officers on Serious Case Reviews and major cases (eg Operation Central).

There is a well established complaints and representations process within Children and Young People's Services. All children and young people who make complaints are contacted by the Complaints and Customer Service Team. There is a complaints leaflet for them, developed in consultation with LAC, rated 'excellent' as part of the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

Complaints performance information is reported annually to Cabinet Member, Safeguarding Board and Children's Board and twice yearly to Directorate Leadership Team. Quarterly performance reports are produced for locality managers and team managers. The Complaints Manager has regular contact with the local authority designated officer to discuss relevant complaints.

We have recently changed the way we collect and record lessons learned from Stage 1 complaints which will lead to improved monitoring and implementation and enable more effective shared learning.

Where a service user directly raises an issue of concern about an employee or where managers are aware of an issue these are taken very seriously and action is taken. The LADO role is firmly established.

Under Appendix 5 of Working Together (2006) Rotherham's Safeguarding Unit leads the arrangement and management of strategy meetings in response to allegations against professionals, foster carers and volunteers (93 between March 08 and December 09) or where a complex situation arises (eg multiple abuse). The total requests from March 08 to December 09 was 275, resulting in the convening of 650 multi-agency meetings.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- 162 CAFs submitted since training launched in February. Being run on a rolling programme as required
- More than 300 practitioners and 50 managers attending CAF training.
- Recognising the key role of schools, a programme has been developed with schools in one area with joint placements for social workers.
- Introduction of co-location in localities and the multi-agency Safeguarding Unit
- Series of Safeguarding Board briefings now issued as appropriate (minimum quarterly).
- Co-location with RMBC of NHS roles of Director and Senior Manager of Children and Young People's Health Services along with Quality and Performance Team.
- Post of Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Conference Chair created to continue to ensure compliance with timescales.
- Advocacy is available for children (eg LAC and children making complaints) and LAC Activities Worker provides informal advocacy
- A total of 13 Looked After Children made complaints in 2009/10, one of these complaints went to Stage 2.
- The number of compliments has increased over the last year from eight in 2008/09 to 38 in 09/10 – further work to capture these is underway
- After Stage 2 complaints an action plan is produced and monitored by the Complaints and Customer Service Team. This is sent to Adjudication Officer, Service Manager (and if appropriate Director).
- Information about complaints process is included in the LAC Promise Packs and is covered at LAC reviews. Care Leavers can also use the Bridges Project complaints procedures.
- Information on complaints has been included in Rights 2 Rights newsletters and the Exchange newsletter for disabled children and their families.
- A complaint by adopters resulted in a number of staff being interviewed, a complaint by a relative led to a disciplinary investigation, involvement of police and investigation by internal audit which resulted in a change of practice
- Well established short breaks panel to manage access to respite care at Orchard Centre. This is being developed, along with the Rotherham Parent Carer Forum, to take account of increased range of options, clarify eligibility and facilitate access

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Improve performance on N168 (conversion from referral to initial assessment) through CAF training and usage
- Overall figures for complaints at Stage 2 increased to 11 compared with three in 2008/09. The number of Stage 1 complaints completed within timescales in the first three quarters of the year was over 80% but in quarter 4 performance dropped to 58% due to impact of number of staff vacancies and changes to staff. We are addressing this through progress chasing and recruitment and retention strategies
- Improvements to the complaints procedure process for younger disabled children, in consultation with service users.
- Need to improve timescales on Stage 1 complaints
- Developing Web/Intranet based accessible complaints information
- Development of “You said, we did” style outcome reporting
- Develop promotion of the compliments procedure and sharing of positive comments.
- Formalising of agency communications officer liaison through Safeguarding Communications sub-group.

## **8. Assessment and direct work with children and families**

### **Our overall rating is inadequate**

The Access Team manages initial contacts and passes on details, where appropriate, to locality teams or children with disabilities service. Managers seek to allocate promptly or risk assess and safeguarding is a high priority. The information portal now has daily updated reports on unallocated cases. The Out-of-hours service responds promptly to contacts and referrals and carries out Section 47s and initial assessments, along with ‘safe and well’ checks, as appropriate.

Our new core assessment form encourages robust risk assessment and continuous assessment. It captures information for initial child protection conferences, first LAC review and Child in Need planning meeting. Feedback from practitioner workshops and Conference Chairs is positive. Consultation with service users will take place shortly.

Whilst we can show improvement of timeliness of assessments the quality is variable. We have therefore implemented a QA process with all assessments checked by the two practice consultants and the findings will inform practice development. SWIFT has been amended to include a box to indicate management decisions.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- Two audits of contacts classed as NFA identified issues eg NFA being used after work had been carried out and high volume of domestic violence referrals from police.
- “Terminated” assessments were checked by Locality Managers to ensure children were safe. The classification has now been removed.
- Re-issuing of guidance to social care team managers around timely visits to children subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Two practice consultants work with NQSWs on assessment skills. NQSWs will also have a one month placement with the Family Assessment Team after a recent successful secondment of this type
- Assessments undertaken in time since the Notice to Improve: Initials - 66% in Dec 09 to 76% in Feb 10 (performance above stat neighbours)  
Core – 80% overall but 100% for those completed in Feb 10
- Family Assessment Team assessments highly rated
- All care leavers have a 16+ safeguarding assessment which is reviewed at least six-monthly
- Leaving Care Service has adopted DCSF ICS assessment and pathway plan

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Fieldwork review of services concluded that a larger “front door” service is needed with clear managerial supervision and accountability. The review also recommended that teams do not cover the full range of social work responsibility but are more targeted.
- Continue to reduce high vacancy levels and embed the development programme with newly qualified workers
- The social worker placement with Access Team has not yet generated the expected improvements in reducing contacts passed to localities
- A revised Review Case Conference Report is currently being developed by the ICS Working Group.

## **9. Case planning, reviews and recording**

### **Our overall rating is inadequate**

Our performance on the timeliness of LAC review is good, however, record keeping is inconsistent and does not always reflect continued improvement. Management overview has been increased and is now robust with increased quality assurance and audit activity at all levels. Directors are carrying out audits of case files in addition to routine monitoring activity.

We have identified the need for increased capacity and the bid for four team managers using DCSF funding reflects this. Two posts are supernumerary so they can focus on quality assurance and audit; policy and practice

development, review of planning processes and review of groups of children e.g. children under placement with parents.

Quality assurance and audit has shown that while work has been done this has not always been inputted in a timely manner. We have addressed this by putting in additional administrative resources. Good multi-agency partnerships exist and there is good joint working across services 'out of hours'.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- An audit of IRO reviews led to actions to address issues which in turn triggered an audit of all cases leading to significant actions to ensure all LAC have care plans.
- Strategy meetings held in schools to facilitate attendance
- Good attendance and information sharing from police at case conferences and strategy meetings. Police also have dedicated child protection and sexual exploitation officers.
- Training and development programme for team managers in development with University of Sheffield (course outline agreed)
- Manager training sessions held with independent consultant. Positive feedback from those taking part.
- Monthly Residential Unit Manager audits are carried out as per National Minimum Standards
- All children with a child protection plan should have an allocated social worker and this is monitored by Locality Managers and included in weekly report to Directors/Lead Member.
- Establishing good practice bank to share learning
- Following unannounced inspection, decision taken to increase social care admin support temporarily. Posts made permanent as part of 2010/11 budget
- Backlog of 16,000 documents checked and cleared in six weeks through extra admin support
- SY Police has electronic Crime Management System and case management system (CATS) used for every incident/concern relating to children.
- Amendments made to SWIFT so management input can be captured
- RLSCB revised constitution to drive forward more robust approach
- Safeguarding Unit developed Safeguarding Matrix, risk assessment tool to measure sexual exploitation risk.
- Ofsted safeguarding reports of schools under new inspection arrangements show four outstanding, nine good, seven satisfactory and one inadequate.

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Coaching, mentoring and development of staff to improve quality of plans through DCSF bid and remit of interim appointments.
- Work has started on devising a single child plan.
- We are encouraging more GPs to attend case conferences



- Reduce delays gaining assessment contributions in some cases
- Continue to ensure improvements to quality of case recording
- We plan to put two experienced social workers into the new look Access Team.

## **10. Children and young people are safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe**

### **Our overall rating for this is adequate**

Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board has a revised constitution agreed to strengthen the governance and working arrangements, providing a firm baseline for fulfilling its functions more effectively. This new Constitution has provided a robust governance framework which includes a Performance and Quality Assurance Sub Group. The Safeguarding Board is chaired independently to ensure robust challenge. Terms of Reference and a Work Plan are monitored by the Board and a Board Member chairs the Sub Group to embed information sharing. Agencies have staff in attendance with sufficient seniority and knowledge to make a difference. This has resulted in agencies viewing safeguarding children in a wider arena than before.

The safeguarding and child protection of children and young people is identified and this is becoming more robust. Quality assurance is identifying areas where practice falls short of required standards and we are embedding consistent practice. Partnership working is strong, and we have particular examples related to sexual exploitation where this has been demonstrated.

Currently all residential units are rated as 'satisfactory' with plans in place to drive improvement. The fostering service is rated as adequate while adoption and private fostering are rated as 'good'.

We recognise our need to further improve and sustain the required standards across all our settings.

### **Examples of good outcomes**

- Section 11 audit and action plans in place for all RLSCB members. To be monitored by the Performance and Quality Assurance LSCB Sub Group alongside own agency governance arrangements.
- Joint work between RLSCB and SY Police presenting evidence to Licensing Board regarding a town centre nightclub causing concern by selling alcohol to under 18s. The club's licence was revoked.
- Good partnership working with police on Operation Central
- 27 Schools have been inspected under the new Ofsted Inspection arrangements; 6 are awaiting their report. Of the 21; 4 were outstanding, 9 good, 7 satisfactory and one inadequate
- 'Survivor' of sexual exploitation has written a book about her experiences

- Now presenting workshops for professionals has assisted the Children's Safeguarding Unit to develop a Safeguarding Matrix.
- Risk Assessment Tool used to measure actual risk of sexual exploitation of other young people.

#### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Our arrangements for contact and referrals are good. We are further strengthening this through our fieldwork review and will be putting two experienced social workers in the Access Team.
- Variable quality of case recording e.g. not always showing that children have been seen alone. This was highlighted by audit of children subject to case conferences and a view that children under 4 should not be seen alone. That age has now been removed.
- Quality of social care safeguarding services is variable and we have put in place a number of actions to address this, but it is early days so we cannot yet demonstrate consistency or sustained improvement.

### **11. Children and young people feel safe: the effectiveness of services taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe**

**Our overall rating for this is adequate**

**The Children's Trust Board and RLSCB provide effective leadership and demonstrate they are driving the development of services and service improvement. They are highly focussed on the safeguarding of children and are signed up to the CYPP commitments. They receive regular performance reports and updates to ensure services are effective.**

There are a number of examples where the work of these has proved to be effective and timely interventions have led to improved outcomes for numerous children and families. Safeguarding is judged to be effective in our regulated settings and services.

We recognise how important it is to have true participation with children young people, parents and carers. We also recognise that to achieve this requires a range of opportunities and methods. Rotherham rises to this challenge by giving a high priority to voice and influence in all we do. This commitment means children and young people are better informed about our services, leading to more meaningful consultation and partnership working. They are empowered and develop skills which will be of benefit as they progress through life. As a service, we are better informed and actively encourage challenge to appropriately address issues and further develop services.

Children and young people and their parents were involved in the consultation for the new CYPP including: article in Rotherham News; every LAC written to; survey to all foster carers and adoptive parents; community engagement events; Mosque Liaison Group meeting; sessions with young offenders, young carers, Orchard Flyers and Youth Cabinet.

In addition there has been work between children and young people and the Rights 2 Rights Service and Parent Partnerships along with an AHDC consultation.

We asked the respondents to identify an rank priorities for the CYPP. Overwhelmingly the top priority was safeguarding, which is in line with our multi-agency and Council thinking.

All Looked After Children, care leavers and their carers have the opportunity and are encouraged, to participate in the review and development of their own care and services.

The review forms distributed to Looked After Children are one example of extensive consultation with young people in care leading to positive changes.

The Orchard Stars Disability Group of young people meet every two weeks and address issues around care provision, the physical environment and wider local, regional and national issues.

Children's Homes Meetings are actively encouraged, supported and recorded, with the Looked After Nurse and R2R regularly invited to take part.

Customer satisfaction surveys in 2009, showed satisfaction rates were high and results were high compared to the previous survey in 2006. For example, in 2009, 91% of Foster carers were either satisfied extremely satisfied with the service they received, compared to 82% in 2006.

We hold exit interviews with children leaving care and all complaints regarding care of Looked After Children raised with the Council were resolved at stage one in 2009 apart from one, which registered at Stage 2. Children and young people were involved in the design for the complaints leaflet, which also helped to raise their awareness about how to make a complaint.

The Lifestyle Survey and Tell Us surveys both give young people a chance to tell us about their lives but also their views on issues such as personal safety, bullying, smoking, drinking, drugs and their perception of safety in areas such as school and where they live. Findings are shared with schools and partner organisations including NHS Rotherham. The 2009 Secondary Lifestyle Survey highlighted the following:

- 46% of all pupils said they had been bullied at some point in their lives.
- As in previous surveys more Year 7 pupils felt that they had received help and support when they had reported bullying than Year 10 pupils
- There has been an increase in the percentage of pupils reporting incidents of bullying from 48% in 2008 to 53% in 2009. There has also been an increase in the percentage of pupils who said they got help and support with bullying from 37% in 2008 to 49% in 2009.
- As in previous years, the pupils surveyed consider 'at home', 'out with friends' and 'on the way to or from school' to be where they feel the

safest. 23% of all pupils say they never feel safe in Rotherham Town Centre, 23% say they never feel safe 'out by myself' and 19% never feel safe 'on local buses or trains'.

## Tell Us4

- 34% of Rotherham's children and young people felt very safe in the area where they live (37% national average). 17% felt a bit unsafe (14% nationally) and 3% felt very unsafe (4% nationally). In school, 50% of Rotherham's pupils felt very safe 58% (nationally). 7% felt a bit unsafe (6% nationally) and 3% felt very unsafe (2% nationally).
- When on public transport, 15% of Rotherham's children and young people felt very safe (same as national average). 26% felt a bit unsafe (23% nationally) and 3% felt very unsafe, (same as national average).
- 67% felt information and advice given in school on safety was helpful, slightly less than the national average, while 14% felt that it was not helpful (same as the national average).
- 50% stated they had never been bullied at school (46% nationally).
- When asked if they were bullied when they were not in school, including on their journey to school, 23% of Rotherham's pupils answered yes (21% nationally). 60% of Rotherham's pupils felt their school dealt with bullying 'very well' or 'quite well' (58% nationally).

## Examples of improved outcomes

- Rotherham Youth Service first in country to be re-validated with National Youth Agency Quality Mark
- Concerns raised in the Lifestyle Survey around town centre safety on public transport were fed into SYPTTE's strategic planning.
- School specific information from the Lifestyle Survey is fed back to schools to use in planning. Survey information has also been used to inform the new CYPP
- Anti-bullying steering group meets three times a year. Awareness education for Years 5 and 6 provided by Anti-Bullying Officer.
- Anti-bullying peer mentor training available for secondary schools and staff training for agencies available from Rotherham Mind
- 51 schools working towards, or accredited with, Rotherham anti-bullying standard.
- Anti-bullying project 'Safe Havens' in seven secondary schools. Student-led initiative originated at Wath.
- Learning from Operation Central will inform any future joint investigations with police
- Seven residential experiences of diverse groups of young people to break down barriers and relationship build.
- LAC involvement in consultations on e-safety

- Police PYPPOs based in localities
- On-going Voice and Influence work involving BME Youth Forum in accessing decision-making processes
- Children's Complaints Leaflet developed in close consultation with LAC, rated "excellent" by the Customer Service Excellence Assessors.
- Further development of work with LAC Council and supporting them via Voice and Influence Unit.
- Chief Executive and Lead Member meetings with the LAC Council, along with DLT joint work with the LAC Council.
- Children and Young Person involvement in commissioning of services.

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- We need to improve the participation in reviews and making sure that the views of the child are being taken into account. We are addressing this through audit and quality assurance of case files.
- Anti-bullying toolkit developed and will be sent out to schools shortly

**safe**  
**healthy**  
**achieve and enjoy**  
**positive contribution**  
**economic wellbeing**

# The SHAPE We Are In

## Looked After Children Services Self Assessment

May 2010



## **Overall Assessment of Looked After Children Services**

**There is no greater priority in Rotherham than safeguarding children and young people. Whilst this applies to all children and young people it is of particular importance for those who are vulnerable such as our Looked After Children. It is our judgement that the overall quality of the services available and provided for Looked After Children in Rotherham is Adequate with firm plans and capacity in place to improve, something that Rotherham is committed to achieve.**

### **1. Ambition and Prioritisation**

**Our overall rating for this is Good.**

**Safeguarding and Looked After Children's (LAC) Services are a top priority for all key partner agencies in Rotherham. This is reflected in our Children and Young People's Plan which has "safe" as one of its "four big things" and Looked After Children as a priority area. Our ambition is to deliver high quality services for all children including those most vulnerable. This commitment and determination involves senior officers in those agencies, Elected members, the integrated CYPS Leadership Team and the effective multi-agency Children and Young People's Board.**

The Lead Member, his advisors and members of the LAC Scrutiny Panel are highly visible proactive champions and challengers of our services.

All the groups mentioned above are also involved in monitoring improvements recommended from inspections such as the Director-led response to the inadequate fostering inspection in 2008 where the action plan was also monitored by Lead Member and Chief Officers Group. In addition the CYPS Improvement Panel is also providing fresh challenge and focus to LAC services. This led to an improved rating of satisfactory in 2009.

The strength of our corporate parenting agenda has been identified by Ofsted in previous inspections. However, we are not complacent and have recently reviewed our Corporate Parenting Strategy, which along with the Looked After Children Strategy, ensures LAC are specifically highlighted as a priority group in all our plans and receive high quality services, meeting statutory requirements and guidance. Our comprehensive review of CYPS led to the establishment of the post of Director for Safeguarding and Corporate parenting reflecting the strength of our commitment.

This high level commitment is also reflected in less formal arenas where senior members and officers meet LAC Council, the Strategic Director visits all residential units regularly and the Council's Assistant Chief Executive has also visited a unit. The Lead Member and advisors visit all units twice a year.

Following a full review of resources, an additional Council investment of £3.1 million has been secured for CYPS in 2010/11 with the focus on reducing dependency on agency staff and increasing staff numbers in residential units. There is also a medium term strategy for children's homes' refurbishment.

The Children and Young People's Plan has four key priorities to transform our services over the next three years. These are: Keeping Children and Young People Safe; Prevention and Early Intervention; Transforming Rotherham Learning and Tackling Inequalities. These priorities form a golden thread which can be traced through a number of other plans and strategies, including our Corporate Plan and partnership plans such as the schools partnership, Learning Without Limits. The Children and Young People's Board members have also signed the Rotherham Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy pledge, a key measure of this will be reducing the numbers of children who need to become looked after.

This is not a one-way process as the Directorate Leadership Team ensures staff contribute to service reviews at all stages (for example, the Fieldwork Review and Care Planning Review).

The commitment is reflected in many practical examples of partnership working. For example, the Council and NHS Rotherham commission CAMHS support with specific provision included in the Looked After and Adopted Children (LAAC) Team. Rotherham took a lead role on the GOYH regional commissioning approach and although this has not come to fruition we are now proactively taking elements forward on a sub regional basis. The Care Placement Review Group has developed a new commissioning strategy. The benefits can be seen in a number of newly commissioned services such as the robust contracted service with Action for Children for Care Leavers.

None of the work stands still and we continue to bring in new initiatives to keep driving improvements.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- Elected members led the Corporate Parenting Review and have recommended the development of a Corporate Parenting Board reporting to the Children and Young People's Board
- Multi-agency review of Health pathways for LAC creating new improved pathway for initial, review and out-of-area assessments
- All residential homes are now rated satisfactory with many good outcome areas. The aim is to move all to good by April 2011.
- Since Nov 2009, 24 regulation and 38 viability assessments have been referred to the Fostering Team and eight progressed to Foster Panel.
- Some young people are now chairing their own reviews, increasing their participation and making them feel more in control
- Fostering Team and foster carers led on a new recruitment campaign - 23 new foster carers recruited in 2009/10 – up from 11 in 08/09.
- Improved inspection result in 2009 moving Fostering Service to satisfactory



- Increases in number of social workers and residential unit staff
- Third Sector partner awarded Leaving Care and Post 16 Accommodation Services after comprehensive commissioning process.
- LAC offered a wide variety of positive activities. Examples include dry slope skiing lessons and a water skiing session.
- Work with health colleagues has provided extra training for staff at Bramley House respite so they can work with children with nursing needs. Expands remit of centre and offers much needed support to children and families
- All children's homes now have direct access to SWIFT, the social care management system.
- Any issues of concern with the safeguarding of LAC are reported to the Safeguarding Board.
- Training programme and Performance Development Reviews for all Adoption Panel members
- Respect for Life programme for Year 9 LAC delivered by Fire and Rescue Service
- Plans and actions agreed with LAC services, police and home staff to tackle concerns around sexual exploitation at a specific home.
- LAC Nurse Health Practitioner, Leaving Care and young homeless health practitioner all co-located with Looked After and Adoption Team
- Get Real Team training with school governors and dedicated teachers
- Partner agency workshops for Adopter's Support Group
- Integrated Assessment and Training programme for adopters
- LAC Services team meetings include targets and performance discussions and development sessions, frequently staff led
- Last two Health Visitor and School Nursing development days have featured LAC as a main item
- Cabinet member led performance clinic led to reconfigured Adoption Team and additional Adoption Panel meetings. Increase in target by 9 of adoptive families approved per year
- Our workforce strategy and recruitment campaign to increase the number of foster carers
- Targets for attainment and inclusion provide a golden thread between high level strategies and plans through to those in our Learning Communities and our work on the ground.

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Keep all LAC Care Plans up-to-date and accurate through quality assurance activity, which we are applying systematically
- Introduced a more robust quality assurance framework which is reported monthly to Directorate Leadership Team and Lead Member.
- Reviewing compliance around the National Minimum Standards and Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations. The Directorate Leadership Team and CYP Board are regularly updated on progress.
- Need to continue to increase the number of foster carers and our recruitment campaign is assisting in driving up this success

- Need to improve the recruitment and retention of team managers and social workers and this is a key focus of our campaign, which has attractive benefits and a dedicated microsite.

## **2. Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development**

**Our overall rating for this area is adequate as we have excellent systems and processes, but we recognise that we have more work to do to fully embed this into custom and practice.**

**Our performance management information is of a high quality and is used to inform practice. Our evaluation of this information and quality assurance is becoming more effective in using it to drive up the quality and performance.** Case management reports are generated and shared via a secure online portal on a daily basis to enable managers and practitioners to make informed decisions and improve quality. Usage of the portal is monitored to ensure that managers use the reports to manage and drive improvements. Monthly, quarterly and annual performance reports are presented to various strategic partnership bodies as well as the Directorate Leadership Team (which has performance as a standing agenda item), Cabinet Member and Advisers for CYPS and the CYPS Scrutiny Panel. Where performance slips various remedial challenge forums are in place such as member led Performance Clinics and Director Leadership Team Performance Challenge meetings.

The Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Performance Book is an online performance monitoring tool published monthly via local intranet and secure data portal which is being further developed from user feedback. The book serves many purposes and covers all key agendas.

The new Director of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting has also introduced a more comprehensive audit framework which has been developed electronically to ease input and analysis. From March 2010 all initial and core assessments are being audited with a bank of good practice being developed and used for coaching and mentoring.

We routinely undertake robust reviews of performance which incorporates statistical neighbour benchmarking. Performance within staying safe is broadly in line with statistical neighbours but we recognise the need to improve and sustain good outcomes.

Budget reports are generated and made available to all budget holders. These are reviewed on a monthly basis at Senior Manager meetings and monthly financial monitoring reports are presented at CYPS Cabinet Member and Advisers meetings. Where pressures are identified these are scrutinised closely and action is taken where necessary. In 2009/10 and going forward into 2010/11, we have shifted resources into our areas of increased priority to assist in alleviating the pressures.

The views of Looked After Children, care leavers and carers matter to us. All children are supported to have a say in their review and influence their Care Plan. Foster Carers are reviewed annually and Looked After Children and the Carers Birth Children are supported to contribute. All Care Leavers have the opportunity to participate in and are supported, if needed, in contributing to their Pathway Plan. The review forms distributed to Looked After Children to capture their thoughts prior to their statutory review were not fit for purpose so an extensive consultation process was undertaken to develop new forms. Views will continue to be collated for 6 months following their launch and the forms reviewed if required.

The LAC Council has participated in the recruitment of key posts including the recent appointment of the Director of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Service and Senior Director of Schools and Lifelong Learning Services.

A review of the current children's workforce was undertaken following our 2009 Children First Review. This resulted in the Senior Leadership Team being restructured to enable enhanced focus on Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting. The second wave of the review is now underway looking at frontline services for safeguarding and corporate parenting.

Recruitment of high quality team managers and social workers has been at the heart of the Social Work Recruitment and Retention Strategy. Ensuring managers currently employed are of a high quality is addressed by the Social Work Learning and Development Training Plan. Our Workforce Development Strategy helps to ensure staff have the necessary skills and capability to deliver high quality services for Looked After Children.

Practice Education is at the heart of effective Social Work workforce planning and recruitment, and Rotherham CYPS has policy documents to support an effective Practice Education experience for all students on placement, by paying Practice Teachers and Supervisors, reimbursing student travel and supporting students with ICT and other equipment.

Clear strategies are in place to address identified issues in respect of staffing capacity at Social Worker and Team Manager level. This involves increasing the level of administration to alleviate the burden on social workers and shifting staff between teams which are experiencing greatest pressures.

Staff confidence in leaders and managers is good but morale is sometimes affected by the day to day difficulties of vacancy levels and staff turnover. Sickness levels compare favourably with other areas in the Council. The embedding of the performance management culture is welcomed by most staff and managers, but there are still some areas where this is not the case.

## Examples of improved outcomes

- Use of the Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Performance Book's Case Management Report increased (120 views in Nov 09 - 222 in March 10).
- Reduced social worker and team manager vacancies
- Increased contact workers to reduce social worker time spent on visits
- Rolled out laptops and ICT to all social care staff to enable secure remote access
- Introduced revised quality assurance and data quality strategy
- Undertaken a comprehensive review of all children's homes to ensure inspection recommendations have been implemented.
- Additional investment of £3.1m has been allocated to CYPS to supplement investment in safeguarding
- Additional administrative staff have cleared the document backlog
- External funding DCSF (£150k) and the RIEP (£125k) to support improvement
- Improved serious case review recommendation audits – tracking in conjunction with GOYH/DCSF/Ofsted.
- Weekly audits of Contact and Referral 'No Further Actions' – stepped up activity after December audit found unsatisfactory pace of progress.
- The Looked After Children's Council is well established and informs the service by having meetings with Elected Members, Directors and other professionals. The Council has been involved in national events such as meetings with Children's Rights Director for England. The Council communicates with all LAC through a quarterly magazine.
- The voice and influence service provides support to LAC through the Rights 2 Rights Team. A specialist Positive Contribution Worker within the Care Leavers Team works with care leavers to ensure their voice informs local and national service delivery
- Foster Carers have contributed to a Customer Satisfaction survey. This evidenced high levels of satisfaction with the support they receive and enabled the prioritisation of specific areas for future development.
- Adopters are asked to feedback on each individual Integrated Assessment and Preparation group meeting and all adopters living in Rotherham are routinely invited to the Monthly Adopters Support Group which are well attended
- Ongoing decrease in vacancy factor of fieldwork staff. Low turnover in staff in LAAC services, with experienced staff committed to Rotherham.
- Collection of data weekly on the profile of the workforce, including information in relation to time since qualifying and worker level (i.e. salary, relative to competence)
- Participation in the CWDC Social Work Peer-to-Peer Manager Support Programme and the CWDC Support to Front Line Managers scheme. Newly Qualified Social Workers are expected to undertake the NQSW Programme. To help support existing Team Managers, four additional temporary posts have been commissioned via Cambridge Education.
- Recruitment and retention strategy has - as part of the action plan – a recruitment and media campaign to promote Rotherham.

- Managers are fully aware of CRB requirements and regular monitoring of CRB compliance is in place.
- An audit is well underway of all social care personnel paper files to ensure full compliance to requirements. Where issues are arising remedial action is being taken immediately.
- The new ISA registration process will commence across RMBC in July 2010, prior to the statutory requirement of November 2010.
- A significant proportion of our Headteachers have undertaken the National Safer Recruitment online training (TDA) and supporting that from September 2009 we have had a further 32 representatives from Schools attend the training. In addition our Safeguarding Unit delivers a face-to-face alternative model which has been approved to meet statutory requirements. Developments are underway to roll out this good practice across other appropriate areas of CYPS with a particular emphasis on Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Services.
- All local authority staff, who visit schools, are required to have a CRB
- Detailed guidance has been supplied to all schools regarding completion and maintenance of their Single Central Record (SCR).

#### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Continuing to focus on recruitment and retention of a high quality workforce including managers, social workers and foster carers
- Continue to fully embed the performance management culture through training and development, coaching and mentoring
- Drive performance improvements by close scrutiny and challenge.

### **3. User Engagement**

**Our overall rating for this area is good.**

**We recognise how important it is to have true participation with children young people, parents and carers. We also recognise that to achieve this requires a range of opportunities, methods and mediums. Rotherham rises to this challenge by giving a high priority to voice and influence in all we do.**

This means that children and young people are better informed about our services, which leads to more meaningful consultation and partnership working. They are empowered and develop skills which will be of benefit as they progress through life. As a service, we are better informed and actively encourage challenge to appropriately address issues and develop services.

All Looked After Children, care leavers and their carers have the opportunity to and are encouraged to participate in the review and development of their own care and services. Furthermore, the role of the LAC Council is recognised as playing a vital role in providing the Council with a critical friend.

The review forms distributed to Looked After Children are one example of extensive consultation with young people in care leading to positive changes.

Children have a variety of methods to choose from to participate in their reviews, including video, text, attendance and through advocacy.

The Right 2 Rights (R2R) Service plays a vital role in providing information to LAC and informing them of services available whilst attempting to demystify the jargon and processes to help them engage, understand and challenge when dissatisfied. Information and materials supplied includes:

- A promise pack to all newly looked after children outlining what they can expect from services.
- Quarterly newsletter
- Questionnaires on issues developed with young people
- The use of a lending library
- A dedicated R2R website giving information and an online opportunity to fill in review consultation forms, make requests to see their files, contact social workers or other professionals.

The Orchard Stars Disability Group of young people meet every two weeks and address issues around care provision, the physical environment and wider local, regional and national issues. They have recently developed a newsletter and are exploring creative ways to reach those with more challenging disabilities and difficulties.

Children's Homes meetings are actively encouraged, supported and recorded. Looked After Nurse and R2R are regularly invited to support the meetings.

Customer satisfaction surveys in 2009, showed satisfaction rates were high and results were above those of the previous survey in 2006. For example, in 2009, 91% of foster carers were either 'satisfied' or 'extremely satisfied' with the service they received, compared to 82% in 2006.

We hold exit interviews with children leaving care and all complaints regarding care of Looked After Children raised with the Council were resolved at stage one in 2009 apart from one, which registered at Stage 2. Children and young people were involved in the design for the complaints leaflet, which also helped to raise their awareness about how to make a complaint.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- LAC children are now informed prior to their review of who will be attending and can discuss this with their IRO, Social Worker or R2R.
- LAC Council meeting with Children's Rights Director
- A Children's Complaints Leaflet was developed in 2009 in close consultation with LAC. This leaflet was described as "excellent" by the Customer Service Excellence Assessors.
- Further development of work with LAC Council and supporting them via Voice and Influence Unit.
- Further developments on the Disability Review Consultation Forms.
- Chief Executive and Lead Member meetings with the LAC Council, along with DLT joint work with the LAC Council

- Positive Contribution Worker for Leaving Care appointed
- Children and young person involvement in commissioning of services.

#### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- We need to improve the participation in reviews and make sure that the views of the child are being taken into account. We are addressing this through audit and quality assurance of case files.

## **4. Partnerships**

### **Our overall rating for this area is good**

**Rotherham has a strong commitment and history of working in effective partnerships which has been recognised at regional and national level in many arenas. This strength is reflected in CYPS with high level commitment through the Children and Young People's Board and the strong links with the Local Strategic Partnership's key themes.**

This is demonstrated further through the co-location of agencies in neighbourhood teams. Multi-agency panels bring professionals together to ensure Rotherham provides a team around the child.

The council and partners within the children trust arrangements have taken action to tackle issues raised in recent reviews around leadership of services within CYPS. The work, co-ordinated by the Improvement Panel, has seen a number of key changes resulting already in a more competent and effective leadership of service for Looked After Children and care leavers.

The Directorate Leadership Team was restructured in 2009 to provide clear lines of responsibility across Every Child Matters outcomes specifically around safeguarding and corporate parenting. In addition, we have created the post of Director for Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting, who has led on a reconfiguration of service including the creation of a specific team providing social work support for Looked After Children from July 2010.

These teams are a key component of the Learning Communities we have formed in the development of our Building Schools for the Future programme. This has further strengthened the multi-agency relationships that impact daily on the lives of children and young people.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- The monitoring of youth crime cases identified an issue around LAC being prosecuted, particularly for offences within their homes. The Youth Offending Services met with Youth Court Magistrates and Crown Prosecution Service. This now means any decision to prosecute a LAC would be given additional consideration, including the circumstances and welfare issues of the case. The number of offences committed in

their homes by LAC and prosecuted in the Courts has fallen from 13.6% (2008/9) to 6.8% (2009/10).

- Foster carers were at the forefront of a new recruitment campaign for more carers both helping design the campaign and taking part in media work. They also help provide training for new carers
- The LAC Education Team provide regular and ongoing training for Designated School Governors and Teachers and, where identified by a school, to broader sections of staff. The team is managed by the “virtual headteacher for LAC”. This has contributed to the improvements in comprehensive, agreed and timely Personal Education Plans and the drive to improve LAC exam achievements.

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Need to embed the CAF which has recently been re-launched as part of the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy. This will also help support the “team around the child” philosophy for front line services and ensure the number of children coming into care is reduced
- Need to continue to develop the Learning Community workforce learning from the pilot in Swinton. This will further strengthen the relationships between the multi-agency professionals and lead to better outcomes for children and young people.
- We are strengthening the role of the LAC Virtual Head Teacher in order to champion the needs of LAC and to increase the partnership working between LAC teachers and other agencies

## **5. Equality and Diversity**

**Our overall rating for this area is good.**

**Rotherham works effectively across a range of services to help ensure that all Looked After Children have equal rights and the same opportunities to reach their full potential under the Every Child Matters outcomes. The 2010-2013 Children and Young People’s Plan includes a commitment to “tackling inequalities” as one of its “four big things”.**

Our last fostering inspection rated Equality and Diversity as good and found that carers and young people value the work of the Get Real Team in raising educational attainment. The educational attainment of LAC shows GCSE up from 2007 by 12% at A-G and by 4% at 5A-C. Carers have received training on how to support young people in education. Ofsted has also previously commented positively on the work of the Children’s Disability Team and our work with the Slovak Community.

Although the borough has seen only small numbers of Looked After Children from minority groups it continues to retain a specialist social worker for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and a role within the leaving care team for separated children and asylum seekers. The Adoption Service appointed a Family Finding Social Worker to find placements for children with special or



complex needs, dual heritage, minority ethnic children, older children and sibling groups.

A Fostering Equality and Diversity Action Plan was published in 2009 using the National Minimum standards as a guide. All fostering policies had an Equality Impact Assessment and an action plan was produced. Management information to assist monitoring of equality and diversity and inform service development is on the Swift and EMS(ONE) systems. LAC Scrutiny Panel receives regular updates, including quarterly monitoring reports.

Prospective new foster carers and adopters as well as those involved with supported lodgings receive training around diversity. In addition, all foster homes receive relevant written information and guidance and all staff undertake religious and cultural awareness training.

The recent recruitment campaign for new carers has included information and images around welcoming applications from a diverse range of groups in the community and the images used have reinforced this.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- The same foster family has provided regular respite support for two children and has been assisted to gain information and understanding of the children's culture and country of origin.
- In 2009/10 seven children with special needs were adopted and a further five children with special needs were placed for adoption. Since April 1 potential links have been identified for a further seven children.
- A matching form is completed for all referrals to the Fostering Team. A similar system is used for Supported Lodgings
- The translation phone and direct translation service are both available to LAC and carers and are well used.
- Black and Asian RMBC workers have offered to do one-to-one support
- All LAC have access to funding for activities
- Actively promoted direct payments with 77 families currently involved
- Through the Families Together Project, 30 children access short breaks, more than 100 access residential services and 65 use outreach and family support
- Same sex couples have been carers and adopters and a single male carer has been approved as an adopter

### **What we can do better and how we are tackling it**

- We need to improve the use of the information on electronic systems to produce specific monitoring reports
- We need to increase carers from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups and this is a key action in our Recruitment and Retention action plan
- The Statutory Review process enables consideration of these needs on an ongoing basis, and ensures that appropriate services are in place.

- We have taken action to recruit staff from the local population and this has resulted in increased work with local communities of interest. Despite the progress this remains an issue and we continue to explore opportunities including recruiting people with disabilities.

## **6. Value for Money**

**Our overall rating for this area is adequate.**

**Senior officers and elected members are committed to providing a value for money service to the people of Rotherham and carried out a full value for money review of CYPS in Autumn 2009. Efficiency savings of £1.043m were identified with impact assessments carried out to help re-align budgets. This work was informed by external judgements, local priorities and performance comparisons.**

Rotherham is a low funded authority for children's services with a per capita allocation well below the national average and similar authorities. However, average spend on LAC compares well with statistical neighbours. The Council has invested an extra £3.1 million in CYPS for 2010/11.

Effective Commissioning is a key element of value for money services and the Business Development and Commissioning Manager and the Care Placement Review Group has developed a new commissioning strategy. Together with a review of placements and work with the DCSF Commissioning Support Programme to explore sub regional and regional opportunities we aim to reduce the number and cost of care placements. We are proactively working with neighbouring authorities to create a sub-regional commissioning framework. Locally the Council and NHS Rotherham are developing an improved joint commissioning of agency placements. In addition we are looking at the block booking of placements with IFA foster carers to reduce costs and we have benchmarked unit costs for all placement types.

Monthly monitoring and budget reviews are carried out through Directorate Leadership Team and Service Director meetings. A continuing care panel has been established between the Council and health colleagues to determine partner contributions to care costs. We are also working with colleagues in the Neighbourhood and Adults Services Directorate to improve transition arrangements between care services. Political scrutiny is provided through revenue budget monitoring reports and the CYPS Value for Money Panel.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- The Looked After Children and Adopted Children Team created to provide more holistic approach funded by Area Based Grant
- Specific budget training for managers
- Careful monitoring of placement options by social care teams. Only accredited suppliers will be considered.
- In-house secondment of admin staff to clear document backlogs

- Participation in the CIPFA LAC Benchmarking Club
- Increased investment in 2010/11 directed to safeguarding and LAC

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Need to ensure timeliness of jointly commissioned agency placements and have agreed a process based on the recently published joint DoH and DCSF Continuing Care Guidance which meets monthly to consider and reach agreement. Emergency placements are looked at and any joint funding agreement is back dated to the start of the placement.
- Need to reduce the number of looked after children and we have launched our Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, re-launched the Common Assessment Framework and reviewed thresholds
- Increasing numbers of LAC mean that budget challenges remain and we need to become more effective at joint commissioning and pooling resources with partners to further improve value for money and ensure appropriate joint funding of placements
- We recognise that a high proportion of costs are attributable to complex out of authority placements. Time limits introduced on initial placements and placement reviews to improve permanency planning.
- We also recognise that a high proportion of costs are attributable to staff turnover, vacancy levels and using agency staff. We are vigorously pursuing recruitment and retention of permanent staff to reduce these costs and improve the stability of children and reduce the number of changes to social workers for the child.

## **7. Effectiveness in Promoting Safeguarding**

**Our overall rating for this area is adequate.**

**Rotherham's Safeguarding Children's Board comprises of multi-agency representatives at a high level and is effectively and independently chaired. This ensures objectivity and no allegiance in holding all agencies to account. Rotherham's agencies along with the Operational Safeguarding Children Unit work together to ensure they meet the national standards to safeguard Looked After Children and care leavers.**

Several sub groups of the RSCB carry out activity to ensure that services are developed to ensure the best outcomes possible. These sub groups, supported by a small strategic safeguarding team, ensure that services are regularly audited to ensure effectiveness.

Our Corporate Parenting has consistently been seen as a strength in inspections and elected members play a committed and well informed part in that. Currently all regulated LAC services are judged as satisfactory, except the Adoption service which is judged as good.

The Safeguarding Unit has responsibility for the arrangement and management of strategy meetings in response to allegations against

professionals, carers and volunteers or complex cases, dealing with 275 requests for meetings from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 to December 2009. From 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 there were 126 initial strategy meetings with 391 strategy meetings being convened in total. Initial strategy meetings are held within five working days with the review/final meeting arranged within the following four weeks. The unit is also monitoring and evaluating progress to meet service plan aims on distribution of information among professionals.

Independent Reviewing Officers play a key role to ensure that decisions agreed are implemented to meet a child's needs. The Safeguarding Board has adopted the Local Dispute Resolution Process and has required all key partner agencies to comply with it.

The Safeguarding Unit carry out multi-agency training and this is effective in promoting safeguarding in schools, with GPs, within the Council and with a number of voluntary and community sector providers.

Where children and young people are placed outside the borough we have effective arrangements in place with other authorities and agencies.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- The recent LAC Scrutiny Sub Panel of corporate parenting recommended the development of a Corporate Parenting Board to report to the Children's Trust Board.
- Currently, 97.5% of IAC have an up-to-date care plan – national target is 92%
- Over the past 18 months only one Looked After Child has expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome of their initial complaint and wished to take the matter further.
- Funding secured for two additional safeguarding posts, one of which will assume lead responsibility for all matters referred to the LADO
- Joint Council and PCT working group highlighted pressures working with out of authority health services on placements and this has been raised by the PCT Executive Director at the highest level.
- Member-led performance clinics challenge practice, agree actions and monitor progress

### **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Improve quality and consistency of some care plans and review reports. Additional training, coaching and mentoring is being provided for social workers and reviewing officers and the effectiveness of this is being monitored through audit and quality assurance
- Improve consistency of engagement with some local services such as education providers and CAMHS services
- We recognise that the safeguarding provision in our regulated settings and settings needs to improve from adequate to good or better and quality assurance and mock inspection of these settings is beginning to see improvements

- We recognise that our performance needs to improve but we have prioritised tackling the quality so that we have firm foundations on which to build.

## **Quality of Provision**

### **1. Service Responsiveness Including Complaints**

**Our overall rating for this area is adequate.**

The changing needs of LAC and care leavers are routinely monitored in a number of ways: there are LAC reviews for LAC at least every six months where their changing needs are reviewed – these needs are encapsulated in a subsequent LAC Care Plan. The Independent Reviewing Officer has a strengthened role in ensuring these needs are met. In relation to care leavers, we commission Action For Children to provide Leaving Care services – each young person has a Pathway Plan which plots who does what and when to meet the young person’s changing needs.

The LAAC team & Get Real Team monitor the needs of children in relation to emotional needs and educational needs respectively (the latter via a Personal Education Plan)

More globally, we have had a series of “Review of Placement” meetings to ensure that our LAC are receiving the appropriate care and placements.

We have a proud history and tradition of working in effective partnership, and no area has seen better examples of this than CYPS. All key stakeholders are members of the CYPS Extended Leadership Team and are fully committed to problem solving and driving improvement in outcomes.

A full review of resources has been undertaken and further investment by the council secured in areas of frontline social work provision, to reduce dependency on agency staff and therefore ensure the existence of a long standing relationship between social workers and Looked After Children, which in its self will improve the quality of care planning and case review. The staffing quota for the residential units has also increased.

There is a clear process for decision making to ensure children and young people are accommodated appropriately, including initial and core assessment and Child Protection procedures through to robust and well established Gateway meetings. Senior Managers are involved in decision making in respect of accommodation of every child. Rotherham’s Resource Panel meets weekly and prior to coming to this stage the social worker will have undertaken the ‘challenge to care’ protocol to ensure thresholds are met.

There is a well established complaints and representations process within Children and Young People’s Services. All children and young people who make complaints are contacted by the Complaints and Customer Service Team. There is a complaints leaflet for them developed in consultation with a

group of Looked After Children which was rated 'excellent' as part of the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

Complaints performance information is reported annually to Cabinet Member, Safeguarding Board and Children's Board and twice yearly to Directorate Leadership Team. Quarterly performance reports are also produced for locality managers and team managers. The Complaints Manager has regular contact with the LADO to discuss relevant complaints.

We have recently changed the way we collect and record lessons learned from Stage 1 complaints which will lead to improved monitoring and implementation and enable more effective shared learning.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- The monitoring of youth crime cases identified an issue around LAC being prosecuted, particularly for offences within their homes. The Youth Offending Services met with Youth Court Magistrates and the Crown Prosecution Service resulting in an agreement that any decision to prosecute a LAC would be given additional consideration. The number of offences committed in their homes by LAC and prosecuted in the Courts has fallen.
- The Get Real Team monitors the progress of KS4 pupils (three times a year). GCSE results have risen each year since 2007.
- The council has committed to capital funding for a major refurbishment of one of our children's homes following observations made by Ofsted inspectors.
- A total of 13 Looked After Children made complaints in 2009/10, only one of these complaints went to Stage 2.
- Information about complaints process is in the LAC Promise Packs.
- The number of compliments has increased over the last year from eight in 2008/09 to 38 in 09/10 – further work to capture these is underway.
- After Stage 2 complaints an action plan is produced by the Complaints and Customer Service Team. This is sent to Adjudication Officer, Service Manager (and if appropriate Service Director) and the Team then monitors progress.
- Information about complaints process is included in the LAC Promise Packs and is covered at LAC reviews. Care Leavers can also use the Bridges Project complaints procedures.
- Information on complaints has been included in Rights 2 Rights newsletters and in the Exchange newsletter for disabled children and their families.
- We have met with our key Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) providers and negotiated the purchase of block placements at improved rates.
- A new post of Family Finder was filled in November 2009 and has had great success in placing children who have waited the longest.
- A comprehensive audit framework is in place and key documents are signed off by senior managers

## **What we could do better and how we are tackling it**

- Currently taking the initiative with neighbouring authorities to develop a sub commissioning framework.
- Overall figures for complaints at Stage 2 increased to 11 compared with three in 2008/09. The number of Stage 1 complaints completed within timescales in the first three quarters of the year was over 80% but in Quarter 4 performance dropped to 58% due to impact of number of staff vacancies and changes to staff. We are addressing this through progress chasing and recruitment and retention strategies
- Improvements to the complaints procedure process for younger disabled children, in consultation with service users.
- Development of Web/Intranet based accessible complaints information
- Development of “You said, we did” style outcome reporting
- Develop promotion of the compliments procedure and sharing of positive comments
- A Care Placement Review Group has developed a commissioning strategy which is currently being considered by the Director and Cabinet Member.
- A needs assessment of our children to meet ‘sufficiency of accommodation’ requirements has been completed and work is ongoing to ensure we meet the requirements.
- The needs of 16 and 17 year olds who require accommodation are considered closely and a joint working protocol with Neighbourhoods and Adult Services is in development.
- Further development work on CAMHS service
- A recent audit has been undertaken identifying the quality of written care plans as an area for improvement and this is currently being addressed within localities. A full audit of Care Plans is underway with a clear timetabled action plan.
- LAC placements are reviewed according to national legislation and within timescale. IROs chair the reviews and complete reports on time in most cases. Recent audit of case files indicated that many case files did not contain the most recent review report. This is being addressed.

## **2. Assessment and Direct Work with Children and Families**

**Our overall rating for this area is adequate.**

**There is a clear and timely decision making to ensure children and young people are accommodated appropriately including initial and core assessment, child protection procedures and Gateway meetings. Senior managers are involved with every child and procedures are well understood at all levels.**

Allocation and placement review is through the weekly Resource Panel. The Panel considers other options than care and the Youth Service Manager sits on the panel. Prior to coming to this stage the social worker will have undertaken the ‘challenge to care’ protocol to ensure that thresholds are met.

Family members and other connected people are considered as a first option where appropriate. Emergency placement procedures are well established. The needs of 16 and 17 year olds are considered with a joint working protocol with Neighbourhoods and Adult Services which is being further developed.

Improved identification has resulted in an increase in the number of children in care from 358 in December 2008 to 416 in April 2010.

The Get Real Team which provides educational support to LAC has been consistently praised in inspections. The Looked After Children Therapeutic Support Team has an excellent reputation for high quality health and activity based support. Both teams have developed innovative practice. The Rights 2 Rights service provides arms length support to children with individual concerns and works with children to improve services. The activity co-ordinator sits within the LAAC Team and care leavers are supported through a service commissioned from Action for Children.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- Partnerships were engaged in the Corporate Parenting review.
- A full fieldwork review is underway and one parameter is to ensure a ring-fenced LAC service.
- Children with disabilities in foster care are supported by a specialist team.
- The Silverwood Emergency and Respite Unit provides respite and outreach support to enable children to safely remain at home.
- Assessments of regulation 38 and private foster carers have now both been centralised although more work is required to ensure the service can meet the need.
- The importance of the roles of Designated School Governors and Teachers is recognised, and the Get Real Team provides training to these key individuals, and other staff as required. This has contributed to the improvements in comprehensive, agreed and timely Personal Education Plans and the drive to improve LAC exam achievements.
- The Get Real Team and Action for Children have service level agreements to support LAC and staff working with them in schools.

### **What we need to do better and how we are tackling it**

- Embed the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy across partner services.
- A full fieldwork review with an agreed parameter to ensure a ring-fenced service for Looked after children
- Resource Panel is under review and will become a multi-agency forum.
- The service for 16 to 17-year-olds is under review
- Implementation of actions following the review into needs assessment to meet 'sufficiency of accommodation' requirements.
- Improve the vacancy factor to provide more sustained relationships with social workers for LAC.



- Service for those ‘on the edge of care’ and placements with friends and family members are underway.
- Family Group conferencing techniques is not embedded.
- Full review of care plans underway with action plan being produced.
- Monitoring required to ensure embedding of new IRO service procedures.
- Need to ensure all children receive appropriate and timely therapeutic support.
- Support to those on the edge of care is under review as part of the review of Early Intervention services and intensive support services are not consistently available.
- Begun a full review of placements with Friends and Family Members

### **3. Case Planning, reviews and recording**

**Our overall rating for this area is adequate.**

**We have worked hard to improve service responsiveness and care planning is much improved.**

We strive to ensure children have stable and supportive placements and avoid unplanned changes. We support carers through good quality skills training and where in house provision cannot meet need, use appropriate independent care.

The changing needs of LAC and care leavers are routinely monitored in a number of ways: there are LAC reviews for LAC at least every six months where their changing needs are reviewed – these needs are encapsulated in a subsequent LAC Care Plan. The Independent Reviewing Officer has a strengthened role in ensuring these needs are met. In relation to care leavers, we commission Action For Children to provide Leaving Care services – each young person has a Pathway Plan which plots who does what and when to meet the young person’s changing needs.

The LAAC team & Get Real team monitor the needs of children in relation to emotional needs and educational needs respectively (the latter via a Personal Education Plan which every LAC has)

More globally, we have had a series of “Review of Placement” meetings to ensure our LAC are receiving the appropriate care and placements.

There is a clear process for decision making to ensure that children and young people are accommodated appropriately, including initial and core assessment and Child Protection procedures through to robust and well established Gateway meetings. Senior Managers are involved in decision making in respect of accommodation of every child. Rotherham’s Resource Panel meets weekly and prior to coming to this stage the social worker will have undertaken the ‘challenge to care’ protocol to ensure thresholds are met. For those young people requiring specialist provision or when accommodation is necessary but not available in-house, a protocol is in place where a Director

can be appraised of the situation and make an informed decision. Where a child has had a number of social workers, foster carers or residential workers work to provide consistency of care and liaise closely with their social worker.

To ensure the very best quality placements for our LAC and Care Leavers our commissioning process and targets are under constant review to ensure the best possible provision that improves outcomes.

We strive to ensure that all our children have stable and emotionally supportive placements. We avoid unplanned changes of placement by working hard to match children and carers/placement providers appropriately. We have worked hard over the last two years to improve this and regularly use independent care provision where we cannot match appropriately within our in house provision. We also support our carers by providing good quality training to raise their skill level.

The Adoption Service has been strengthened to ensure better timeliness of adoptions and the use of SGO and RO has increased. Enhanced financial and support packages have ensured this is an attractive option for Carers

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- NI 62 (% of children in 3 or more placements in a year) – Provisional outcome for latest figure is 9.1% against a target of 11% - top quartile performance.
- A full audit of care plans is underway with a clear timetabled action plan and corrective actions being implemented.
- Reviews for LAC are timely and the quality of review documentation has been undertaken.
- Pathway plans for Care Leavers have been reviewed and improved by Action for Children
- A new Family Finder post has had great success in placing children who have waited the longest.
- In 2009/10 - 38 children placed for adoption, 25 adoption orders granted 17 Special Guardianship Orders granted.
- The Care Placements Group has conducted a needs analysis to inform service planning.
- Electronic case records are subject to audit and reviewed by team and locality managers. Remedial action is taken on cases not of required quality. Foster carer records are also subject to similar audit, including by Foster Carer IRO. Supervision records are also placed on files.
- Implementation of new Integrated Performance Framework.
- A needs assessment of our children to meet 'sufficiency of accommodation' requirements is complete and work is ongoing to ensure we meet the requirements.
- A full fieldwork review is underway and one agreed parameter is to ensure a ring-fenced service for LAC.
- LAC placements are reviewed according to national legislation and within timescale. IROs chair the reviews and complete reports on time

in most cases. Recent audit of case files indicated that many case files did not contain the most recent review report. This is being addressed.

### **What we need to do better and how we are tackling it**

- A Performance Clinic is being held in May around adoption timeliness
- Contract negotiation with Action for Children due to capacity issues.
- Implementation of the Fieldwork review recommendations in July 2010
- Locality Managers working to address planning delays caused by pressure on social worker time
- Further work on the use of Special Guardianship Orders
- Some drift has been identified in planning timeliness due to pressure on social work time. Locality Managers are working to address this issue wherever identified. This will also be improved through fieldwork review and enhanced challenge from IROs.

## **Every Child Matters Outcomes**

### **Being Healthy**

There is a universal commitment to health care beyond those health professionals working directly with LAC. There has been joint agency commissioning of specific resources and contracts to allow interventions. The standards of health care and outcomes for young people living in our children's homes are among the highest in the country and have consistently been rated as good or better by inspectors. We work with health partners to plan, review and monitor targeted health services and work with foster carers to look at how home environments impact on children and young people.

LAC have access to a comprehensive health assessment and are encouraged in creative ways to take up this offer. LAC have developed the 'My Journey So Far' record and an information leaflet designed to encourage their peers to access services and assessments. All LAC have an age appropriate named health professional in their locality and access to the Designated LAC Nurse. Parents and family members are also encouraged to take part in the reviews.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- Percentage of children who had been in care for over a year and received a health assessment – 07/08 – 70.72%, 08/09 – 85.53%, April 2010 – over 90%, above the national average.
- Multi-agency LAC Health Group meets every two months to co-ordinate services. The Designated Nurse leads the meeting, is part of the LAAC Team and has strong links to IROs. The Bridges Team also has specialist health practitioner support co-located in the LAAC Team. Each care leaver has a school nurse up to age 19.

- A LAAC worker is linked to each children's home and the LAAC Nurse visits homes regularly
- The LAC Designated Doctor and Nurse produce an annual report and make service recommendations. The report is challenged by the LAC Scrutiny Panel.
- The LAAC support team use assessment tools including the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, using information to inform interventions.
- Families Together Scheme develops service provision to meet the health needs of disabled children and Aiming High provides respite opportunities.
- Attachment training for foster carers and adopters.
- Development of new LAC health assessment pathway
- Restructuring of health teams with localities.
- Foster carers are made aware of healthy eating benefits and some have taken part in the Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food project
- The adoption and foster carers smoking policies have been updated in line with BAAF guidelines.
- Foster carers now receive copies of LAC health assessments and plans and resource packs have been created for them around health care and sexual health.
- Children's homes staff receive appropriate specialist health training as required eg Aspergers Syndrome training.
- The multi-agency Child Development Centre supports LAC with developmental concerns and complex needs.

### **What we need to do better and how we are tackling it**

- We are quality assuring our health care plans to ensure they are comprehensive and meet the needs of the child
- Information sharing across agencies continues to improve but we need to ensure that the protocols are applied consistently in practice. One of the ways we are addressing this is through ContactPoint.
- Despite our success in reducing teenage pregnancies we are improving services through a LAC Teenage Pregnancy Pathway.
- Some concerns that have arisen around health provision for out of area placements are being followed up at NHS Chief Executive level.

### **Staying Safe**

There is a clear decision making to ensure children and young people are accommodated appropriately including initial and core assessment, child protection procedures and Gateway meetings. Senior managers are involved with every child and procedures are well understood at all levels. Allocation and placement review is through the weekly Resource Panel. The Panel considers other options than care and the Youth Service Manager sits on the panel. Family members and other connected people are considered as a first option where appropriate.

Safe standards in children's homes are monitored through a variety of methods including regular health and safety assessments and inspections, fire safety checks and drills, accident reporting procedures, regular maintenance checks and monthly manager reports on safeguarding issues. A further report is made under Children's Homes regulation 33.

Emergency placement procedures are well established. The needs of 16 and 17 year olds are considered with a joint working protocol with Neighbourhoods and Adult Services.

Good quality information is available to all LAC in a variety of formats, many of them produced in consultation with LAC themselves. Support and guidance is also available via the Rights 2 Rights Service, LAAC therapeutic team, Get Real Team's education support and services such as Connexions and Risky Business (sexual exploitation).

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- NI 66 – LAC cases reviewed within timescales – 97.5% against target of 92%.
- NI62 – stability of placements, three or more changes of placement in a year – 9.1% currently compared to target of 11%.
- All agencies involved with a LAC are invited to attend review meetings or to contribute. The LAC Scrutiny Panel, Safeguarding Board and Directorate Leadership Team actively request information regarding services and call partner agencies to account where appropriate.
- Improved assessment training and support for foster carers to ensure they can meet the needs of young people in their care.

### **What we need to do better and how we are tackling it**

- We are improving support to children in agency placements by reviewing placements to ensure they are still the most appropriate
- We will raise the rating of children's homes under Staying Safe to good from current position of satisfactory by taking swift action to address issues that we identify in our routine inspections and by comparing with best practice. We are also enhancing staffing levels.
- We are reviewing our Resource Panel which will become a multi-agency forum.
- The transition service for 16 to 17-year-olds is under review
- We have carried out a needs assessment to meet 'sufficiency of accommodation' requirements and are implementing changes.
- We have improved the format for children's comments in reviews
- Action plans are in place to improve services via the multi-agency Improvement Panel.
- Development of a Panel Advisor/Practice Development co-ordinator.

## Enjoying and Achieving

This is an area of consistent good performance with three children's homes rated as good and one satisfactory. The last fostering inspection judged this element as 'good'. Rotherham LAC and care leavers are supported to make good progress in line with their ability and to access the best possible education via the Get Real Team and Action for Children. Children's homes have an education plan and are supported in meeting this by the Get Real Team. LAC are also supported through a specific school admissions policy. Procedures are in place to monitor the support needed and the achievements of LAC being cared for out of the area.

The Personal Education Plans were seen as a strength in last year's Children's First review. The plans and guidance have been reviewed and developed and multi-agency training implemented.

The Get Real Team also provides homework support and monitors the attendance rates of LAC. There have been no permanent exclusions and new strategies have been implemented to raise attendance rates, working with the exclusion officer. Schools inform the team of absence on the first day.

Post 16 education is managed through the Bridges Project with generous financial support for young people aged 16 and 17. Care leavers at university receive a £5,000 bursary.

### Examples of improved outcomes

- All young people given a laptop to support their education.
- Improved assessment training and support for foster carers to ensure they can meet the needs of young people in their care.
- Support for designated teachers and governors. Monitoring of Early Years provision for younger LAC.
- Direct 1:1 GCSE teaching and mentoring in primary to raise literacy and numeracy levels. Transition support for Year 6 to Year 7 pupils.
- Of seven children who received support and took GCSEs, in 11 subjects taken there were improvements in final grades from predicted ones (out of total of 22). Only three results were lower than expected.
- Attendance rates – 20.01% (07/08) in LAC who missed 25 days or more at school, reduced to 15.76% in 08/09
- Three care leavers are currently at university, another has deferred a place with four others hoping to move on to university next year.
- Exclusions – 514 in 06/07, 99 in (08/09)
- Permanent Exclusions – 4 in 06/07, zero in 08/09
- LAC GCSE results – A-G 06/07 – 60%, 08/09 – 72%
  - 5A-C 06/07 – 8%, 12% 08/09.
- A high proportion of LAC go on to Further Education.

- The service has developed links with universities, a local college and local and national employers to raise aspirations.
- LAC and care leavers have access to a range of leisure activities from swimming to an outward bound retreat in Russia. Young people in children's homes have recently taken part in a ranger course, learning to ski, driving lessons and accessing a gym.

### **What we need to do better and how we are tackling it**

- Improving our support to children in agency placements.
- Introduced new developments in monitoring of Years 9, 10 and 11.
- We are extending our protocols with local colleges
- Implementing the care to work planning route to employment
- Carrying out a programme of training to designated teachers/governors.
- Currently introducing a dedicated LAC person at each Early Years setting monitored via the LAC Team.
- Further roll out of multi-agency PEP training
- Development of regional handbook to share information on services for children cared for in other areas.

### **Making a Positive Contribution**

The views of Rotherham's LAC are sought to improve service provision and engage them in their care and support. At the highest level, their views were sought for the new Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013. All LAC were contacted to give their views and 28 responded. An event was also held to work with LAC on the CYPS priorities.

The LAC Council is starting to work with the Voice and Influence Unit via the Right 2 Rights Service and Youth Services to ensure their voice is heard. The LAC Council liaise with LAC and carers on an informal level, for example, they facilitated an information sharing and fun day in November 2009. They liaise with elected members and directors on a formal level through scrutiny. They have contributed on a national level, by contributing to the 'ministerial stock take' where the views of LAC were sought, and they were consulted by members of the Who Cares Trust Team in September 2009 which contributed to a national survey surrounding their experiences of the carer system.

The LAC Council has expressed their views of service provision with RMBC, such as better access to, and consistency in maintaining a named social worker – an issue accepted as of paramount importance at Director level.

The Orchard Stars Group provides support to enable young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability to have voice and influence. Children with communication difficulties are supported where necessary with some carers having skills in the use of Makaton, B.S.L. and picture boards.

LAC, their carers and parents are encouraged to participate in planning, placement and review meetings where key decisions are made and their views are taken into account.

There are consultation forms (with access online), feedback forms, children's forums and feedback meetings with managers. The Online Review Forms are promoted by Rights 2 Rights (R2R). Every child receives a letter before their review encouraging them to fill in a consultation paper and the process to follow. E-mail links are available via the R2R website and contact forms are distributed to all LAC which can be posted to R2R requesting guidance and advocacy. All IROs offer to speak separately to every child before their review and are creative in helping those who don't wish to attend to still take part.

There is a well established youth activities project for LAC who are actively encouraged to attend.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- The Children's Rights Service worked closely with a group of young people in developing RMBC's Corporate Parenting Promise to all LAC, which is based on the five outcomes for children and is embedded in the Promise Pack. There is ongoing consultation with young people to ensure the continual development of this.
- The LAC Council has developed a pledge for children in care and both the Pledge and Promise are linked. The Pledge states what young people in care want from the local authority and the Promise outlines the local authority's corporate commitment to meeting these needs .
- The LAC Council met together to draw up the Pledge, which outlines young people's expectations from Rotherham Borough Council. This Pledge has been distributed by LAC Council members to all young people through the Magazina and shared with Directors and Elected members through scrutiny.

### **What we can do better and how we are tackling it**

- As part of the on going work of the LAC Council, the Pledge now needs consolidating with the Promise to strengthen our commitment to LAC and is work that is ongoing.

## **Achieving Economic Well-Being**

In Rotherham there are a large number of initiatives working with young people in care to promote their economic well-being from training how to manage personal finances to links with local and national businesses. High aspirations for care leavers are a key priority and they are encouraged to take an active part in their pathway plans. Young people provide feedback in a number of ways including a revamped Pathway Plan and electronic access for some. All Pathway Plans are signed off by line managers and they monitor young people's involvement and that of key professionals and agencies.

We have a wide range of opportunities specifically for LAC post-16 including vocational training and work experience. The recent Care 2 Work mapping



and action plan has received Director level support and key agencies are involved in delivery. Young people are provided with funding to ensure they have appropriate equipment for training, education and employment and those who move on to higher education have a good quality support package with financial help.

We have adopted the DCSF ICS assessment and pathway plan to ensure care leavers have their needs assessed in preparation for key transitions while LAC have a Personal Education Plan. Rotherham offers a range of accommodation options to assist transitional arrangements including semi-independent, supported and tenancy support. Young people in foster care can also be assessed to convert their placement to supported lodgings. Leaving care resources are managed through the Bridges Project meaning options can be tailored to individual needs. In a flagship project a new build development of 10 semi independent flats is due for completion in June 2010. The multi-agency resource panel meets weekly and considers accommodation needs.

### **Examples of improved outcomes**

- Financial future group backed by Barclays provides group work for LAC focussed on their financial planning and stability.
- The employability group targets young people's employability skills and offers aspirational work experience with local and national employers.
- Young people are supported to take their driving test.
- A specific post within Connexions provides information and support to LAC and care leavers along with a specific worker in the Leaving Care Team to help those in higher education.
- A performance clinic was held as numbers of 19-year-olds in ETE was at 55% below the target of 65%, although care leavers had hit their target at 67%.
- Currently, 11 young people are accessing Higher Education with a further eight expected to progress this academic year.
- Seven care leavers involved in 2009 National Takeover Day went to the national Action for Children HQ and "taking over" key roles.
- A new protocol with housing to ensure young people are assessed in a timely manner for living independently and gain priority status.
- A key outcome for the leaving care service is managing a change in the young person's life and the matrix tool ensures transition management is closely monitored and remains on the agenda for pathway planning.
- All young people leaving care have an exit interview to monitor feedback. No formal complaints were received regarding transitions to independence.
- All of the 19-year-old 2009/10 cohort were in suitable accommodation and across the service the figure is consistently above 90%.
- The positive contribution co-ordinator is currently carrying out an evaluation interview with young people to gather more evidence for service planning.

- **What we can do better and how we are tackling it**
- Working with O2 to provide a managed safe text scheme for young people to contribute to reviews via text message.
- Increase the number of apprenticeships in the local authority and in partner organisations and encourage LAC to take up these and other work experience opportunities.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Friday, 4th June, 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services - Fostering Inspection Self-Assessment</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services</b>

## **5. Summary**

This report provides Members with details of the Self-Assessment submitted to Ofsted in preparation for the forthcoming inspection of Fostering Services in Rotherham. The inspection is scheduled to take place on 21st June for a period of 4 days. The Self-Assessment, together with the Service's Dataset was sent to Ofsted within the required timescale on 11th May, 2010.

The report highlights those areas of progress and good outcomes for children and young people since the last inspection in June 2009, and the plans for further improvement.

## **6. Recommendations**

**That Scrutiny note the report and the progress made within the Fostering Services.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

The Fostering Services' provision was last inspected in June 2009 when it was rated 'Satisfactory'. As a result of this rating the provision is being inspected again this year instead of the normal 3 yearly cycle.

During the inspection, the Inspectors will speak to a range of people including children and young people, staff, foster carers, parents and other professionals. They will, in addition, check case records, procedures and other documents.

The findings from the inspection are graded; Outstanding, Good, Adequate and Inadequate.

Outstanding are assessed on the basis of very clear, exceptional and evidenced sustained outcomes.

Good is based on evidence of improved outcomes.

Satisfactory is based on statutory requirements are met and services are on track to improve.

Inadequate are those areas where there are little or no evidence of continuous improvement and outcomes.

The attached Self-Assessment document (Appendix A) provides detail of each section of the services that will be inspected. The document gives evidence of what is working well and delivering good outcomes and what areas where further change is needed. An action plan and communication process is in place to ensure adequate preparation for the inspection.

## **8. Finance**

The finance for delivering the requirements in the Self-Assessment is within the Children and Young People's budget.

## **9. Risk and Uncertainties**

Failure to adequately prepare and implement actions from the previous Inspection could lead to a judgement of 'Inadequate'. This will impact on the Council CAA and further inspection. It should be noted there is uncertainty over the future of CAA under the new Coalition Government.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The last inspection in June 2009 highlighted a number of policy and performance management issues. These have now been addressed. The service is compliant with Fostering National Minimum Standards.

## **11. Background and Consultation**

- Ofsted Inspection Guidance
- National Minimum Standards for Fostering
- Fostering Services Self-Assessment (Appendix 1)

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## Fostering services self-assessment

We will record and store information so that we meet the Data Protection Act 1998. You can get further information about this on our website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)) or from our helpline on 08456 404040.

<b>Name of service</b>	Fostering Services Rotherham	
<b>Address</b>	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	
	Crinoline House	
	Effingham Square	
	Rotherham, South Yorkshire	
	Postcode	S65 1AW
<b>URN</b>	SC047258	

<b>Date form sent by us</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)	24-04-10
<b>Final date for return by you</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)	11-05-10

### *To be completed by you*

<b>Name of person filling in this form</b>	Sue May
<b>Job title</b>	LAC Service Manager
<b>Office telephone number</b>	01302 382121 ext 3444
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Sue.may@rotherham.gov.uk">Sue.may@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.fosterinrotherham.co.uk">www.fosterinrotherham.co.uk</a>
<b>Date form filled in</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)	10-05-10

## **1. CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS**

**We do the following to ensure that the views of children and young people are the focus for our activity and are promoted and incorporated into what we do:**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING**

The Council adopts a 'whole authority approach' to its roles and responsibilities as corporate parents. Members take an active interest in supporting Looked After children by closely monitoring outcomes, challenging performance and celebrating achievements. The Council has well-established scrutiny arrangements for Children and Young People's Services through the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel which meets every 2 months. There is also a well-informed and robust Looked After Children's Scrutiny Sub Panel which invites representation from Looked after Children and Care Leavers where appropriate. A Foster Carer sits on the panel. The LAC Scrutiny sub panel has recently undertaken a review of Corporate Parenting using the self evaluation tool developed by the National Children's Bureau the report recommends development of an Elected Member led multi agency Looked after Children's Board which will formalise existing relationships and strengthen structures.

Following a comprehensive review of the role of Councilors as corporate parents, a Corporate Parenting Strategy was developed and revised in April 2009 which outlines duties, responsibilities and operational guidance for Members undertaking visits to Children's Units or meeting Looked After children in other forums. Comprehensive training on the role of Members as corporate parents has been undertaken by many Councilors'; the Looked After Children's Scrutiny Panel undertakes annual training.

Multi agency partnerships are embedded at all levels. The Directorate Leadership team includes representatives from the PCT, Police and emergency services. Co -Location of Health and Social Care services ensures good communication and co working arrangements. LAC services will move into PCT multi agency accommodation with children's disability and CAMHS Services in February 2011. This will further enhance joint working arrangements and provide good quality facilities for the service as a whole.

### **PARTICIPATION**

The Looked after Children's Council was established in 2008 and has a current membership of 13 children and young people aged between 11 and 17. This group has met with the Children's service Executive Director, Director of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting, the Lead Member for Children's services and the chair of Children's and LAC Scrutiny panels to inform service development. The group has undertaken work on the 'promise' they would like us to make to them. They have developed a Magazine to go to all LAC to publicise their work, request new LAC Council members and request feedback and also led a consultation day for all Looked after Children, with activities provided by 'Swamp Circus'.

Looked After Children are also closely involved in the development of their service through:-

1. The Rights to Rights service (R2R) who actively seek to work directly with all LAC on individual issues and service development. Their work includes

- Young Rights Representatives.
- Meetings with Senior Managers.
- Work on the Corporate Parenting Promise and Leaflet.
- Orchard Flyers and Orchard Stars (rights groups for children and young people with a learning disability).
- Young Interviewers - L.A.C. have been involved in interviewing of key positions within the Local Authority, for example, the appointments of the Executive Director, Service Directors and Locality Managers.
- Consultations with children and young people
- Online Review Forms, promoted by the Rights to Rights Service (R2R). Every child receives a letter prior to their review encouraging them to fill in a consultation paper and the process to follow.
- E-mail links via the R2R web-site and text messaging.
- Development of the Promise pack, which is now given to all LAC and includes useful information and age appropriate gifts, contained within a backpack

2. Birth children of prospective foster carers are actively involved in the Form F assessment process, the recruitment social workers have developed innovative tools for use with birth children of all ages. A birth Children's support group meets regularly.

3. The Leaving care service and care Leavers 16+accommodation service were subject to tender in 2008. LAC were involved in interviewing the applicants. LAC and Care Leavers are also participating in the development and shaping of the post 16 accommodation service. A Positive Contribution worker is employed by the Leaving Care Service to support all care leavers to contribute to their service, the wider government agenda and their community.

## INCLUSION

A range of activities have been developed in line with our Children's wishes and feelings and as a result of extensive consultation. These support our LAC to develop skills and grow in self esteem. It also fosters a greater sense of inclusion with the service as a whole and provides opportunities for us to interact informally with them to seek their views in a non threatening environment.

Opportunities to undertake activities not normally available to LAC have been enhanced through the development of an independent Charitable LAC Trust fund.

A number of agencies provide activities for Looked After Children to develop self-confidence and physical fitness. In the last year we have provided individually-tailored activities, free of charge, to over 200 Looked After children to enable them to pursue hobbies.

The range of activities include:

- Horse riding
- Ice skating
- Youth ranger project
- Drama project
- Outward bounds activity
- Driving lessons
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Skiing
- Water skiing
- Summer coach trips
- Theatre trips

Positive outcomes are clear, for example

- One young person requested to attend an international adventure scout camp in Russia for three weeks and funding was provided for her to do this. This has inspired her to consider other choices and options which she might not have necessarily considered. For example she is planning a similar trip next year.
- Another young person who moved through the youth ranger project was so inspired that he is now acting as a volunteers providing peer mentoring support, and providing a positive role model to other LAC. To and peer support for LAC, which will not only be positive for other young people but will assist his application to university.
- The drama project for LAC has become an annual event and last year 30 fostered children. Workers and managers contribute to the final show. An innovation partnership with the local college has increased opportunities for fostered children to develop skills and social confidence, for example, one young person secured a placement on a drama course at RMBC having contributed to the drama project over a number of years.
- In 2009, 20 fostered children gained either an AQA or OCN qualification through participation in the drama project.

Other key inclusion activities include



- Young Champions Award – Every two years, Looked After children aged 5 and over are given awards for personal achievement (67 children in 2008) at an event hosted by a local celebrity. The Drama group and Action for Children Football teams also both gained group awards for their achievements.
- A football team has been established with players made up from the L.A.C. and Care Leavers population in Rotherham. Currently 30 young men attend on a regular basis. The ‘universal language’ of sport also enables young male asylum seekers within our LAC population to participate in positive activity and gain new friendships. The team competes every year in the National Care Leavers tournament.
- Initiatives to improve the health and well being of young people have been explored through promotion of positive activity, such as funding gym membership and setting up some circuit training sessions under the supervision of a local ex-professional boxer.
- A summer of activities includes coach trips for foster families. This enables them to have an enjoyable day out as a whole family whilst networking informally with other foster families. This opportunity is enjoyed by Foster carers, birth children and fostered children.
- Every year the Mayor and Lead Member for Children host a Post-16 Awards ceremony in the Town Hall which awards all Post-16 achievements by Looked After Children and Care Leavers in education, employment or training. In November 2009, 41 Looked After Children and Care Leavers received an award. Approximately 30 Members attended to offer their congratulations and support.
- An ongoing program of events using the councils Outdoor Pursuits residential centre in Crowden
- The Get Sorted Music Academy has offered some sessions to Care Leavers, both on a group and individual basis. They have supported some of our most vulnerable young people, including children with a learning disability and those with conduct disorders.
- A skiing and snowboarding program organized in conjunction with Sheffield Ski village has been extremely popular and has enabled our LAC to participate in an activity normally not available to them
- Our LAC are also encouraged and supported to access mainstream activities including those run by the Youth service and voluntary sector. 24 fostered children were supported to attend residential activities in the last year,

**We have made the following changes as a result of listening to children and young people:**

Service development is routinely informed and improved by the voice of the child, we take a holistic view of consultation and use every opportunity to talk to our LAC about their views on their service including within their own reviews (100% participate in the process) informally through activity based events and formally through the LAC Council and other groups. Looked After Children are involved in a number of differing ways as outlined above to inform service development at every level.

Examples include:-

- The development of the Looked After Children’s Council has enabled our Looked After

Children to comment on every aspect of their care and liaise directly with the people who make the decisions which shape and form their lives. They have challenged some practices and have also made suggestions for service development including the need to ensure specialist social work support, which is being addressed through the Fieldwork review

- The LAC Council wished to ensure they were able to communicate with all LAC and we supported them to develop a Magazine (the Magazina) edition 3 is about to be published. They also worked with us to consult with other LAC in a consultation day with Swamp Circus providing activities and entertainment.
- Further development of the Looked After Children Scrutiny Panel involving the Looked After Children at all stages. The LAC Council minutes are considered by Scrutiny Panel and panel members met with the Council as part of the Corporate Parenting review
- The Children and Young People's Plan was informed through consultation with all children in Rotherham. The views of Looked After Children and Care Leavers were considered closely, resulting in actions being included in the service plans.
- Development of the differing routes to enable Looked After Children to participate in and communicate effectively within their review. Young people required easier access to review participation. We now have the facility for consultation online with direct links to advocacy and Independent Reviewing Officers. Young people with disabilities use dictaphones and video to express their views, wishes and feelings to their Looked After Children review. Where LAC feel unable to attend their review meeting they are invited to meet with their Independent Reviewing Officer to ensure that their wishes and feelings are central to all discussions and planning.
- Children are supported to participate in their review in ways that are meaningful to them, recently one child chaired her own review and one gave a powerpoint presentation on his good qualities.
- Looked After Children and Care Leavers regularly contribute to the government agenda. Two Members of the LAC Council traveled to London to participate in the Government Stocktake, and whilst there met with other members of other LAC Councils, they plan to meet again to share ideas. Action for Children utilises its comprehensive range of consultation processes with their work with Care Leavers. These are influential locally and nationally. These have included contribution to the annual review undertaken by the Children's Commissioner and on a drugs and alcohol questionnaire commissioned by Ed Balls.
- Foster carers' birth children had expressed an interest in meeting as a group. As a result of this consultation, a foster carers' birth children group has been established. The focus of the group is on support through the changes in family lifestyle as a result of fostering. The birth children's group is small but growing and committed (it currently has 7 core members with a number of others accessing some activities). The group set their own agenda which at their request is activity based, though with opportunities for them to inform our practice where it impacts on their lives.

**We are planning to make the following changes as a result of listening to children and young people:**

The LAC Council is still in the early stages of its work, they have made a number of suggestions for improvements to the service which we are actively working to incorporate

- The LAC Council's primary concern is to ensure all children are able to access consistent quality support from their social worker. They have contributed to the Fieldwork review and though their voice is not the only influencing factors in this review, their concerns were accepted and solutions have been sought through development of a specialist LAC social work team.
- They have worked on a new form of the Councils 'promise' to them and are currently consulting with other LAC through the Magazine. The draft promise has been shared with all locality and LAC team managers. The completed promise will be sent to all social workers, foster carers and other relevant professionals as well as to all LAC.
- They wish to have some space of their own, for all LAC to meet in a relaxed environment and to be able to meet with workers, gain advice and work with us on service developments. We have been working with the Youth Service to identify a suitable venue and youth worker support.
- They have also suggested that Rotherham schools should incorporate an understanding of children in care into their Citizenship classes in order to foster greater understanding and break down common myths, this is being considered.
- An interactive DVD for birth children of prospective foster families is in development. This will assist the children to consider the impact of fostering on them.

## **2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

**We do the following to ensure that equality and diversity are promoted and incorporated into what we do, bearing in mind race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, religion and belief:**

The May 2008 Ofsted inspection of fostering services highlighted the need to further develop our practice in working with the BME population. We have undertaken a great deal of development work but recognise that this is an area which requires further input. We have a clear action plan to improve services to our small population of LAC who are from the BME community. We are pro-active in providing support for children and young people seeking asylum and our specialist social worker has a wide range of local networks to support her work

Senior Management take a strong lead in issues of Equality and Diversity. There is a Corporate Single Equality Scheme, which is currently in the process of being reviewed. The Children and Young People's Service have recently strengthened their approach to Equalities and Diversity issues, by including this as a standing item at the weekly Directorate Leadership Team meetings, and issues from the Corporate Equalities Team are now fed directly to the CYPS Senior Management, through this process. One of the Directors is the named Equalities Champion for the service.

### **STAFF RECRUITMENT**

Specific action is taken to recruit appropriate staff to reflect the local populace and to ensure children and young people's cultural, religious and linguistic needs are met. An Asian worker from the predominant local BME community has worked closely with the team to facilitate work within the

community. Two prospective carers from the local predominant community are currently being assessed. They attended training together and have been able to support each other through the process. They anticipate they will provide a doorway into the community.

The Fostering Recruitment Strategy is based on a thorough assessment of current and projected need amongst the Looked After Children population, including unaccompanied children who seek asylum. Recruitment of foster carers from the B.M.E. community is a key priority and an action plan is in place to progress this work. The fostering team manager is working with local Voluntary sector groups to work to break down barriers and share information. The recruitment strategy has successfully attracted applications from non-traditional family units. Two carers from the predominant BME community are currently being assessed and others have expressed an interest in fostering.

The local BME community has been subject to rapid change over the last two years, with a significant increase in communities from Eastern Europe, especially Slovakian and Roma communities. Specialist support organisations have been developed and the Fostering Recruitment team have made contact with these groups.

Where we have been unable to provide an appropriate placement in house, Out of Authority placements that meet the diverse need of the children and young person have been pursued

#### **VALUING DIVERSITY**

The Fostering Service ensures children and young people are provided with foster carer services which value diversity and promote equality. Each foster carer preparation course includes training around diversity. This is expanded in the foster carer assessment. We have recently made it a mandatory requirement for Foster carers to have Diversity awareness training within the first year of approval. Statutory reviews consider these needs and ensure appropriate services are in place. All foster homes have access to a variety of relevant information including anti-racist language, 'Understanding Islam and Muslims' and the Calendar of Religious Festivals and Special Days. The translation phone and direct translation services have also been used to good effect. A specialist post of a social worker to work with Looked After Children and families who are asylum seekers has assisted greatly in meeting their needs. Black and Asian workers within the Local Authority have offered to undertake one-to-one support and advice where Black and Asian children are placed with white foster carers.

Many young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability have been significantly involved in influencing development of services across the authority through the Orchard Stars group. This has included specific work within the Looked After Services.

The fostering service has provided a flexible service to meet the needs of children from asylum seeking families. In one good practice example, the same foster family has provided respite support for two children when their mother has required several hospital admissions, this family has been assisted to gain information and understanding of the children's culture and country of origin.

#### **MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL CHILDREN**

All children have the right to communicate in their own language. Looked After Children can access translation services through the Language Line. The Local Authority I.T. system produces an on-line translation facility which is user friendly and easily accessible. In addition, the library offers a translation service. Children with a disability and communication needs are supported using a range of tools including Makaton or picture boards.

Additional Boarding out payments may be made if children require specific items (for example hair and skin products). Funding is available for additional support and adaptations where assessed as appropriate to foster carers' homes.

All Looked After Children have access to funding for activities aimed at enhancing education, promoting self-esteem and improving participation.

**We have made the following changes to promote equality and diversity:**

- Fostering policies and procedures have been subject to Equality Impact Assessments. An action plan identified key areas for improvement and these have been addressed. Actions included developing a list of resources, including workers within Rotherham available to offer support to foster carers
- A new Diversity policy was written in February 2009 to provide clear guidance and practical support to both workers and foster carers. This has been disseminated to all foster carers and followed up by workers in supervision sessions
- The training program for Foster Carers now includes mandatory training on Equality and Diversity. Distance Learning and direct Training sessions are both available
- The recruitment of foster carers from the BME community has been pursued utilising the knowledge of the BME community and contacts gained through the Voluntary Sector. Two carers from the predominant BME community are currently being assessed and will provide an effective means of engaging with the community.
- The Disability Matters Aiming High agenda has been embraced and a comprehensive strategy adopted to improve services for children with a disability, an additional worker commenced in post within the Recruitment and Assessment team in April 2009 and 5 more families together carers have been approved since that date
- The Families Together Scheme has continued to expand service provision, currently 21 families receive a service and no family is on the waiting list.
- The Director of Locality services, a Locality Manager and the Operational Manager of Safeguarding spent a week in Romania and Slovakia in May 2009 to share practice and gain insight into Eastern European communities to assist our work with our new local BME population

**We are planning to make these further changes to promote equality and diversity:**

We recognise that this is an area which requires further focus over the next 12 months

- Recruitment of foster carers from the BME community continues to be a key priority. A publicity and marketing plan has been outlined which targets need. The aim of the campaign is to emphasise the diversity of foster carers and ensure that non-traditional families are aware they are welcome to apply. Images used include members of the BME community, a same sex couple and an older male carer. Links within the communities will continue to be developed through close working partnerships with key individuals. This has already had effect in the recruitment of two families from the community.



- We also plan to improve the service to unaccompanied children seeking asylum by forging closer links to the relevant support teams and the asylum seeking population. The integration of children's service provision will bring these services into a unified management structure and assist in ease of access to services.
- A new policy and associated guidance has been drawn up to assist the Fostering teams to provide the best support and advice in respect of BME and cross cultural placements. The work of the team in this area will be closely monitored through staff supervision and file audit.
- We have effectively used Kinship care arrangements to support a child from their own BME community and aim to develop this service further through a review of Kinship care services. Where appropriate we have used Regulation 38 to support immediate placements.

### 3. Barriers to improvement

**We have found that during the last 12 months the following issues have made it hard for us to improve as much as we would have liked:**

**The timescale for change.** Following the Ofsted inspection in May 2008, the Council and Children and Young Peoples service recognized the need to improve services across the board and implemented a comprehensive and ambitious action plan. In July 2009, the work of the Council to improve the Fostering Service was recognized by Ofsted who judged the service to be Adequate with Good in 3 Outcome areas with a further Good in Equality and Diversity. The service continues to strive for Good or Outstanding in all domains. The pace of change continues to be rapid and though staff have welcomed the opportunity to implement good practice models, the requirement to ensure wholesale change across the whole service and to ensure this is understood, embedded and owned at all levels within very tight timescales continues to pose a challenge, albeit one which we have wholeheartedly embraced.

**The increase in the number of LAC.** Rotherham has seen a large increase in the number of LAC, from 353 in May 2008 to 412 in April 2009, this higher number of LAC has been maintained over the last year and we currently have 416 LAC. This mirrors a National trend. Pressure on resources has been high and increased use of the independent sector inevitable.

**Staffing capacity.** The Fostering teams continue to have a low vacancy factor. Staffing is however tight, with caseloads of approximately 20 for the Supervising Social Workers and stretching targets for the Recruitment and Assessment Team. The Supervising Social Workers Team Manager has left the service to take up a promotion opportunity in a different Local Authority. The Training Co-ordinator is on Maternity Leave and other team members have been required to cover this work. Locality teams have had some difficulty in recruitment of qualified social workers and subsequently in ring fencing support for Looked After Children.

**Insufficient foster carers.** The primary difficulty in meeting the Sufficiency duty is the insufficient number of Foster Carers to meet need or provide placement choice. We have had a limited response from the local BME population to the media campaign but will seek to build the response further.

**We have tried to reduce the impact of these barriers by:**

**The Timescale for Change** We have provided structured support to staff as a group and individually. Team Meetings include a monthly extended development meeting to ensure good practice is shared and embedded. The team managers across the LAC Service meet regularly and provide mutual support. The Service Manager has focused on the fostering elements of her role in order to maximize management support. Additional resources have been given by the Performance Directorate, including support in reviewing policies and procedures.

**The increase in the number of LAC.** We have a clear commitment to ensure that we do not over stretch our foster carers or use exemptions except for exceptional cases where an exemption is evidenced to be in the interests of the child and is for a specific short timescale. We have managed this through increased use of the independent sector. The commissioning team have taken a strategic lead in management of placement provision and the Commissioning Strategy is under review within the Care Placements Work Group (see below)

**Staffing Capacity** – The Management and staffing structure of LAC Services is under review to ensure the service continue to be fit for purpose and capable of delivering against the requirements

of the new Draft Care Planning, Placements and Review Regulations. The Manager of the Recruitment and Assessment Team will manage both teams in the interim. Two experienced Senior Practitioners have been promoted to Deputy positions in an interim capacity. A full review of Fieldwork services has been undertaken and a separate LAC Service will be established within the next 3 months to ensure ring fenced quality support to LAC

**Insufficient Foster Carers** – The duty to provide sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of our LAC within the local area has been taken seriously. A Care Placements group, led by the Interim Director as undertaken a full assessment of needs of our LAC and developed an action plan to ensure needs are met. Timescales are tight for delivery within this agenda and effective commissioning will be a key part of the service development. The recruitment and assessment strategy has included commissioning of a media company to work with us on a professional campaign and enhancement of the staffing of the teams. A Commissioning policy is in development to ensure effective commissioning of good quality external resources where necessary. An action plan is in place to engage the local BME population. We have also reviewed our means of assessing foster carers to ensure better quality assessments within clear timescales.

#### 4. VALUE FOR MONEY

**We know that we give a service that provides value for money because:**

The Council undertook a value for money review in Autumn 2009 involving Members, Service Directors and CYPS Service Finance. This involved benchmarking of all services with statistical neighbours, metropolitan authorities and England averages. A risk based approach was established to identify both efficiency savings and prioritisation of investment proposals for the 2010/11 budget. Efficiency savings of £1.043m were identified. Impact assessments were carried out and a realignment of the budget undertaken. The Council has invested an additional £3.1m in 2010/11 in CYPS Services.

Rotherham is a low funded authority, with a per capita allocation for children's services well below the national average and similar authorities.

The council reports that the 2008–09 budgets achieved cashable efficiencies and outturn was within budget.

Improvements in service provision have been monitored closely in order to ensure that we manage a safe service with a commitment to ensuring we meet the needs of each individual child.

Added value to the service is created through use of external funding to support the LAC Activities program and LAC Council

The Leaving Care service was tendered in 2009 to ensure Value for Money. Action for Children have funded an additional post of Participation coordinator and use their corporate partnerships with businesses to bring added value

The Recruitment of Foster Carers has been a priority for the Local Authority and a comprehensive Development plan has been actioned. Invest to save funding has been used to enable a temporary post within the recruitment team to become permanent.



The commissioning team manager is developing a commissioning strategy to ensure Value for Money in the purchase of external placements

A Continuing Care assessment format and decision making process has been established to ensure those children who require joint funding are identified and arrangements agreed.

**Being healthy****Standards**

12

**What we do well:**

We take the health care needs of our Looked after Children seriously and have developed a Multi Agency team (the Looked After and Adopted Children's Support team) to ensure we meet their physical and emotional health care needs.

**INFORMATION FOR CARERS**

The service ensures that foster carers are provided with clear, easily understandable details of the possible health needs of the child. The locality social worker or Looked After Children nurse, where necessary will discuss the health needs of the child with the foster carers prior to placement. The Families Together Scheme ensures the health needs of the child are assessed through pre-placement and risk management agreements. The service assists carers to understand their responsibilities and those of professionals in relation to the health care of the child placed with them via training, advice and supervision.

The Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team (LAACS Team) have developed a series of leaflets aimed at assisting foster carers to understand their child's emotional needs and giving practical tools to assist them with common problems.

Information about healthy diets is shared with foster carers and several foster carers have participated in the Jamie Oliver healthy 'Ministry of Food' campaign in Rotherham. Information about food to meet dietary and cultural requirement is available and we ensure that all children are able to eat food which meets religious requirements and choice, additional funding is available if required

**SUPPORT, INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The designated doctor carries out initial assessments and health plans are agreed, implemented and regularly reviewed with direct involvement of the child or young person. All Looked After Children have an allocated health professional and can contact the designated Looked After Children nurse directly for advice and support. She has been particularly innovative in engaging older Looked After Children who can be reluctant to attend health checks, through pro-active visiting of young people within their own setting, doing pre-health checks herself. Parents and family members are encouraged to participate in health care plans by taking part in reviews.

Looked After Children access appropriate local health services in a variety of ways. The "My Journey So Far" record provides advice in a child-friendly way and assists in self-recording of important information, including their health record and advice on healthy living. It was produced by Looked After children supported by the Children's Rights Service. Looked After Children have also helped promote health assessments by designing a leaflet, which provides information to other children and young people about the process. More information can be found at [www.rotherham-r2r.co.uk](http://www.rotherham-r2r.co.uk)

**DEMONSTRATION OF GOOD HEALTH OUTCOMES**

The current Health returns indicate that 86% of all Fostered Children have both a current Health

assessment and dental check. This is above the national average, we will though continue to strive to ensure all our children have a health assessment and dental check.

### **PARTNERSHIP, MULTI-AGENCY WORKING AND USE OF RESOURCES**

A designated doctor and nurse for Looked After Children work strategically across agencies to develop systems and policies. The designated nurse works borough-wide and directly provides services as well as training and support to school nurses and health workers. A strategic LAC Health task and finish group has met frequently during the last 12 months to ensure LAC Health services are fully compliant with the revised Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children, published in November 2009. A new pathway for referrals, using the Health and Social Care electronic pathways has been developed. A key issue of access to appropriate Health Assessments and services for children living in other local areas was identified and actions taken by the Chief Executive of the PCT.

A Looked After Children's Health Group meets every 2 months to co-ordinate and develop health service provision for Looked After Children. The nurse has direct access to P.C.T. and safeguarding unit systems and strong links with the Independent Reviewing Officers which assists us in planning where there are concerns about Looked After Children's health. When a child enters our care system, the named health professional is informed. The matching process takes into account the need to provide continuity of specialist and mainstream health services.

Health teams within the 7 localities have been restructured and there is now an Advanced Practitioner for Health Visiting and School Nursing in each locality who have been assigned lead areas of practice. Looked After Children feature as one of these priority areas. Co-location of Health and social care professionals has greatly assisted communication.

The Action for Children Bridges Leaving Care Team (Voluntary Sector) includes a health worker who provides individual specialist support to Care Leavers, advice to other workers and works closely with the Looked After Children nurse and the LAC Support team on the development of health services for Looked After Children.

### **TRAINING FOR CARERS**

Induction and ongoing training for foster carers includes management of Looked After Children's health needs and all foster carers are required to attend First Aid training within the first year of their approval

The training program also includes 2 days of 'Healthy Care' training for foster carers to facilitate health promotion, attachment and development training. Specialist training for carers is available, for example, specialist training on autism awareness.

All carers who require moving and handling training have now received part 1 training. An e learning package has been purchased to ensure all carers who administer medication have access to appropriate training. Recruitment to the Families Together Scheme prioritises people with nursing and health care skills. Sexual health training for foster carers is provided online with the Sexual Health in Care Policy. Training for health visitors and school nurses includes wider issues related to Looked After Children including legislation and consent.

A conference and 4 day level 1 training course was commissioned from Dan Hughes, to ensure the best possible training for workers in attachment theory and the DDP model of intervention. As part of the commission 70 foster carers and adopters attended a seminar led by Dan Hughes on Attachment. All reported positively on this unique opportunity to hear directly from such an influential figure in this field.

#### Our evidence to show that we do it well:

- 86% of Fostered Children have a current health assessment and dental assessment.
- 100% of Looked After children participate in the review process.
- The resource base includes accessible information for all Looked After Children, including web based information.
- All foster carer households receive First Aid training within the first year of their approval Training packs include training on Healthy Care and Sexual Health.
- All Foster carers all have information on healthy lifestyles including smoking cessation. Following incorporation of BAAF guidelines on foster care and smoking, a smoking cessation program has assisted 8 carers to cease smoking.
- The LAAC support team utilise a number of assessment tools including the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to assist with individual work but also collate the responses to identify priority areas for development work. The average score for those young people who have undertaken the SDQ is 14.5. This falls within the borderline range for children in terms of emotional and/ or behaviour difficulties
- All carers receive mandatory training on children's attachments within the first year of their approval and a wide range of support materials are available from the LAACS Team

#### What we could do better:

- **C.A.M.H.S.** - The tier 1 and 2 C.A.M.H.S. service for Looked After Children has been brought in-house and a new team has been developed which will meet the primary needs of Looked After children and provide expert support and training for foster carers. Referral pathways for tier 3 and 4 are now streamlined through a single referral route. Further work will ensure an excellent service is provided.
- **LAC Health service.** The PCT Have recognised that the LAC Health service requires review and expansion, a multi agency working group has been established to drive this forward.
- **Health Support for LAC placed out of the Local Authority Area.** We have identified that LAC Placed out of the Local Authority area have a higher incidence of none completion of Health Assessments and may not therefore access appropriate health care support. The LAC Health Work group has taken action at the highest level to ensure appropriate health support by the local PCT.
- **Placement Matching** - This takes into consideration the health needs of Looked After Children as far as possible within the constraints of placement availability. The current recruitment plan will afford increased choice (see Recruitment Plan).

#### How we have improved in the last 12 months:

- The Health needs of Looked After Children has featured prominently in the last two Health Visitor/School Nursing Development days in September 09 and March 10 around the new processes for health assessment and the handover between Named Nurses for children in foster care.
- 
- Recruitment of foster carers has been a priority for the Local Authority and a comprehensive Development plan has been actioned. In the last 12 months 438 enquiries have been made, 54 applications and 22 carers approved.
  - Smoking cessation advice and signposting for foster carers is available and supervision sessions with all carers who are smokers address this issue. Targeted work with foster carers following the implementation of the BAAF guidelines has resulted in 8 foster carers quitting smoking after being supported through smoking cessation programmes.
- The Looked After Children's Support Team are involved in training social workers and foster carers in attachment and emotional health, provide a 6 week attachment based course (fostering security) for foster carers and undertake direct interventions utilizing specific interventions including DDP. Early responses to the input from this team are very positive.
- The LAAC Support team use a number of assessment tools including the SDQ to assist individual work. These are also collated to assist in prioritization of development work.
- Training has been improved, in addition to the First Aid training, The LAAC Team have undertaken attachment training on all induction courses and post approval training and taken 10 foster carers through a 10 week Fostering security course. All training is incorporated into a rolling program to ensure an understanding of attachment and the meaning for the child is at the centre of all our practice.
- The Families Together Scheme has continued to develop service provision to meet the health care needs of disabled children. Currently 30 children access the service. Specialist training for Families Together carers has been developed
- We have improved our policy and guidance on Management of Medication and shared this with all foster carers.
- Each Care Leaver has a named school nurse up to the age of 19 years.
- Health and Social Care are currently working together in order to utilise the SDQ screening within Statutory Health assessments in line with best practice. The LAAC Support Team utilise the BAAF form CR-C 'profile of behavioural and emotional wellbeing' to inform children's placement needs when requested to do so.

**Our plans for improvement in the next 12 months:**

- The LAC Health service is under further review within the PCT. The joint working party has achieved much in the last 12 months and continues to consider the requirements of the service with a view to enhancement of the service provision

- Further development of the comprehensive Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team. The team plans to facilitate further fostering security groups, develop the DDP model of intervention and host the level 2 DDP training with Dan Hughes in 2011
  - Further improve the take up of Health assessments and dental checks amongst the LAC Population, especially amongst those children placed outside the Local Authority Boundaries
  - An audit is being undertaken to ensure the quality of the health plan and to ensure that it informs the statutory review process
- The Recruitment Plan sets clear review timescales within an action plan which is reviewed every 6 months and will continue to improve placement choice.
- The Families Together scheme will be further strengthened through implementation of the Disability Matters agenda; a worker has been employed to recruit Foster Carers for the scheme and a target of 30 additional places by April 2011 has been set. Currently 5 additional carers have been approved; each carer can be matched with up to three children requiring a short breaks service.
- Foster carer training will be enhanced and we will ensure that all carers have a current First Aid certificate.
- Further development of tools to use with the specialist CWDC workbook for Families Together Carers

### ***Staying safe***

#### **Standards**

**3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30**

#### **What we do well:**

The May 2008 inspection and subsequent review inspection in January 2009 identified a number of issues to be addressed. We had too many placements requiring an exemption, these were inadequately risk assessed and were not managed within a sufficiently robust framework. We immediately developed a robust action plan to address these issues. In June 2009, our service was judged by Ofsted to be Satisfactory but two action areas were identified under the Safe Outcome area. To ensure compliance with Regulation governing the immediate placement of children under Regulation 38 and to ensure panel minutes were accurate and reflect the correct approval category. Actions have been taken to address both issues

#### **SUITABILITY OF PLACEMENTS**

The suitability of foster carers and safety of children is ensured through detailed assessments and full statutory checks. Preparation training is detailed and includes managing behaviour, safeguarding and safer caring, it has been recently improved using the Skills to Foster Course developed by the fostering network and plans are in place to improve the training further. The foster home is seen at each fostering social worker's visit and the health and safety in the home is inspected in line with the

annual review process. This process includes car M.O.T. and insurance. An individual and detailed risk assessment is carried out prior to each placement, which includes risks to and from each child in placement. A placement specific safe care agreement is in place for each foster family with an individual agreement for each child in placement. The foster carer agreement ensures that foster carers understand they may be interviewed or visited as part of the commission's inspection process.

Exemptions are now not made except in exceptional circumstances, and only where clearly in the best interests of the child and for a time limited period. The number of exemptions has been reduced to minimal levels. Currently, there are 4 children in 4 placements subject to an exemption. Monitoring of exemptions is undertaken by the Fostering Panel.

Placement matching is undertaken through Resource Panel discussions involving all relevant professionals. The Panel is presented with detailed written information contained within the application form, which includes information on the child's needs and resources required. A matching form is used to ensure placements are carefully matched and any risk factors are understood.

All placements are subject to an individual risk assessment; this has recently been strengthened to incorporate a clear management plan. The risk assessment is undertaken with the foster care, locality worker and child if appropriate. Risk assessments include Moving and Handling, management of complex needs and Medication Management where necessary. Where a child has specific needs due to disability these will be detailed within the risk assessment.

Placement decisions consider the child's assessed racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs and where trans-racial placements are made, the foster family is provided with additional training and support. Planned placements include a period of introduction and allow for the child to express an informed view.

The Resource Panel has been strengthened and is managed at senior management level. Improvements have been made to the processes for requests for approval for agency placements to ensure timely decisions are made with all appropriate information.

There have been 15 unplanned placement endings within the last year (down from 30 last year). We aim to further reduce this number through recruitment of foster carers, improved supervision and enhanced training. Only 1 of these unplanned endings was immediate, all others were following a 28 day notice period. Carers also often extended notice periods in order to ensure a positive move. 8 children went missing from foster placements during the last year (a total of 26 individual episodes). This is a reduction from 10 children missing and 54 episodes last year. All were responded to appropriately and all were in order to meet friends or family.

The Families Together carers receive specific guidance on safer care including recognition of vulnerability of children with a disability and management of personal care. The "safe and sound" book is given to all Families Together carers and a communication book manages communication between home, school and carer.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESOURCES**

Children have access to a range of support services, including access to independent advocacy and through independent visitors. The independent visitor scheme has been recently moved into the operational safeguarding team and is in the process of re-development. Care is taken to ensure that support services to placements match the needs of the child through case planning meetings where necessary and are monitored through supervisory visits. Safety messages are promoted via the Rights to Rights Service. A newsletter for Looked After Children is sent out quarterly, the diary section of 'My Journey So Far' promotes safety at appropriate times of the year, i.e. bonfire night, safety near water and railways etc.

## **BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION**

An anti-bullying policy is in place to assist foster carers to respond appropriately. Looked After Children were central to the development of the policy and foster carers were consulted. The 'Get Real' Team help in liaison with schools and offer direct support to Looked After Children who are subject to bullying or abuse within schools. The 'missing from home' procedure is contained within the foster carer handbook. There is also a comprehensive 'missing from school' procedure. Fostered children may also access additional support to ensure their safety, for example, through specialist learning mentors (provision of support regarding integration and safety within schools as well as education support) and the two projects, 'Risky Business' (in respect of sexual exploitation and vulnerability within relationships) and 'Safe@Last' (working intensively with young runaways). Looked After Children are encouraged to complain or comment on their care and are given clear information about how to do so.

## **CHILDREN'S VIEWS ARE LISTENED TO AND ACTED UPON**

Children's views and experiences are taken seriously. Comments and complaints are encouraged and all children are informed of how to access the children's complaints service. In the last year no Looked after Child has made a complaint against a foster carer.

All children and young people who make complaints are contacted by the Complaints and Customer Service Team on receipt of the complaint and when their complaint has been closed, to ensure that they are satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled. Children and Young People have a complaints leaflet developed in consultation with a group of Looked After Children and was considered excellent as part of the Customer Service Excellence Standard assessment. Future developments to include improving the process for younger children and children with disabilities to make complaints, this will be done in consultation with service users.

Allegations against foster carers are always taken seriously and managed within a safeguarding framework. Fostered children are actively involved in the LAC Council and we have improved services as a result. Fostered Children have also assisted in recruitment of senior managers within the Children and Young People's Service, including the recent appointment of the Director of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting. A balanced view of risk is taken. Children who are fostered are encouraged to participate in school and community activities and an activity budget is available to help them do so. They are encouraged to develop friendships and visits to friends' homes are subject to sensible risk assessments made by foster carers.

## **FOSTERING PANEL**

The Fostering Panel operates within clear written policies and procedures (including its own constitution) and has an independent chair. The constitution has been recently revised and includes referral to the I.R.M. The Panel takes its duties seriously and maintains a vigorous independence with medical and legal representatives assisting the Panel. As part of the corporate parenting function, a Councillor also sits on the Panel. Management information is presented to Panel. All foster carer exemptions are reported to the panel, the panel scrutinises any exemptions closely and monitors timescales rigorously. First annual foster carer reviews are also presented to the Panel along with any reviews following an allegation and any other reviews which highlight specific issues.

The Fostering Panel has been strengthened, The LAC Service Manager has acted as interim panel advisor since September 2009 and a legal representative is also present to advise where necessary. We welcome the rigour that the panel brings and seek to improve performance as a result of



constructive challenge. Panel minutes are scrutinized closely and two new minute takers have recently been appointed to ensure timeliness and accuracy of minutes.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH SAFEGUARDING**

Rotherham has an L.S.C.B. with members at a Senior Management level in each of the agencies. This is independently chaired to ensure rigour and independence.

The Fostering Service takes steps to ensure all children are protected from abuse. All foster carers sign a Safer Care Agreement, which includes them agreeing not to use corporal punishment or humiliating forms of punishment. Family specific and child specific safer caring agreements have been implemented. All carers have an incident book and are required to write up any incidents. The Safeguarding Children Unit manages incidences where Professionals, Carers or Volunteers are subject to allegations of abusive or unsafe practice.

The Managing Allegations Against Professionals, Carers and Volunteers procedure is compliant with Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2006, allegations are managed in a safe and timely manner. In the last year 11 allegations have been made against foster carers, 8 investigations completed in less than 2 months and 1 in less than 4, one is currently outstanding. All 11 completed allegations have been presented to panel for review. This process, in respect of fostering is closely monitored by the Fostering Team Manager and Assistant Safeguarding Manager

Serious Case Reviews are used as an opportunity to reflect on practice and action plans are followed to ensure learning is incorporated at all levels. An S.C.R. review workshop was held in April 2009, jointly led by the Locality Service Director, Targeted Services Director and LAC Services Manager and attended by all LAC Service Social Work staff. This will be repeated within the next 2 months to ensure learning is maintained.

### **SAFE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF AND CARERS**

The June 2009 Fostering inspection identified that some adult household members were without a CRB. We have undertaken a stringent analysis of all placements and instituted strict monitoring to ensure that we are aware of the stage in the process of all CRB's. This process continues and CRB's are closely scrutinised.

Safe recruitment practices are a priority. The Fostering Service is staffed in accordance with standards 3 and 15. All social work staff are appropriately qualified and those involved in assessments have either the requisite experience or are supervised closely by an appropriately qualified social worker. All other professionals are appropriately qualified and trained.

All social work staff receives induction and ongoing training. Foster carer's induction training includes a clear emphasis on safeguarding issues and these are further explored on an individual basis within the assessment. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (L.S.C.B.) Training sub-group co-ordinates safeguarding training across children's services much of which is available to foster carers. Progression is linked to learning and the council has a comprehensive plan to ensure CWDC compliance. N.V.Q. 3 places are ring fenced for foster carers.

In order to improve foster carer access to mainstream training, the fostering recruitment workers attend the first training sessions alongside their foster carers and encourage and support networks of Foster Carers to attend training together.

Supervision of foster carers is undertaken within timescales, is recorded and is signed by all parties.

#### **Our evidence to show that we do it well**

- The LADO procedure is reported to government and has been accepted as compliant with procedures.
- Placement stability has improved and the recent indicator on 3 moves or more within 12 months has an out turn figure of 9.1% lower than the target of 11%. This can only be improved through improvement of the quality of care, including matching processes and training and support to carers.
- 109 Foster Carers have received formal Child protection or Safer care training within the last year. 137 carers have completed interactive DVD courses, 39 have used the interactive Safer Care DVD. This innovative approach to learning allows carers to receive training in their own home, discuss this with their Supervising Social Worker and complete a worksheet to evidence learning.
- All foster carers have a family specific and child specific Safer care agreement
- All children in placement have a full risk assessment including bedroom sharing risk assessment where necessary and carers have copies of all documents
- All Caravan and holiday accommodation used by foster carers for more than three weeks has been fully risk assessed
- The panel Constitution has been recently re written and is compliant with all requirements
- Current performance (final quarter) against National Indicator NI66 'Looked After children cases reviewed within timescales' is 97.5% against a target of 92%

#### **What we could do better:**

- Whilst recruitment of Foster Carers has improved both in terms of numbers, assessment of carers and expectations of carers against minimum standards, we still need to improve placement choice, especially in respect of the BME. Population and for children requiring permanence through fostering.
- We need to improve the quality of our LAC Statutory visits. Our LAC Council tells us that they would like to see more of their Social Workers and to have a more productive relationship with them. This is a positive recognition of the importance of their social worker for them and we plan to work to ensure all our Looked After Children are able to form a good relationship with their social worker. The review of Fieldwork services (below) is integral to improving our social work support to our LAC.
- We need to ensure the quality and consistency of Care Planning improves. As above the review of Fieldwork services is integral part of this. Concerted action is being undertaken to review all plans and ensure they are of the quality required to ensure the child's needs are met within a clear plan.

- Whilst we have improved the involvement of fostered children in our service, an ex-fostered child representation on Foster Panel and involvement in the training of foster carers, we need to build on the existing work in involvement of children in recruitment of staff and foster carers.
- Most unplanned placement endings are followed up by a disruption meeting, chaired by the Team Manager or Senior Practitioner, however we must ensure all unplanned placement endings are followed up by a disruption meeting and that lessons learned are disseminated.
- All foster carers receive supervision at least every 6 weeks and this is recorded and signed by both the carer and Supervising Social Worker. Supervision is used as a tool for challenge and development however we could improve the consistency and quality of challenge and analysis and use regular case file audit to drive forward improvements
- We have improved support systems for Regulation 38 carers considerably through integration of the service within the Fostering service, and creation of a mini team comprising of an assessing and a supervising social worker who work closely with the Team Manager to ensure a seamless and supportive service. We continue to monitor the timescales for approval. A full review of Kinship care service provision is underway as part of the Care Placements work group.
- All decisions to allow related or non related children to share a bedroom are subject to a risk assessment. A number of children in foster care do currently share bedrooms and we plan to reduce this number through ongoing review of carer approval, consideration of financial support to create bedroom space and a requirement of spare bedroom capacity in the recruitment of new carers.
- Following G. V. Southwark the service has conducted a review of provision for Homeless 16 and 17 year old young people. An immediate response is in place with a protocol between Neighborhoods and Adult Services and CYPS to ensure that our vulnerable young people receive immediate assessment, clear support and appropriate accommodation. The service is seeking to improve this service and a multi Agency Team is reviewing the service offered to 16 and 17 year old homeless young people.

#### **How we have improved in the last 12 months:**

- We have reduced the number of children requiring an exemption from 42 in 2008 to 4 and will continue to monitor use of exemptions closely. We have amended our practice in respect of exemptions and have a clear authorization process through the ADM and panel to ensure compliance.
- We have improved the challenge process within independent review of Foster Carers through placement of this service within the safeguarding team, all reviews are scrutinised and commented upon by a safeguarding manager.
- Fostered children within the LAC Council meet regularly with service directors and the Lead Member for Children's Services this allows them to form a relationship and discuss any issues in a safe environment.
- We have ensured that all foster carer agreements reflect the approval of the carer and are signed by all parties

- Improved risk assessments are in place for every child in a foster placement, these are undertaken in conjunction with the foster carer, child's social worker and child if appropriate.
- All foster carers now have an improved family specific safe care agreement and individual agreements are in place for each child in placement
- We have also ensured that all Health and Safety risk assessments are reviewed annually, have clear actions and are signed
- Assessments of Prospective Foster Carers have been improved through training of the Assessing Social Workers, use of the Competency based format and improved use of analysis. These are closely monitored by the Recruitment and Assessment Team Manager and scrutinized by Panel. Ongoing improvements are maintained through a dialogue between the Panel Chair and tea, facilitated by the panel advisor.
- We have also improved the assessment of Friends and Family carers (including Regulation 38 carers) through use of the Family rights Goup assessment format. This is fully endorsed by BAAF and the Fostering Network and ensures a close focus on the issues and benefits of care within the family
- We have reviewed the physical capacity of all foster carer households against the approval of carers. Some carers have had their approval category amended. Two carers have received funding to improve their homes and two have funding applications currently under consideration.
- LAC Statutory visits are closely monitored by the Team and Locality Managers for compliance and quality.
- We have reduced the number of children sharing a bedroom and have a plan to reduce this number further (see above)

**Our plans for improvement in the next 12 months:**

- Improvements in placement choice, especially in respect of BME and permanence foster care.
- We have improved the involvement of the child and family in placement matching decisions in planned placements, through careful planning of visits and feedback but will work to further improve this process.
- To reduce the number of children sharing a bedroom in a planned and structured way.
- Build on the existing work in involvement of children in recruitment of staff and foster carers.
- Develop the foster carers' voice in induction training for social workers.
- To assist social workers to spend more productive time with the children on their caseload who are Looked After through the fieldwork review and development of LAC teams. To also improve the quality of LAC visits, building on comments made by the LAC council about the importance they place on their relationship with their social worker.
- To further improve supervision of foster carers and ensure that the child really is at the centre of all work through further training for supervising social workers, challenge in supervision of

Supervising Social Workers and ongoing audit of case files

- To improve representation from the BME community on the Fostering Panel, when a vacancy arises
- To re-develop the volunteer visiting scheme which will sit within the Operational Safeguarding service to ensure quality support and independence of the visitors.

## ***Enjoying and achieving***

### **Standards 7, 13 and 31**

#### **What we do well:**

We strive to ensure all our LAC are well supported achieve to their capability and enjoy life. In order to achieve this, we work hard to meet individual need.

#### **DIVERSITY**

The assessment and preparation training of prospective foster carers includes a focus on issues of diversity and equality. The training focuses on respect for the child's individual background and issues of discrimination. Information on differing religions and cultures is given to all foster carers. Emergency foster placements are reviewed at the one month statutory review. If the child cannot be placed according to their needs, support is given to the placement to ensure the best possible means of promoting their individual requirements.

Children with a disability receive specific services and additional support. Direct payments are available to promote independence and inclusion in the community. Rotherham M.B.C. has actively promoted this scheme and increased uptake. Rotherham Y.M.C.A.'s 'Time Out' scheme offers leisure activities for disabled children including a full program during school holiday periods. Short breaks are available through Families Together and residential provision, with 21 children currently accessing the short breaks service. Fostered children, who have a disability, are also able to access residential services, outreach and family support services.

#### **EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT**

The June 2008 Ofsted inspection identified that our overall strategy in education and achievement is under developed and a number of relevant documents are out of date. We have responded by working across the service to develop better Personal Education Plans and guidance, to develop an early years P.E.P. and to meet requirements within the Care Matters agenda.

All Looked After Children are on a school roll and those who on entry to care need to change schools are allocated a place within 18 school days. All necessary support is put in place for a child to remain in their original school once they become Looked After. A child only changes school if issues around protection arise or if it cannot be avoided.

The Fostering Service gives a high priority to supporting the child's educational needs and provision is effective in supporting Looked After Children and young people's well-being and educational progress. The foster care agreement ensures foster carers understand their role in day-to-day school contact and (in conjunction with Get Real) providing a structured occupation for those not accessing education during school hours. Foster carers contribute to Statutory Review and Personal Education Plan (P.E.P.) meetings where key information is shared to ensure specific support and plans can be put in place for each child. Focused P.E.Ps. are individualised, regularly reviewed, supported and closely monitored by the multi-disciplinary education support team (Get Real). Our research showed 73% of foster carers always attended the child's P.E.P. review and 83% of those who attended found the meeting useful. Foster carers' work with the Get Real Team in supporting individualised packages to maximise educational potential. Support packages also include provision of essential items, support for school activities and other life-enhancing activities, contained within the Additional Boarding Out procedures.

Homework support is now available through the teachers at the Get Real Team by request. The teams also have good links with local Sheffield University's to provide mentoring support.

The 'laptop lending library' which provided laptops for foster carers has now been extended and all Looked After Children in Year 11 who are undertaking examinations or those in further education are now loaned a laptop for the full academic year.

Monitoring processes for Year 6 and Year 11 pupils have become more finely tuned and are able to react much quicker to support needs identified, resulting in improved outcomes at K.S.2 and G.C.S.E. Aspirational interviews are now conducted with all Year 9 students, to assist in supporting them to aim high and achieve their ambitions.

The success of the work in this area is reflected in the achievements of Looked After children. Educational achievement, attendance and support are improving. Personalised and intensive intervention has resulted in sustained improvements in G.C.S.E. results, 72% of LAC, achieved at least 1 A – G, 45% achieved 5 A-G and 12% children achieved 5 A - C grade G.C.S.Es. There have been no permanent exclusions of a Rotherham Looked After Child since 2004. Non-attendance of Looked After Children in care for 12+ months shows a positive trend following the impact of tighter systems for reporting and following up absence. The figures to date for this academic year show a positive trend no children placed with L.A. Foster Carers have 25 or more days absent this year. The Rights 2 Rights service runs a voucher draw for full attendance each half term.

Post 16 Education support is managed through the Action for Children Bridges (Leaving Care) Project. Generous financial support is given to all young people aged 16 and 17. The Local Authority will also fund Care Leavers to attend all first education courses at any level for Care Leavers over 18 and will consider all applications from Care Leavers who for whatever reason need a second attempt at education. Care Leavers at University receive a bursary of at least £5,000 dependent on need and expenses. 11 Care Leavers are currently in Higher Education. A further 8 care leavers plan to go to university next year and have been offered conditional places. All Care Leavers in education or who wish to return to education have the support of a personal advisor.

We strive to ensure that our children have the best possible start in life. All LAC aged 5 and under receive books from the Dollywood foundation, in partnership with Dolly Parton. These are books especially chosen to promote an enjoyment of reading and pre-reading skills.

### **FOSTER CARERS TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

A guidance document on information sharing and roles and responsibilities for all professionals and carers involved in supporting the education of Looked After Children is given to all Foster Carers

A free annual conference aims to raise the issue of working together to improve educational outcomes for Looked After children among carers, social workers, school staff, governors and Elected Members. The most recent conference focused on children's attachments and the impact on Education.

Specific training packages are delivered to foster carers on understanding their role in supporting Looked After Children's education.

### **ENJOYMENT AND LEISURE**

The Activity Co-coordinator for Looked After Children has a yearly budget of £28,000 to support learning and developing new skills Funding has included funding for music lessons, martial arts and football, as well as the provision for group activities during the holidays which foster carers and their own children are invited to participate in. Over 200 LAC have benefited from the activity fund in some way. Swimming lessons have been organised through the Council and all Looked After Children are encouraged to have lessons in order to ensure this important skill is learnt, The Activity Co-ordinator also runs a drama group which produces a yearly production and is supported by staff from across Children and Young People's Services and the N.C.H. Bridges Leaving Care Team. 30 LAC Children and young people took part this year and 20 gained either an OCN or AQA Award.

The mainstream budget was complimented by additional funding through external channels. Including Children's Fund Monies and grants from the Rotherham Chamber to enhance the work of the LAC Council. . A recent award of £21,000 has been granted from the Extended Schools Activity budget. This has enabled the project to increase the extra curricular activities for our Looked After Children.

### SHORT-TERM BREAKS

Short-term breaks for children in foster care are provided for children with a disability by the Families Together Service. Placement matching is undertaken within a Families Together Panel which meets monthly. The partnership between birth parents and foster carers is clear and covered within the pre-placement agreement.

### Our evidence to show that we do it well:

- Continued maintenance and improvement of Looked After Children's G.C.S.E. results in 2008/9 72% LAC achieved at least 1 A –G grade GCSE, 45% achieved 5 A -G and 12% achieved 5 A –C .  
Our figure compare favourably against the national average in 2007/8  
National average Lac 1 A-GGCSE = 65%  
5 A-G GCSE= 43%  
5 A-C GCSE= 13%  
We are not satisfied with this figure and will strive to improve performance
- Low exclusion rates, no permanent exclusions for Looked After children. The total number of days of education for LAC lost due to exclusions (all types) has reduced considerably over the last year from 514 in 06/07 to 197 in 07.08 and 99 in 08/09
- 15.7% LAC missed 25 days or more schooling in 2008/9 a reduction from 20.1% in the previous year
- Looked After Children participate in the 'Aim Higher' Programme.
- Over 200 Looked After Children involved in activities supported and funded through the LAC activity programme.
- Training programme for foster carers on LAC and education.



- Lap top lending library and computers with internet access in all Children's Homes.
- Currently 11 Care Leavers are being supported in Higher Education and a further 8 expected to go next year
- 20 LAC who attend the Drama Group achieved an OCN or AQA qualification

#### **What we could do better**

- Improve the choice of Foster Placements further in line with the Assessment of Need and Recruitment plan.
- Improve the quality of support for children from the BME population through continued improved links with the local populace and better training for foster carers
- Although education outcomes are improving, we must strive to continue to improve outcomes for all LAC
- Ensure that all LAC have a current PEP relevant to their needs and that the PEP is a live document The present position with regard to PEPS is that 73.9 % have been completed within 12 months and 50.4 % with in 6months.
- Improve participation of parents in planning for their child's education.
- The Get Real Team have delivered training packages along with a multi-agency education conference. This assists foster carers to work with the directorate to improve outcomes for Looked After children's educational achievements. This training program needs to be delivered to all carers

#### **What we have improved in the last 12 months:**

- LAC Educational achievement continues to show a steady improvement
- More Looked After Children and foster carers take part in activities funded by the Active Project - Over 220 children, supported by 53 foster carers.
- Drama production developed in collaboration with R.C.A.T. now includes a formal qualification and the members are supported to attain this 20 Students achieved an AQA or OCN
- Development of closer links with Sheffield University and Sheffield Hallam University through expansion of the 'Aim Higher' program. 24 LAC attended one of several jointly devised events held by the Sheffield Universities with an aim to improve aspirations
- All carers are now expected to undertake mandatory training and have an individual training plan, reviewed within their annual review. Traditional day training continues to be popular with a total of 334 carer days training (some attended more than one session). 487 carers are currently working on interactive DVD's and 134 work sheets have been completed.

- E learning and distance learning packages have been developed to provide a range of learning environments. Other training may be delivered by the supervising social worker in individual sessions.
- A systematic approach to implementation of CWDC workbooks has been adopted, including accreditation of learning, more focused supervision and an ongoing series of well attended workshops. This has been enhanced by improved worksheets linked to each standard. Experienced Carers now host CWDC Coffee mornings to assist other carers to develop the necessary skills
- The Get Real Team have developed and delivered training for Designated Governors and Designated Teachers to enhance working practice in line with the Every Child Matters agenda.

#### **Our plans for improvement in the next 12 months:**

- Funding from the “Disability Matters” agenda has been granted to further develop the Short Breaks service for Disabled children and their families. This has enabled employment of a full time social worker within the Recruitment and Assessment Team with a target of enhancing the scheme by 30 placements over the next 2 years. We are on target to achieve this.
- Enhance involvement in the ‘Aim Higher’ program to build on existing relationships with the local universities to get Looked After Children involved in university life from an early age and raise aspirations. Embed and extend the existing mentoring links between Looked After Children and students in both universities.
- Ongoing review of Training packages for foster carers to ensure continued learning
- Continue to develop services in line with the recommendations from the ‘Care Matters’ White Paper, the 14 to 19 agenda and other future legislation. Further development of the Get Real Team into a virtual school model in line with ‘Care Matters’. The Get Real Team has moved to the School Inclusion Directorate to ensure appropriate levels of authority within the school system, whilst maintaining clear protocols with the LAC service.
- Ensure all children have a current and good quality PEP and that the Foster Carer understands their role. This will be strengthened through further Training for all foster carers, the Imagination Library, and the enhancement of the Designated teacher role. Social Workers performance in this area is subject to close monitoring.
- Monitor completion of CWDC training closely and ensure completion within timescales
- We have planned a two day INSPIRE Rotherham day at the high quality Magna venue with contributors from education support services from the Local Authority, Voluntary and Independent sector aimed at providing tools for foster carers to use to promote secure attachments and learning for children of all ages. All attendees will also be able to spend the day in the award winning Magna science museum. This event has been co-ordinated by the Get Real Education support team. The fostering team has a stall on Life Story Work with free support packs for carers.

## ***Making a positive contribution***

Standards

10 and 11

### **What we do well:**

We pride ourselves on our commitment to ensure that every child is able to contribute to their own plan, service development and to their community.

### **PROMOTING CONTACT**

Contact is actively encouraged for every Looked After Child with their family and carer, particularly those placed away from home, and is monitored and reviewed through the statutory review process at least every 6 months. Specialist contact workers have been recruited and a specific budget is available to cover associated costs for contact including for those Looked After Children placed out of the borough. Foster carers are advised of the importance of supporting family contact through preparation training and the foster care agreement. Support is given to the carer in dealing with difficult contact arrangements through fostering social worker supervision sessions and financial support is given where appropriate to facilitate contact sessions. The views of the child are sought within statutory reviews.

The Letterbox coordinator for adoptive families will support LAC who's siblings have been adopted with both direct and indirect contact. She has developed comprehensive systems for monitoring sibling contact through the letterbox and encouraging contact, including support to write letters, the take up from birth families has been very good.

Currently no sibling groups are not placed together where the Care Plan is for them to be placed together.

### **CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION**

Looked After Children comment on new policies, procedures and leaflets, giving views directly to Elected Members and Senior Management through the LAC Council. The LAC Council has influenced the development of service provision from direct practical suggestions on enhancement of contact with their Social Worker and recruitment and retention of foster carers to the development of a ring fenced resource for Looked After Children. Initiatives and opportunities include development of the voice of the child throughout the induction training and assessment process for foster carers, including tools for establishing the views of birth children. The Orchard Flyers Group (which includes children who are in foster care) was established in 2002 to enable young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability to have voice and influence.

Looked After Children, their carers and parents are encouraged to participate in planning, placement and review meetings where key decisions are made and their views are taken into account. Children with communication difficulties are supported where necessary with some carers having skills in the use of Makaton, B.S.L. and picture boards. Personal Education Plan and Pathway Planning Meetings are also held in line with statutory requirements and support may be provided through the Children's Rights Service. There are consultation forms (with access online), feedback forms, children's forums and feedback meetings with managers. The Online Review Forms are promoted by Rights 2 Rights (R2R). Every child receives a letter prior to their review encouraging them to fill in a consultation paper and the process to follow. E-mail links are available via the R2R website. All I.R.Os. speak separately to every child who does not wish to participate in their review.

Transitions of placement, education and other services, including care placements, are managed effectively within the service and children are supported by fieldwork staff. Education transitions are monitored by the Looked After Children Multi-Disciplinary Education Team. Looked After Children have priority of admission to schools. Action for Children, Bridges Leaving Care Team, Children and Young People's Services and Connexions monitor all Looked After Children and Care Leavers from Year 11 to ensure support is available.

### **CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

Looked After Children are advised of their right to make a complaint at point of entry and this is reinforced within placements and at every review. Rotherham Rights 2 Rights Service also offers an advocacy service and the website provides information to Looked After Children on making a complaint and accessing advocacy. Children and Young People were also involved in the revision of the Children's complaint leaflet including a competition for the design of the leaflet.

#### **What we could do better:**

- Recruitment of foster carers to improve placement choice and better matching for contact arrangement
- The volunteer visitor scheme has been restructured and reinforced however it still needs to be expanded and promoted to ensure all LAC who do not have family contact are supported and encouraged to have a volunteer visitor
- Contact is supported by a busy social work team and inevitably, occasionally contact has to be rearranged. Communication in some instances with the child and foster carer could be improved.
- The LAC Council is in the early stages of development and implementation of actions and feedback to the group must be monitored to ensure progress is made as swiftly as possible.
- Further improvements in transitions into the work place, especially for young people with complex needs.

**How we have improved in the last 12 months:**

- The LAC Council has been established, meets regularly with Directors and elected members and has begun to influence service development. The group has published their first Magazine to be given to all LAC which aims to promote the work of the group, invite new members to the group and invite contributions to work in progress. The work of the group has been financially supported by grants from the Rotherham Chamber.
- The Activity Project and the LAC Council were nominated for the CYPS Achievement Award (2010)
- The Orchard Stars were nominated for and won the CYPS Achievement Award (2010)
- The LAC Council received positive feedback from the Director of Children's Rights, Dr Roger Morgan, for their participation in the Ministerial Stock Take.
- The LAC Council members were awarded funding from the Mayors Charity for their valuable contribution and involvement in setting up and running of the LAC Council. At an awards event, the Mayor, gave a particular commendation to the way that the young people presented themselves and said that they were a credit to RMBC.
- The LAC Council have accessed funding through LABGI funding
- LAC have more opportunities to play an active role in contributing to the decisions and plans regarding their life through a variety of methods from individual and group discussions to on line intranet forms.
- The Drama production for Looked After Children and Care Leavers has become an annual event and involved last year 30 fostered children. Workers and managers contribute to the final show. An innovative partnership with the local college has increased opportunities for fostered children to develop skills and social confidence through participation in drama. This year 20 fostered children gained either an AQA or OCN qualification through participation in the drama group.
- Appointment of a letterbox coordinator for adoptive families ensures LAC who's siblings have been adopted can access good support to maintain contact.
- Foster Carer reviews are conducted by specialist independent IRO's who ensure that they incorporate the views of all LAC and birth children in the placement.
- The volunteer visitor scheme has been placed under the Operational Safeguarding team to assist with communication with I.R.O.'s. A recent recruitment drive has resulted in the recruitment and training of 4 volunteer visitors, enhancement of this service is a priority

**Our plans for improvement in the next 12 months:**

- We plan to build on our developing links with the local BME community to encourage more members of the community to apply to foster. We also intend to target our recruitment of foster carers with specific skills to provide appropriate foster care to meet the needs of all the children in Rotherham.

- The LAC Council will continue to develop and inform service development. Additional Support to the LAC Council will be given by the Voice and Influence team. This will also ensure the independence of the council.
- Contact workers have been employed to ensure contact is supported as agreed in the child's plan. We plan to further improve contact for Fostered Children through a review of Contact support systems to ensure this is always given the appropriate level of priority. A Locality Manager is taking the lead in feasibility work with the Voluntary sector to consider models of delivery. We will continue to work with foster carers to assist them to understand the importance of contact for the child and to support the child through any difficulty around contact. The LAC Support team will work with social workers and carers to ensure the child's needs in respect of contact and wishes and feelings are understood.

## ***Achieving economic well-being***

Standards

14 and 29

### **What we do well:**

Our Leaving Care service is delivered in partnership with Action for Children who work in partnership with us to offer a comprehensive service to our Care Leavers. We are especially proud of the support we give to our Care Leavers in Further and Higher Education.

### **PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD**

91% of our Eligible LAC are engaged in employment, education and training. All our Looked After Children over 15 and a half are referred to the N.C.H. Bridges Project which provides leaving care services on behalf of the authority. Pathway plans are completed within 3 months of their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. 97% of Care Leavers actively participate in the planning process and good quality personal and welfare support is available to all Care Leavers, including accredited programs run by Action for Children focusing on parenting and Financial Management through an innovative “Financial Futures Programme” developed in Rotherham by Action for Children and Barclays Bank. Foster carers are actively encouraged to contribute to the needs assessment and pathway planning process and many have developed clear skills in this respect. A corporate work experience scheme has enabled Care Leavers to gain valuable experience in the ‘Family Firm’. Action for Children has further developed the model to include their wide range of corporate partners.

There are clear written requirements of what is expected of foster carers in terms of preparation for independent living, contained within the foster care manual and the leaving care policy and procedures. The Leaving Care Team attends foster care support group meetings to discuss their work.

### **WORK IN PARTNERSHIP**

A transitions group meets 3 times per year. This is collaboration between Action for Children, Bridges Leaving Care Team, Connexions and the Get Real Team and monitors every Looked After Child and Care Leaver between the ages of 15 and 19 ensuring there is an identified worker and clear plans in place for every child.

Care Leavers can access good quality mental health support and a health worker who is part of the LAAC Support Team provides advice and supports group work. Youth Start offers confidential support and counseling around issues affecting the emotional and mental well-being of young people.

### **FOSTER CARER ALLOWANCES**

All foster carers, including kinship carers, receive allowances commensurate with National Minimum Requirements and foster carers also have access to additional Boarding Out payments to ensure children fostered have both appropriate levels of care and access to funding for more stretching activities. There is a written policy on fostering allowances and each carer receives an annual breakdown of payments made. Foster care payments are linked to a clear skills-based progression route. The Families Together fostering payments have been revised in order to reflect the skilled contribution these carers make to the lives of children with a disability. These payments are higher than the national average.

- Currently foster carers who wish to continue to offer a home to their fostered child over the

age of 18 have the option of assessment as Supported Lodging Providers through the N.C.H. Accommodation Project, which enables them to continue to receive financial support as well as ongoing supervision and advice. We await government guidance regarding fostering beyond 18 but are in a good position to implement this development.

- The specialist activity scheme and Bridges Project work together to enable children in foster care to increase their employability through access to funding for “added value” activities. For example, in the last year, 27 young people accessed driving lessons and 35 young people have accessed training courses provided by Action for Children. 30 Care Leavers regularly play football for Action for Children.

#### **Our evidence to show that we do it well:**

- All LAC and Care leavers referred to Action for Children have a Pathway plan and 96% of the plans have been reviewed within the last 6 months
- 97% LAC and Care leavers participate in their own pathway planning process
- All care leavers in the age 19 cohort are deemed to be in Satisfactory accommodation
- 91% LAC aged 16+ are in Education, Training or Employment
- Foster Carer payments are above the government minimum recommended amount, friends and family carers are paid the same rate as mainstream carers and Additional Boarding Out payments are made for a wide variety of needs.
- There is a good progression system and foster carers on level 2 and 3 receive additional payments.

#### **What we could do better:**

- There is a well-established competency-based progression scheme, linking enhanced payments to skills development. Training of foster carers has been enhanced through the employment of a specialist Training Officer and has received additional funding to purchase training programmes. A clear program is in place to ensure all carers complete the CWDC workbook and though this is now on track it will require further focused work over the next year to ensure compliance. The training officer is now on maternity leave and her work is being undertaken by the Recruitment Team Social Workers. Ongoing monitoring is required to ensure compliance.
- The LAC Health service has been enhanced through the development of the LAAC support team and the incorporation of the LAC Nurse and Care Leavers Health visitor into the team, the LAC Health service and CAMHS service in transitions does though require further enhancement. Plans are in place to rectify this
- Although we have achieved a good performance in Education, Training and Employment for LAC post 16, performance for Care Leavers could still be improved. The transitions group requires review to ensure all children, Looked After in Y11 have a smooth transition into Education, Training or Employment.



**How we have improved in the last 12 months:**

- The Post 16 Accommodation service managed by Action for Children has been in further development. A core and cluster model of service provision has enabled streamlined support to a wider group of Care Leavers
- The foster carer training programme has been greatly enhanced
- The Care 2 work Strategy has been incorporated into our work with Care Leavers and senior managers across the organisation have been involved in the development of an action plan, signed off by the Executive Director.

**Our plans for improvement in the next 12 months:**

- The Semi independent living unit is currently in temporary accommodation as the existing unit is being completely re-built with the assistance of Housing Corporation funding. A new purpose build unit will be on stream from June 2010. This will increase the units available from 6 to 10 with 2 two bedded units available for Mother and baby placements. One of the two bedded units has been designed with disability access in mind.
- The Connexions service has been improved by the placement of a Connexions worker within each locality. These workers prioritise support to LAC and Care Leavers and work closely with Action for Children to ensure targeted support. The Targeted support team of Connexions workers has been brought together to ensure consistency of response but an identified worker will continue to provide support to both the Get Real Team and Leaving Care service.
- Further development work has been identified within the Care 2 work strategy, to improve connectivity of service delivery.

## **Management**

**Standards** 1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 32

### **What we do well:**

Rotherham M.B.C. has a strong commitment to corporate parenting. There are clear structures of accountability including robust Cabinet and Scrutiny systems. The Children and Young People's Service is well established and the Children and Young People's Plan includes clear priorities in respect of Looked After children

### **MANAGEMENT TEAM**

The May 2008 Ofsted inspection of Fostering raised concerns about the organisation and management of the service. The Fostering service required modernisation and structured oversight, including clarity around decision making and audit of files. We have responded to these comments with an overview of Management support and audit systems. A strategy for delegation of responsibility and decision making has been drawn up to ensure clarity of expectations and supervision is undertaken against clear performance criteria.

. The Looked After Children's Senior Management Team is undergoing review through the Children's Services Integration Agenda and innovative means of adding value to the service are under consideration. The Fostering Team's ideas and views are valued and the service manager attends regular service development workshops. These include briefings on key policy and practice developments.

The fostering service management team has been restructured through consolidation of the two teams into one team with a manager and two deputies. This will ensure strategic development across both teams. An additional post of Panel Advisor and Practice development coordinator has been developed to ensure quality ring fenced support for our Panels and to assist the management team in driving forward improvements to the service.

### **PLANNING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS**

The Planning and Quality Assurance Directorate has offered enhanced support and guidance to the Fostering service to effectively monitor progress against the development and action plan. A new Performance Management system is in place in order to ensure qualitative as well as quantitative scrutiny of work at all management levels. The council has a vigorous performance management framework. Under performing services are monitored by performance clinics where targets are set and monitored. A new Recruitment Plan has been adopted and an Integrated Training and Development plan is in place.

The timeliness and quality of Care Plans have been identified as an area for improvement and a clear plan is in place to audit all Care Plans and ensure they both accurately reflect the current plan for the child and provide a good tool for ensuring all needs are met in a timely manner.

## STAFFING

Robust Human Resources policies are in place to support all aspects of staffing. The staff team is organised in an efficient manner. There is a clear progression framework for staff, with appropriate levels of delegation and accountability. Administrative and management systems, including supervision and performance management systems ensure the team operates effectively and within the standards framework. Professional advice is easily available to foster carers and fostering social workers.

The Fostering Teams benefit from a number of staff members with lengthy experience in the field including 4 principal practitioners and in addition two new re-designated posts of Deputy Manager. New recruits into the service from locality backgrounds have enhanced the service through their knowledge of current locality practice and enthusiasm for Fostering. A new foster care recruitment and retention plan is in place, which has resulted in increased levels of recruitment as well as improved assessments.

Locality Teams have faced ongoing difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified social workers and managers. A comprehensive action plan is in place including a restructure of the service, use of agency staff, golden hello payments and a comprehensive integrated training, progression and support package for all workers. This is now paying dividends.

The service restructure will create a specialist LAC service to ensure quality ring fenced support for our children.

Training of foster carers is a key priority for the service and has been enhanced over the previous 12 months with the employment of key staff and funding for training packages. A clear program is in place to ensure compliance with CWDC standards. An annual training program has been devised specifically for foster carers as well as multi-agency training and information is sent to foster carers at intervals throughout the year. Training for the Fostering Team includes access to specialist training where appropriate, including one-to-one training where the need is identified. For example, within the Families Together Scheme, carers are routinely trained in specialist interventions to support the health needs of the children in their care. Informal learning opportunities are offered through a lively program of presentations and discussions within support groups. Individual learning is supported within supervision sessions and reviewed annually. A new training and development policy is in development, further clarifying the links between training, learning and progression. Training is evaluated and feedback given by trainers where any issues arises. New foster carers are accompanied on mainstream training by their assessing social workers to enable them to build confidence in attending multi-agency training.

The foster carers' handbook details the strategy for working with and supporting carers including the procedure to deal with investigations into allegations. There is a clear policy framework, which outlines the circumstances in which a carer should be removed from the foster care register. A named, appropriately qualified worker supervises each foster carer and visits are made within statutory guidelines.

Each year, a celebration party is held for all carers and children where the Mayor presents long service awards to carers. Our longest serving carer has achieved 35 years and many have served over 20 years.

## RECORDING AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

We work hard to ensure that Case records for both children and foster carers are up-to-date and of a good standard. Some recording is undertaken on the "SWIFT" database, ensuring all approved workers are able to access up-to-date information. We plan to enhance our electronic recording practice and the Fostering team manager will take a strong lead in this area. There is a phased introduction of E.S.C.R which will improve accessibility. There are clear processes for quality assurance of files, including a comprehensive performance management framework. There is an access to files protocol for foster carers and Looked After Children. Foster carers may contribute their own wording to their Form F or review. The child's views are evidenced through their comments within their review, including an ability to comment online. Both Looked After children and birth children contribute directly to foster carers' reviews, through a questionnaire and the Fostering IRO will seek out the views of children within the household if they do not wish to submit a questionnaire. Administrative procedures are managed by a committed and experienced administration team and include prompt response to enquiries from prospective foster carers and management of statutory checks.

### **KINSHIP CARERS**

We have created a new mini team to support Kinship carers, this team is directly supported by the Fostering Team Manager. All friends and family carers, are allocated a specialist principle fostering social worker and receive the same high quality support as other foster carers. The principle Practitioner is driving service development including development of a specialist support group and is pioneering the use of SGO's. The expectations of their care are consistent with those within fostering whilst recognising the over-riding importance of family ties. They are expected to access training and some are active members of local support groups. A full review of Kinship Care services in line with the draft statutory guidance is underway under the remit of the Care Placements work group.

### **Our evidence to show that we do it well:**

- The Children's Locality Team meets regularly to ensure best outcomes for Looked After Children, the LAC Service Manager participates in all Locality Management meetings. The Looked After Children's Management Team and Fostering Teams meet regularly to improve practice and develop services.
- A full review of Foster Carer Training has been undertaken and a range of Training DVD's developed, these have been extremely popular.
- Policies and procedures are comprehensive and used to inform practice.
- Administration and recording procedures are clear and consistent. Enhanced quality assurance procedures evidence audit at all levels
- Foster carers report a high degree of satisfaction in all feedback. The recent satisfaction survey reported a 97% satisfaction rate with the service from the fostering team, an improvement on 85% in 2007.
- The Lead Member for Children's services has been well briefed about the fostering service, he has requested regular reports and chaired a performance clinic to review recruitment of Foster Carers.
- LAC Scrutiny Sub Panel have recently undertaken a Corporate parenting review and have

recommended development of a Corporate Parenting Board which will ensure LAC are at the Centre of all our work.

#### **What we could do better:**

- Both Fostering Teams have worked hard to amend practice and embed learning highlighted within the Ofsted inspection and review inspection. The teams are positive about the changes and team discussions evidence a clear understanding of the rationale for the changes. It is now vitally important to ensure that all developments in practice are embedded and maintained over time. We need to ensure that we always evidence appropriate challenge in Supervision of foster carers.
- Care Plans have been subject to Audit and we need to ensure consistent quality reports.
- As stated previously recruitment of foster carers continues to be a high priority.
- A new structured training plan has been developed to clarify expectations of Foster Carers. This includes mandatory training and expectations of ongoing learning as well as the links between training and the progression framework. This work will be fully implemented over the next 12 months
- Performance and Quality Management has been vastly improved over the last 12 months, through timely information, support from the performance team and a focus on performance within the LAC management team agenda, however we must ensure that we fully embed this practice in order to maintain improvements over time
- Case file audits has highlighted an inconsistency of practice between workers and some areas of weak practice. This is being addressed through training, supervision and practice sharing within team meetings.

#### **How we have improved in the last 12 months:**

- The management of the Fostering teams is undertaken within a clear audit framework, a spreadsheet has been developed to ensure compliance at all stages and files are regularly monitored for quality by the team manager and service manager. This has driven ongoing improvements in the service.
- The extended LAC Managers group now includes the Rights 2 Rights Manager and IRO Manager. The group continues to meet on a monthly basis to manage performance, share information and undertake development work
- A clear system for service development and consultation utilising the skills and experience of the Fostering Team has been established through the use of regular workshops. The views of foster carers are established through regular meetings with a group of Foster Care representatives.
- The LAC Council has continued to find innovative means of liaising with all LAC to ensure they have a clear means of influencing decision making
- The performance management framework has been strengthened in order to ensure

## **41 Fostering Services self-assessment**

qualitative and quantitative evaluation of work. A specific framework for use within the Fostering Team has been developed.

- The Management of the service has been strengthened to include an overarching Fostering Team Manager and two Deputies to manage the previous two Fostering teams. A new post of Panel Advisor and Practice Development Consultant has been developed and will be advertised shortly.
- Recruitment of Foster Carers has been a priority for the Local Authority and a comprehensive Development plan has been actioned including the appointment of a new Recruitment and Assessment Team Manager post and enhancement of staffing within the team. In the last 12 months 438 enquiries have been made (an increase from 171 enquiries in 2008/9), 54 applications (19 applications in 2008/9) and 22 carers approved (11 carers approved in 2008/9).
- Training of Foster Carers has been reviewed, strengthened and placed within a clear structure
- The system of delegation of responsibility has been clarified within a written document, to ensure transparency and clarity of process.
- Case file audits are undertaken routinely and each audit is followed up by an individual discussion with the relevant social worker, lessons to be learned are collated and shared with the Fostering team.

#### **Our plans for improvement in the next 12 months:**

- The Care Planning, Placements and Review Draft Regulations and Statutory Guidance identifies clear challenges for Fostering Services a Working Party has been established to ensure practice is developed in line with new expectations. This group will also review Kinship Care arrangements. A separate working party has produced an action plan to deliver 'Sufficiency of Accommodation' by April 2011, this includes a full review of Commissioning of Fostering services
- The Fostering Service is currently developing a range of training options, including informal training through supervision and guided learning linked to completion of the CWDC Training Support and Development Standards for Foster Care. A clear plan is in place. This work will continue and will be closely monitored.
- Performance management is now embedded within the service and will be maintained to ensure continued improvements.
- We will use the Draft Regulations and Statutory Guidance to improve the quality of Care Planning and to ensure plans are appropriately reviewed.
- The LAAC Support Team and LAC Service Manager completed level 1 attachment training with Dan Hughes in April 2009. This model of therapeutic intervention has been used by the LAAC Support team and also used to inform service development, to ensure our LAC are able to form secure attachments. We plan to invite Dan Hughes to return to Rotherham in 2011 to enable the LAAC Team to complete level 2 training.
- The Looked After Children's service is under further review within the Children's Service integration plan. A clearly identified Looked After Children's management structure with formal links to both Locality Services and Targeted services has improved communication

and access to service provision. The fieldwork review and development of a specialist LAC Service will further support this work.

- The recruitment plan is ongoing and recruitment of foster carers linked to assessment of need will be closely monitored.

## **Brief summary of our comments made within this annual quality assurance assessment**

### **What our service does well:**

The Ofsted inspection in May 2008 highlighted a number of areas of unsatisfactory work and unsafe practice. This has been taken seriously by all parties including: Elected Members, Management at all levels within Children's services, Social Workers and Foster Carers.

In June 2009, the service was re-inspected and judged to be satisfactory with good in Enjoy and Achieve, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Equality and Diversity. Some actions and improvement areas were identified and an Action plan was instituted to ensure improvements.

Management and workers across all services have been informed about the required actions and progress made has been monitored closely by the Performance and Quality Assurance Directorate. Regular reports have been made to senior managers, elected members and the Improvement Panel.

We are also proud of our commitment to Children's Participation and whilst we have an ongoing commitment to improvement, work in this area has also been recognised as being a strength across the Council.

We believe that our concerted efforts to affect change over the past two years have been successful. Placements are appropriately matched, risk assessed and supervised. We have better systems in place to monitor and quality assure all processes.

We strive to be a good or outstanding service and have instituted improvements across the board to ensure we do much more than meet National Minimum standards. We are proud of our children and believe they should always have the best we can provide.

### **What we have improved in the last 12 months:**

We have improved the service in line with expectations from the previous inspection and review inspection. Our primary focus has been on ensuring safety through:

- A full review of practice in respect of exemptions. Exemptions were in place, in May 2008 in respect of 42 children in 24 placements. This had improved by April 2009 to 14 children in 14 placements, we currently have 4 exemptions in place.
- Strengthening our Safe Care and Risk Assessment procedure to ensure all carers and children placed have appropriate safe care agreements and assessments of all risk, including where relevant, bedroom sharing and Caravan/holiday home Risk assessments
- Monitoring safeguarding processes through scrutiny of allegations within regular monthly monitoring meetings
- Ensuring that Panel has an appropriate membership, is well chaired and robust. The LAC Service Manager has acted as panel advisor and legal representative also attends to advise panel



- Improving training of foster carers. This has included enhancement of staffing and training resources. 109 foster carer households have received child protection or Safer Care training within the last year
- We continue to improve the assessment of foster carers, and have improved our analysis in assessment. Friends and Family Carers are now assessed using the Family Rights Group assessment format which allows exploration of complex issues and benefits of care within the family
- Improvements in the supervision of Foster Carers through, quality audit of files, amendments to the Supervision format and further training
- Improving the service offered to Friends and Family carers. A specialist social worker has been employed to undertake assessments of friends and family carers and a specialist supervising social worker provides ongoing supervision and support.
- Strengthening the monitoring and planning procedures for all LAC placements including monitoring of care planning and statutory visiting.
- Undertaking a full review of service provision against Statutory requirements and National Minimum Standards in order to ensure compliance
- Reviewing and restructuring the Foster carer review process to ensure information is analysed by the IRO and to build in an audit of Case Files.
- Enhancing our Corporate Parenting structures through assessment against the NCB toolkit and proposed development of a Looked after Children's Board, which will take over some of the functions currently held within our LAC Scrutiny Sub Group.
- We strive to ensure our children have all opportunities available to them to pursue activities, develop skills and learn and to this effect a Charitable LAC Trust fund has been established to supplement the funding already available.

We have some overarching strategies in place to improve services to LAC including the fieldwork review and Care Placements review. The fruits of this work will be seen over the next year.

**What we could do better, and how we are going to do this:**

We have made considerable progress in addressing the issues identified but are not complacent we plan to:

- Ensure care planning is robust through robust and challenging reviews, oversight by Locality Managers and panel processes
- Monitor care planning closely to ensure all LAC have current care plans and that no child 'drifts' in care

- Ensure all new procedures continue to be closely monitored and are embedded in practice through performance related supervision and ongoing development sessions with workers
- Continue to recruit more foster carers and a wider range of carers to ensure placement quality and choice utilising our recruitment and assessment plan and the recent full needs analysis undertaken by the Care Placements work group
- Reduce the number of non related children sharing a bedroom through reviews at the end of each placement, a review of carer approval at each annual review and financial support to develop more bedroom space where appropriate.
- Embed developments in training and monitor closely progress against CWDC requirements.
- Continue to improve and embed assessment of and support to Regulation 38 Foster Carers. A lot of work has been done to ensure consistency of work in this area, including the development of a mini team within the fostering service, training for social workers and ring fenced support.
- Improve challenge and analysis in supervision of Foster Carers through training of workers and monitoring through file audit
- Improve the education prospects of LAC through enhanced scrutiny of PEP's and targeted support
- Continue to work on the strategy for incorporation of attachment theory and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (The Dan Hughes model) into all aspects of foster carer assessment, training and supervision to ensure all LAC have care which assists them to develop firm attachments.
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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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1	<b>Meeting:</b>	Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel
2	<b>Date:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> June, 2010
3	<b>Title:</b>	DCSF Progress Report
4	<b>Directorate:</b>	Children and Young People's Service

**5. Summary**

The report presents the significant progress against the DCSF Notice to Improve, which was issued in December 2009. The report covers the background to issuing of the Notice to Improve, together with details of the significant improvements that have been made and the continued efforts that are being made to meet or where possible, exceed the targets set. Also included are the key highlights, issues and risks. The Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive, and Director of Children and Young People's Services are meeting with the DCSF ministerial representatives on 22<sup>nd</sup> April to discuss progress and Compliance with the Notice to Improve. Full details are contained in the report attached at Appendix A.

**6. Recommendations**

**That the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel receives the report and notes the position.**

## 7. **Proposals and Details**

The Minister met with representatives of the Council on 26 November and on the 16th December 2009, Dawn Primarolo wrote to the Leader of the Council confirming that a Notice to Improve was being served on Rotherham MBC to improve key aspects of its Children and Young People's Services.

The key areas for improvement agreed in the Notice to Improve were:

- increasing the percentage of referrals that go onto initial assessment;
- increasing the percentage of initial assessments that are completed within seven working days;
- increasing the percentage of core assessments carried out within 35 working days;
- reducing social worker and team manager vacancies;
- ensuring overall improvements in LAA children's Services and statutory attainment targets during the life of the notice period and finally
- to submit a plan by the end of January 2010 that reduces the numbers of primary schools under the floor targets at Key Stage 2.

Our response has been rapid and already a significant amount of resources, both financial and staffing, are going into help sort out the problems in children and young people's services.

Our strategy is clear; safeguarding children is the top priority which is reflected within our refreshed Children and Young People's Plan for 2010-2013. We have made a very conscious decision to focus our efforts on safeguarding children and young people. The improvement notice contains a wide range of actions but we have felt it necessary to place even more attention on safeguarding, quality assurance and initial/core assessments. We believe it is essential that we maintain this focus in ensuring our systems and processes are robust, safe and secure.

## 8. **Finance**

There are significant financial implications associated with the nature and degree of improvements required. The Children and Young People's Service have worked hard to successfully reduce the overspend position for the 2009/10 budget. Furthermore, savings identified for 2010/11 have been re-directed into the priority area of Safeguarding. The Council's decision to invest a further £3.1m into Children and Young People's Services is welcomed and this has been invested almost wholly into safeguarding, with a small amount being invested into prevention and early intervention to begin to make the shift away from the demands of crisis intervention in the medium term.

**9. Risks and Uncertainties**

A number of risks are present in relation to safeguarding and the Notice to Improve.

Key risks include:

- the pace of improvement being impaired by high vacancy rates
- the possibility that there are insufficient qualified social workers of a high calibre to draw from in the nationwide employment pool
- the quality of improvements being embedded and sustained over time
- that despite all of the significant improvement and meeting the targets, the DCSF Notice to Improve will remain in place for some time in the future
- that despite all of the improvements and progress, the impending safeguarding inspection could still judge us to be inadequate due to insufficient time to fully embed the improved quality of practice

Experience of other authorities who have been the subject of Notice to Improve or Intervention tells us that there is a distinct possibility that despite all this improvement, the Notice to Improve could be in force for many months and possibly years after the end of the original Notice which was issued.

Clearly we are making every effort to prevent this, but the experience in other authorities, in particular, Wakefield and Stoke, tells us this is a risk.

**10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The above risks and our mitigations will impact on performance for Children and Young People's Service, the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership. If the expected inspection of safeguarding judges us to be inadequate, this will in turn act as a limiting factor on the Council's Comprehensive Area Assessment.

However, if our inspection judgements are judged to be adequate or better, even if the Notice to Improve is still in force, we are advised by the DCSF that this should not be a limiting factor on the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

**11. Background Papers and Consultation**

- DCSF Notice to Improve
- CYPS Improvement Plan
- CYPS Improvement Panel
- Monthly meetings between the Council's Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services, DCSF and GOYH.

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and Young People’s Services – Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> June 2010</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Children and Young People’s Services Notice to Improve - Progress Update</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Children and Young People’s Services</b>

### **5. Summary**

This report provides an overview of the progress made since the Notice to Improve was received in December, identifies a RAG rating and a direction of travel for the areas of improvement, some areas of good performance and key risks and issues to meeting the stretching targets set for the council and its strategic partners.

### **6. Recommendations**

**That CYPS Scrutiny Panel notes the progress being made against the targets set in the Notice to Improve.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

This report, to be read in conjunction with the Notice to Improve Action Plan ( Appendix A) highlights the RAG status of the actions, any areas for concern, what the barriers are and what is being done about them.

There are 44 individual actions covering the key performance measures ( 3 social care indicators and the LAA improvements) in addition to the operational targets around Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Leadership and Management, Performance Management, Finance, Recruitment and Retention and ICT.

Based on a RAG rating the following is the current position as at 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

Red: 2 (5%)

Amber : 22 (50%)

Green: 20 (45%) (out of which 13 are now deemed as completed)

### High Risk areas ( red risks)

There are 2 areas which continue to be of high risk:

#### Improve the quality of serious case reviews

The results from the recent challenge submitted to OFSTED for both of the recent SCR judgements is still awaited. Until these are received from OFSTED it is considered that this is still a high risk. However, one Serious Case Review is being fully evaluated again by OFSTED following the submission of a challenge by the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Board.

#### NI59 – initial assessments within 7 days

This stands at 76.92% which has dropped below the original baseline and the target set for March 2010. Focus continues to be on the quality and accuracy of recording and from the 1<sup>st</sup> March all initial assessments (instead of samples) are now being quality checked.

The Quality Assurance report presented at the Improvement Panel on the 7<sup>th</sup> May revealed that practice needs to be improved across Care Plans, Initial and Core assessments. This is being tackled by coaching and mentoring from the Team Managers and Court Practice Consultants. Members of DLT are also carrying out additional audits on cases.

The NI59 indicator is the most important part of the process and trends over the last 5 months are showing a month on month improvement:

January: 72%

February: 76%

March: 77%

April: 80.17%

May: 61.54% ( partial month from 1<sup>st</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>)

**a) Completed targets**

13 actions have now been completed:

- PDR guidance has been issued to managers for 2010 with a May deadline set for the completion of PDRs
- The Director of Children & Learners at GOYH is now a member of the improvement panel.
- Additional administration staff are now in place in the social care locality teams with the resources having a positive impact.
- The Portal development for sharing social care reports for social workers and managers is in place
- Social work staff now have access to the VPN home working solution with the roll out of laptops completed and SWIFT desk guides have been issued to localities
- The Safe and Well Protocol has been updated
- The Safe and Well Protocol was launched on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010.
- No children's homes are inadequate
- A Self Assessment has been written against the safeguarding and looked after children criteria to identify areas for development
- A World Class Primary school reported has been written and submitted to DCSF
- Improvements have been made to the Induction Process
- The overspend for 2009/10 was reduced to £3.99m
- Funding issues were investigated during 2009/10 and further work is now being done around benchmarking.

**b) areas of improvement**

The CAF training re-commenced on the 24<sup>th</sup> February with 459 practitioners and 50 managers having already been trained, since the training commenced 209 CAFs have been received (only 3 had been submitted from the start of the year to the start of the training on the 24<sup>th</sup> February) Further training will re-commence in the middle of June.

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> March all initial and core assessments are being audited with a bank of good practice being developed.

**8. Finance**

The DCSF has agreed up to £150,000 financial support to assist with recovery, a further £125,000 has been secured from the RIEP to fund the work around implementation of Common Assessment Framework. The DSCF funding will be used to supplement social work staffing resources and to employ independent staff to assist in the review and further improvement of and service quality activities. (see reference above)

A review has been conducted of Children and Young People's placements; both



Rotherham based and in out of authority facilities. This has focussed on whether the placements can end, in line with the care plan review, whether the council is getting the best value for money and that the placements are of the required quality. In order to strengthen financial management arrangements all managers with budget holder responsibility attended specific training. The moratorium which has been in place since December 2009 continues into 2010/11 to ensure that resources are directed to priority areas. In addition, a savings work programme is in place to identify efficiencies and enable re-investment into priority areas.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The key performance risks (red) are identified in the report and there are service delivery risks associated with the Notice to Improve action plan. Where these are significant they are being fed into the CYPS risk register. Planning has now commenced for an announced inspection of Looked After Children and Safeguarding services. It is uncertain at this stage when this will take place, self assessments have been developed, as are briefing notes for staff and the KLOEs being circulated to potential members of focus groups in addition to the continued collection of the library of key documents that inspectors expect to receive before they are on site.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The Annual Performance Assessment 2008 result was the trigger for the CYPS Review, which was commissioned jointly by the Council and NHS Rotherham. A number of recommendations arose from this review which were included in an Improvement action plan.

On 4th and 5th August 2009, CYPS received an unannounced inspection of its Contact, Referral and Assessment service. The inspection confirmed many issues related to performance, caseload and capacity, quality assurance. Ofsted's recommendation was that we should take immediate action to address the issues raised in order to prevent further decline in service performance, quality and capacity. A notice to improve was issued in December 2009.

Failure to address these issues would impact further on the CYPS Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), the Council's CAA and could lead to external intervention.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

The Notice To Improve

Ofsted Inspection - Contact, Referral and Assessment, 4th and 5th August 2009

Children First Review and Resource Benchmarking – January to June 2009

CYPS Improvement Plan

Comprehensive Area Assessment

CYP Directorate Performance reports

Appendix A – Notice to Improve action plan

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RMBC Notice to Improve Action Plan

Performance Measures

Date of update 17th May

Objective	Key Actions	Measures			Lead	RAG	Performance Commentary	Lead Workstream(s)
		Baseline	Current performance	Targets				
<b>Staying Safe - Performance</b>								
	NI 68 - Increase the % of referrals of children in need to children's social care going onto initial assessment in line with the current statistical neighbour average/top band performance (mid range is good performance)	57.6% (2008/09 outturn) (2270/3940) 59.8% (position as at Nov 2009)	52.15%	65% March 2010 68% October 2010 70% March 2011	Gani Martins	↑ Amber	From 1st April to 17th May the figure is 52.15%, (compared with 41.3% reported to the Panel on the 7th May, this will be continue to be monitored closely over the next few weeks. This indicator shows the level of shared understanding about thresholds of social care involvement. The Safe & Well Protocol has been revised and was launched on 22nd April. The CAF Development Officer and Coordinator is in post and the CAF training commenced with 459 practitioners having received training between the 24th February and 30th April 2010 with further training sessions planned.	Social Work
<b>Improvement Notice</b>	NI 59 - Increase the % of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 7 working days of referral from the 2008/09 baseline in line with current statistical neighbour average/top band performance (high is good performance)	77.8% (2008/09 outturn) (1767/2270) 73% (position as at Nov 2009)	76.92%	80% March 2010 85% October 2010 87% March 2011	Gani Martins	↓ Red	76.92% (back below the original baseline of 77.8%) of the I.A.s completed between April and the 17th May were completed in time compared with 77% in March, 76% in February and 72% in January. Data checks continue to be undertaken to check accuracy in recording and from 1st March all initial assessments continue to be QA'd by the Practice Consultants.	Social Work
<b>Improvement Notice</b>	NI 60 - Increase the % of core assessments for children's social care carried out within 35 working days of their commencement from the 2008/09 baseline in line with the current statistical neighbour average/top band performance (high is good performance)	84.9% (2008/09 outturn) (276/325) 68% (position as at Nov 2009)	78.13%	80% March 2010 84% October 2010 87% March 2011	Gani Martins	↑ Amber	Still slightly less than the than target at 78.13% compared with 77.97% reported to the Panel on the 7th May. From 1st March all core assessments continue to be QA'd by the Practice Consultants so that we can use findings to drive up quality.	Social Work
<b>LAA 2008-2011 Being Healthy; Enjoying and Achieving; Achieving Economic Wellbeing; Making A Positive Contribution - Performance</b>								
<b>Overall improvements in LAA indicators relating to children's services and statutory attainment targets through the period of this Improvement Notice</b>	Overall improvement to be made against all CYP related LAA measures	Baseline for measures is the agreed position when the LAA refresh was finished in March 2009	70% Improved from baseline as at Q2 2009/10	>65% improved from baseline March 2011	Rotherham MBC / LSP Partners	→ Green	At the end of Q3 2009/10 67% of targets have improved performance from their baseline positions since the LAA was agreed. Further work is being done on the outturn figures and will presented to a Future Improvement Panel	Performance and all Workstreams

Operational Targets

Objective	Key Actions	Measures Baseline	Targets	Target Date	Lead	RAG	Performance Commentary	Lead Workstream(s)
<b>1. Staying Safe - Social Work Practice and Process</b>								
<b>Establish and implement an effective policy on the auditing of assessment and referrals so as to ensure managerial involvement in quality assurance</b>	Implement an improved quality assurance framework for assessments and referrals	Each Team Manager audits 3 files per month as per guidance. Locality Managers to audit 3 files per month and 5 NFA Audits	100% compliance with the policy	June 2010	Gani Martins	→ Amber	A new system has now been implemented and the results of the audits are beginning to come through, a report was submitted to the Improvement Panel on the 7th May and a further more detailed report has been requested for the 3rd June Improvement Panel	Social Work
	Conduct a review on all NFA cases to quality assure the high level of 'no further action' decisions being taken	NFA Contacts and Referrals 1.4.2009 to 9.12.2009 33.18% Total Contacts  11.12% Total Referrals	10% reduction in overall contact and referrals which result in NFA by March 2010	June 2010	Gani Martins	→ Green	A new system has now been implemented and the results of the audits are now beginning to come through, a high level report was submitted to the Improvement Panel on the 7th May and a further more detailed report has been requested for the 3rd June Improvement Panel. In relation to NFAs between January and March 1854 out of 5248 (35%) were NFA'd. A sample of 61 cases found that 90% of the decisions were the correct ones.	Social Work
	Conduct Business Process re-engineering exercise on current practices in relation to Assessments and Referrals in line with best practice to enhance performance	Practices in relation to Assessments and Referrals in need of review	Business process Re-engineering process completed	July 2010	John Dunn, RBT / Rebecca Wragg	→ Amber	Since the last Panel Meeting no further maps have been approved and communicated, 2 maps have been presented to 4 Team Managers, no further maps are awaiting sign off by SCPMT. 4 business areas (consisting numerous maps) are underway. Progress continues to be highly dependant on the availability of staff. A meeting with the Director of SCP agreed to strengthen the arrangements, in particular around change management and compliance checks as well as ensuring that staff are available for agreeing and signing off maps.	ICT
<b>Embed use of the CAF in practice across children's services so that it is effectively used to inform early intervention</b>	Improve quality and completion levels of CAFs	Between January 2006 and July 2009 there have been 976 CAFs completed in Rotherham.	600 CAFs to be completed between April 2010 and March 2011	March 2011	Simon Perry / Sarah Whittle	↑ Amber	£20k has been sourced for CAF training. The Safe and Well protocol guidance has been updated and endorsed by The Policy and Procedure group and was approved by the CYP Board on the 3rd February 2010. This will be launched on the 22nd April 2010 as part of the early intervention improvement programme. A Pathway & Toolkit has been developed - Training Commenced on the 24th February and consists of 14 sessions, 35 people per session = 490 staff to be trained. As at 30th April 459 staff have now been trained with an additional 50 managers. Since the training started 209 CAFs have been submitted (150 upto 31st March and 59 from the 1st April) Further training will re-commence mid-June.	Early Intervention
	Update Multi Agency Safe & Well Protocol and Practice Guidance	Original Safe and Well Protocol launched in 2006.	Update of Protocol Competed	April 2010	Gani Martins/ Simon Perry	complete		Social Work
	High profile re-launch to ensure consistency in Thresholds for intervention across all agencies.	Original Safe and Well Protocol launched in 2006.	Protocol updated and relaunched	April 2010	Gani Martins/ Simon Perry	complete		Social Work

Operational Targets

Objective	Key Actions	Measures	Targets	Target Date	Lead	RAG	Performance Commentary	Lead Workstream(s)
		Baseline	Targets					
<b>1. Staying Safe - Social Work Practice and Process</b>								
Monitor improvement in children's social care, by establishing a rigorous performance management system which delivers regular monitoring, scrutiny and quality assurance of social care performance	Ensure that all children's homes are compliant with regulatory requirements	1 - St Edmunds	No inadequate children's homes	December 2009	Gani Martins	complete		Social Work
	Introduce monthly safeguarding report card to CYP Directorate Leadership Team, Corporate Management Team, Safeguarding Board and Children and Young People's Board.	Safeguarding focused performance scorecard required	12 reports per year	June 2010	Julie Westwood	→ Green	The Safeguarding report card has been approved and adopted by the Improvement Panel, CYP Board and Locality Teams and was presented at the Safeguarding Board on the 19th March 2010. A new Performance sub group has been established which are now firming up reporting arrangements to the RSCB and work is underway with the Children's Board.	Performance
	Conduct a self assessment using the Safeguarding Inspection Criteria to identify any areas for development prior to inspection	Initial work started	Assessment completed and approved	May 2010	Gani Martins / All Managers / Performance and Quality	complete		Social Work
	Improve quality of serious case reviews to ensure all judged adequate or better	Two of Four judged inadequate	All future SCRs to be rated good or better	ongoing	Catherine Hall	→ Red	Rotherham has received judgements on two serious case reviews; one being rated as adequate and one as inadequate.  Rotherham's partners have concerns that the inadequate judgement is not a true reflection on the work undertaken locally. Following discussions about the judgements the independent chair of the Safeguarding Board decided to challenge both SCRs in relation to the issues identified and the overall judgement itself. The Chair of the LSCB and the Strategic Director for CYPS now accept the adequate judgement. However, one SCR is being fully evaluated again by OFSTED following the submission of the challenge	Social Work
	Ensure that all actions from recommendations from SCRs are implemented and that evidence is provided to ensure robust audit trail.	Baseline 37 Actions	Number of recommendations in red status = 0.	June 2010	Alan Hazell Catherine Hall Phil Morris	→ Amber	Rotherham LSCB constitution signed off on 19th March 2010 including TOR of P&Q sub group. SCR sub committee to retain overall responsibility for SCR action plans and P&Q sub group will evaluate impact and outcomes. 1 action plan has now been signed off by GO on the 15th March and the remaining 3 actions are to be reviewed with GO. Further work has taken place on all actions plans including ongoing monitoring at the monthly SCR panels, a meeting held with GO on 11th May. There are currently no recommendations in red status	Social Work
	Permanent Safeguarding Manager to be in post	1 individual working 2 days a week conducting safeguarding manager duties	Safeguarding Manager in post	May 2010	Joyce Thacker	→ Green	Interviews for a permanent Safeguarding Manager were held on 18th March 2010, an appointment was not made but alternative action has been agreed with the RSCB independent chair. Shortlisting for an interim manager is taking place on the 5th May and interviews held on the 17th May with an appointment having been made.	Workforce

	Conduct robust quality assurance checks on information systems to ensure that contacts, referrals and the status of investigations, assessments and plans are up to date	Quality assurance and audits require improved performance framework	% of monthly supervision checks conducted - 100% Number and % of adequate data quality checks conducted - 100%	June 2010	Gani Martins	↑ Amber	A single QA/Audit Framework has been implemented which covers all aspects of this action. The overall data quality assurance strategy and monitoring and reporting policies and procedure has been signed off by the SCPMT. From the 1st March all initial and core assessments are being audited with a bank of good practice being developed. Further, more robust recording of audits has recently been introduced. A report was submitted to the Improvement Panel on the 7th May, more detailed report will be submitted to the Improvement Panel on the 3rd June.	Social Work
<b>Review social workers' responsibilities to ensure that responsibilities are clearly and tightly defined so 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</b>	Undertake Fieldwork Review and implement improved operational structure	The remaining priority action to be addressed	Fully reviewed social care infrastructure in place	July 2010	Gani Martins	→ Amber	A draft report of the review has been completed and is due to be circulated for further consultation prior to implementation. Key areas include: Front Door improvements, the number of locality teams, and introduction of dedicated LAC teams. This report has now been shared with Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Management Team and DLT on the 27th April. A timeline is in place which will include full consultation with staff, unions and stakeholders. Further work is required in relation to monitoring the cost impact and assessing outcomes of the changes.	Social Work / Workforce

Operational Targets

Objective	Key Actions	Measures Baseline	Targets	Target Date	Lead	RAG	Performance Commentary	Lead Workstream(s)
<b>2. Enjoying and Achieving - Practice and Process</b>								
<b>Improve Performance across primary schools with a particular focus on addressing the performance of schools below the floor targets</b>	Submit a plan to the DCSF which addresses performance across primary schools with a particular focus on addressing the performance of schools below the floor targets	Existing plan in need of review	Plan Agreed With DCSF	End of January 2010	David Light	complete		Enjoying and Achieving
	Implement this plan, as agreed with DCSF and National Strategies, to bring about demonstrable and sustained improvement in primary school standards throughout the term of the Improvement Notice.	13 Primary schools below floor targets	13 down to 8 during 2010 and then down to 0 in 2011	March 2010 October 2010 March 2011	David Light	→ Amber	Report was submitted to Improvement Panel on 22nd April 2010 and a World Class Primaries Board meets with DCSF and National Strategies involvement to progress the actions in the plan	Enjoying and Achieving
<b>3. Leadership and Management / Capacity Building / Support</b>								
<b>Build capacity and capability to deliver and sustain improvement</b>	Obtain external funding from Regional Improvement Efficiency Programme/DCSF including sector led expertise as required	No funding agreed	Funding obtained and apportioned	August 2010	Matthew Gladstone	→ Green	£125k additional funding was agreed by the RIEP, this is being used to fund the CAF Champion posts. DCSF allocated £150k (over two years) to support improvement. Additional social work resources have been selected from tenders using the DCSF funding and will focus on quality assurance and improvement work.	Finance
<b>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</b>	Director of Children's Services holds monthly 1:1 challenge meetings with each Service Director covering all aspects of performance	Monthly supervisions currently in place	12 challenge meetings per year per director	December 2009	Joyce Thacker	Complete		Workforce
	Improve induction process for CYPS	Induction process for CYPS inconsistent	Induction process for CYPS consistently adhered to and monitored	January 2010	Gani Martins/ Warren Carratt	complete		Workforce
	Ensure that accountabilities for each individual are being reinforced through consistently applied PDR's to ensure staff have a satisfactory Performance Plan.	81%	90%	June 2010	Julie Westwood/ Warren Carratt	↑ Amber	PDR guidance issued for 2010 with deadline set for the end of May for completion of PDRs. All managers were required to attend PDR/ supervision training. The training has been held and feedback has been positive, an early audit at the end of April showed that only 3% of PDRs have been recorded on the HR system, a reminder was sent out to managers and a further audit will take place in June	Workforce / Performance

<p><b>Demonstrate improvements in staff satisfaction and in the satisfaction of children and families with the services they receive through the term of the Improvement Notice</b></p>	<p>Improve outcomes of CYPS satisfaction surveys</p>	<p>Employee Opinion Survey TBC LAC reviews TBC Audit Commission in Schools Survey TBC Social Worker Survey TBC</p>	<p>Employee Opinion Survey TBC LAC reviews TBC Audit Commission in Schools Survey TBC Social Worker Survey TBC</p>	<p>March 2010 Oct 2010 and March 2011</p>	<p>Julie Westwood/ Warren Carratt</p>	<p>↑ Amber</p>	<p>Baseline for EOS - 64% (CYPS) rest of Council 69% - target to be discussed 69%, the next EOS is not until 2011, however HR have advised that a specific survey for CYPS can be run earlier than planned at the end 2010. Baseline for AC schools survey response rate 2008 29% 2009 63%. Target 80%, next survey not now run until 2011 ( now 2 yearly). The Family Placement Survey is a bi-annual survey of Foster Carers and Adopters, the response rate in November 09 was 29% lower than the 2006 survey - 52%. However, the rates of satisfaction have increased, particularly around the levels of support they receive. The next survey is scheduled for 2011. A paper is being produced to look at which surveys need to be included in this action. Background work for CYPP development has included many areas of good practice. This report will be submitted to the Improvement Panel on the 3rd June</p>	<p>Workforce and all Workstreams</p>
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Operational Targets

Objective	Key Actions	Measures	Targets	Target Date	Lead	RAG	Performance Commentary	Lead Workstream(s)
		Baseline	Targets					
<b>4. Performance Management</b>								
<b>Improve Annual Children's Service Scores Profile to Performing well by 2011 through implementation of all outstanding recommendations and improvement of inspection scores to good or better</b>	Continually assess the position in relation to all outstanding external inspection recommendations including all those listed in CAA Blocks A and B	Performing Poorly	90% of recommendations met in original timescale 12 reports per year	monthly	Julie Westwood	→ Amber	Recommendations from key high risk inspections being input. Visits undertaken to Early Years and SES to examine recording systems already deployed. These have been found to be satisfactory. There will be on site visits to validate the implementation of recommendations and the state of readiness in terms of achieving a positive outcome in the next inspection. Action plans have been requested from the services to shift proportion of services to good or better and have been received and are being discussed with GO on the 9th June. A report to SLT on the 10th May identified that further work needed to be done to evidence the completed actions.	Performance
	Introduce robust monthly monitoring arrangements to ensure implementation of all outstanding inspection recommendations from all inspections in original timescales	Inspection recommendations from key inspections are being monitored but reports need to include all inspected services	90% of recommendations met in original timescale 12 reports per year	Quarterly	Julie Westwood	→ Amber	All inspection recommendations (with the exception of schools and childminders which have an established monitoring system) are being entered into the reconfigured CYP inspections monitoring system. Monitoring reports will be presented quarterly to each Improvement Panel Meeting, reported to Improvement Panel on 25th March focusing on the high risk area, children's homes, this will be developed further and submitted to the 13th July Improvement Panel	Social Work / Performance
	Conduct a minimum of 2 mock unannounced inspections, in line with the Ofsted criteria per quarter	0	Minimum of 2 mock inspections per quarter to have been conducted	Quarterly	Julie Westwood/Gani Martins	↑ Amber	Resources have been committed to commissioning this externally. The work will take place over 6 half days to allow "deep dive" focus on a number of areas but with a particular focus on those which have been highlighted in the self assessment work and challenge. work will take place with Team and Locality Managers in respect of "what does good look like". As Part of Gani Martin's induction she carried out a "deep dive" in 2 Localities. Discussions with external consultant Steven Warburton to establish a framework of pre-inspection activity has now taken place and will take place in June.	Social Work / Performance
	Improve CYP Performance Profile rating for Block A by increasing % of inspected services rated "good or better"	Performing Poorly (bottom band for both PRU and Children's Homes) 54.9%	Performing Well (65% - 79% categorised as outstanding or good)	Quarterly	Julie Westwood	→ Amber	The OFSTED Quarter 1 profile has now been received and will be submitted to the Improvement Panel on the 20th May, the profile shows that 2 areas have moved up bandings, 23 have remained the same and 1 has moved down a banding.	Performance
	Improve CYP Performance Profile rating for Block B by: Ensuring majority of inspected scores are rated "good or better" for safeguarding LAC and SCRs	Fostering - Satisfactory SCRs 2/4 judged inadequate	Fostering - Good All future SCRs rated adequate or better	Quarterly	Julie Westwood	→ Amber	The overall Serious Case Review profile is now 1 Good, 2 Adequate and 3 Inadequate. Awaiting decision from OFSTED on the seventh SCR submitted last year. One SCR is being fully evaluated again by OFSTED following the challenge	Performance



	Improve CYP Performance Profile rating for Block C by improving NI performance	Not In line with or better than statistical neighbours and the national position	In line with or better than statistical neighbours and the national position	Quarterly	Julie Westwood	→ Amber	Improvement plans are in place for NIs and where targets are not being met performance clinics are held to identify areas where further improvement can be made. OFSTEDs Quarter 1 profile has now been received and will be submitted to the Improvement Panel on the 20th May which shows that 11 NIs have moved up a banding, 12 stayed the same and 4 moved down a banding	Performance
	Ensure quarterly reporting on the Children's Services Performance Profile on their release clearly outlining areas of risk and potential impact	Report on Quarter 2 profile prepared	4 reports per year and improvement in each service block	Quarterly	Julie Westwood	↑ Amber	The Quarter 1 profile has been received and will be presented to Improvement Panel on 20th May	Performance
	Implement all the recommendations arising from the Children's First review undertaken using the DCSF Improvement Framework	67% when Improvement Notice Made	100% of recommendations implemented	May 2010	Julie Westwood	→ Green	A report on progress and the overall completion of the actions with evidence will be submitted to the Improvement Panel on 3rd June	Performance
<b>Ensure that the Panel, chaired by the Chief Executive, provides effective challenge, and drives swift and sustainable progress through overseeing a robust action plan</b>	Appoint the Director of Children and Learners at GOYH as a member of the Improvement Panel	N/A	Director of Children and learners at GOYH to attend CYP Improvement Panel meetings	December 2009	Joyce Thacker	complete		Performance

Objective	Key Actions	Measures Baseline	Targets	Target Date	Lead	RAG	Performance Commentary	Lead Workstream(s)
<b>5. Finance</b>								
<b>Strengthen financial management arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose and financial targets 09/10 are met</b>	Tackle the existing overspend in Directorate (particularly Social Care)	£4.5m overspend	Corporate Variance on target 2% +/-	March 2010	Joyce Thacker	complete	The final outturn figure was £3.99m overspent.	Finance
	Address the under funding issues in Social Care and School Effectiveness Service	In 2008/09 the gap was £8.3m. In 2008/09 had narrowed to £6.8m.	Close the gap against statistical neighbours average spend for CYP Services	March 2010	Joyce Thacker	complete		Finance
	Benchmarking exercise in relation to funding and performance		establish how low spend is linked to high performance in other LAs	August 2010	Julie Westwood / Joanne Robertson	↑ Amber	Benchmarking to be carried out with Barnsley, Wakefield and Wigan, visits to be arranged to clarify joint understanding, report to be presented to August Improvement Panel.	Finance

Operational Targets

Objective	Key Actions	Measures	Targets	Target Date	Lead	RAG	Performance Commentary	Lead Workstream(s)
		Baseline	Targets					
<b>6. Recruitment and Retention</b>								
<b>Increase the capacity of social carers to ensure effective services to safeguard vulnerable children</b>	Reduce the vacancy rate of qualified social workers from the December 2009 baseline to meet the improvement notice target	37.2% 16th December 2009	20% vacancy rate by October 2010 10% vacancy rate by March 2011	June 2010	Gani Martins	→ Amber	Currently all social worker posts are covered either by permanent establishment posts or agency staff 20.4 posts (25.3%)	Social Care / Workforce
	Reduce the vacancy rate of team managers from the December 2009 baseline to meet the improvement notice target	33% 16th December 2009	16% vacancy rate by October 2010 8% vacancy rate by March 2011	June 2010	Gani Martins	↑ Amber	There are currently 33.3% Team Manager posts unfilled. There are 15 Team Manager posts in the establishment with 5 vacancies, however 4 of these are covered by agency staff and 1 remains unfilled (6.7%).	Social Care / Workforce
	Recruit 30 new Foster Carers	126 (January 2009)	156	March 2010	Gani Martins	→ Green	From April 2009 to March 2010 there have been 22 foster carers approved, at the end of March there were 139 foster carers	Social Care / Workforce
	Reduce the over reliance on agency staff	2009/10 spend = £1,843,627 (12 months) £1,811,768 relates to social care, £1,390,402 of which via the Duttons contract	Reduce by £440,000 in 2010/11 on agency staff	October 2010	Gani Martins	↓ Amber	The recruitment campaign for permanent social workers and team managers continues however, there is still expenditure on agency staffing. The total CYPS agency spend as at 17th May is £159,218. Expenditure on agency social workers and team managers to date is £133,075 and agency admin £8,320. There are currently 24.4 fieldwork vacancies covered by agency workers (4 team managers and 20.4 social workers)	Workforce / Finance
	Increase the number of additional administrative staff within the Directorate to free up time of social workers and assess impact to inform future budgets	7.9 FTE additional admin staff transferred into the Directorate to provide support and 7 admin agency staff.	Impact Assessment completed	December 2009	Julie Westwood	complete		Workforce / Finance

Objective	Key Actions	Measures	Targets	Target Date	Lead	RAG	Performance Commentary	Lead Workstream(s)
		Baseline	Targets					
<b>7. ICT</b>								
<b>Improve information systems to enable social workers/managers to process and access assessments and plans and transfer of case information on vulnerable children in a timely, accurate manner.</b>	Increase email 'in box' capacity for managers	Inspectors recommendation	Resolve Issues raised	November 2009	Julie Westwood	complete		Performance / ICT
	Revise and accelerate the implementation of the corporate agile working programme for social work staff	Social Work teams in a later phase of the council's agile working programme - Worksmart.	Prioritise Social Work teams in the Worksmart programme. 106 Laptops and VPN tokens to be issued	January 2009	RBT	complete		ICT

### CYPS Achievements

- 100% of care leavers are living in suitable accommodation.
  - CPP lasting over 2 years have reduced from the 2008/09 outturn of 4.8% to 1.3%.
  - 100% of CPP are reviewed within timescales. Child Protection Reviews are maintaining the top 100% performance.
  - LAC Reviews in timescales improved from 85.4% to 96.5%
- 
- 97% of all Rotherham Schools (including PRUs) have achieved National Healthy Schools Status
  - Childhood obesity for both reception and Year 6 has improved by 2% and we are now in line with our statistical neighbours.
  - 86% of children and young people participate in 2 hours+ sport or PE (increase of 25% since 2006)
- 
- 93% of schools are meeting Extended Services Core Offer.
  - Rotherham has been rated the best in the region for children getting their first choice of secondary school 97%.
  - Rotherham's Audit Commission Schools Survey 35% increase in response in 2009.
  - Since 2005/6 there has been a 34% reduction in the number of young people entering the criminal justice system.
- 
- Ofsted have judged Hilltop School to be outstanding in all major areas including Safeguarding.
  - 68% of Rotherham's Under 5s are currently part of the Imagination Library Project, that's 10,439 children.
  - GCSEs 2009 - 13th most improved Authority
  - Foundation Stage 2009 15th most improved Authority.
  - Thornhill has been judged by Ofsted as outstanding with an outstanding capacity to improve.
  - Herringthorpe Junior School is one of the top 20 schools in the UK for the best use of technology. Runner up in the learning experience Primary Becta ICT Excellence Award
  - Rotherham Schools Music Service - Second outstanding Ofsted inspection report.
  - Rotherham are the first Authority in the country to have 2 childminders achieve the Quality Mark for Early Years by the Basic Skills Agency

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**9th April, 2010**

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Dodson, Donaldson, Fenoughty and Kaye.

Also in attendance were Councillor Currie and co-opted members Mr. M. Burn and Mr. M. Hall and Mrs. S. Hitchens.

Apologies for absence were received from:- Ali, Burton, Hughes, License, Rushforth, Sharp, Sims, Mrs. J. Blanch-Nicholson, Mr. C. A. Marvin, Mrs. K. Muscroft and Mrs. L. Pitchley.

**132.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**133.       QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**134.       MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE YOUTH CABINET**

There were no issues to report at this meeting.

**135.       COMMUNICATIONS**

(1) The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the work of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel during the 2009/2010 Municipal Year.

(2) Reference was made to Minute No. 37 of the meeting of the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel held on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 (Scrutiny Review of Corporate Parenting Arrangements – Emerging Issues) – the scrutiny review report would now be submitted to a meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee.

(3) It was noted that the report of the scrutiny review of Physical Education and Sport in Schools was being considered at this afternoon's meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel – Members and Co-opted Members of this Scrutiny Panel were invited to attend.

(4) The Scrutiny Panel was informed of the imminent retirement of Mrs. Catharine Kinsella, Senior Director, Schools and Lifelong Learning; the Scrutiny Panel thanked Mrs. Kinsella for her work to improve Rotherham schools and wished her a long and happy retirement.

**136.       YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Paul Boyden (Youth

Start) and Sarah Graham (Rotherham MIND) concerning the role and function of both Youth Start and Rotherham MIND in the provision of mental health services for young people.

The report stated that Youth Start is a Borough Council Youth Service Advice, Information, Counselling and Support Project, which has offered accessible young person centred support services since 1989. Youth Start responds to young people presenting with a range of complex issues, including young people in crisis, and provides early intervention services, particularly in relation to sexual health, mental health and emotional support needs.

Young people aged 11 to 25 are supported in a non stigmatising, young person centred setting, which is neither overly medical or problem orientated; allowing a seamless service to be offered; from entry to secondary education, through adolescence into young adulthood.

Rotherham MIND Young Persons Service has operated since 1999 and offers confidential counselling/mental health support to children and young people in Rotherham. It currently offers one-to-one confidential appointments to young people in all secondary schools in Rotherham who are experiencing poor mental health and emotional distress. In addition, it manages the Maltby Behaviour and Education Support Team (BEST) which also offers family intervention.

The Scrutiny Panel's discussion of this item included the following salient issues:-

- the funding and future funding of these mental health services (including sources such as NHS Rotherham);
- the definition of a 'young person' (children, teenagers and people in their early twenties); the overwhelming majority of young people using the services were under 19 years; for those aged over 19 years, an important aspect of the services provided was to assist vulnerable young people in the sometimes difficult transition to adulthood;
- the confidentiality of service provision and whether to inform parents of a young person receiving advice;
- the support of secondary schools for this service provision; the Scrutiny Panel considered that all schools should be encouraged to make use of these services, whenever necessary, but acknowledged the likely impact upon schools' budgets.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Children

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - 09/04/10 3C**

and Young People's Scrutiny Panel upon the future funding of the mental health services provided by both Youth Start and by Rotherham MIND, such report to include details of funding provision from sources (including NHS Rotherham, schools and the award of grants) external to the Borough Council.

(3) That Paul Boyden and Sarah Graham be thanked for their interesting and informative presentation to this meeting.

**137. PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION - REPORT OF SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Further to Minute No. 115 of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 3rd April, 2009, consideration was given to a report, presented by Review Group Chairman Councillor Tom Fenoughty, setting out the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review into Personal, Social and Health Education. A copy the full report of this scrutiny review was attached as an appendix.

In summary, the key recommendations of this scrutiny review are:-

: Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) should be compulsory and part of every student's timetable;

: PSHE should be taught by trained and confident teachers;

: schools should structure the curriculum to avoid repetition and explain this clearly to pupils (the IMPACT booklet developed by Rawmarsh Comprehensive School is one such approach);

: the quality of PSHE delivery needs to be evaluated and assessed and the views of young people are crucial; and

: PSHE should be part of the induction process for school governors and each school could have a governor champion for PSHE.

The Scrutiny Panel thanked the young people, elected members, schools' representatives and officers who had participated in this scrutiny review. It was noted that the Youth Cabinet had undertaken to monitor the progress of the implementation of the review's recommendations.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That this Scrutiny Panel endorses the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review report into Personal, Social and Health Education.

(3) That the report be forwarded to Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee for approval, and future submission to Cabinet.

(4) That the response of Cabinet to the recommendations of this scrutiny review be reported to a future meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel.

**138. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2010 TO 2013 - CONSULTATION AND EMERGING PRIORITIES**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Director of Resources, Planning and Performance stating that later this year the Children's Trust Board will publish a new Children and Young People's Plan, replacing the existing Plan which lasts until June 2010. The new Plan will continue to set the strategic priorities for the work of partners on the Children's Trust Board and will last from 2010 until 2013.

It is now also a requirement for the Children and Young People's Plan to be prepared and owned by the Children's Trust Board. The report stated that the guidance issued by the Department for Children, School and Families is explicit in its requirement for broad consultation about the Children and Young People's Plan.

Members noted that the findings of the consultation on the new Plan have been considered in the context of other factors affecting Children and Young People's Services, including the Notice to Improve and the annual Audit of Need. A draft of the Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013 (appended to the submitted report) has been prepared for the purposes of further consultation.

Reference was made to the four priorities (termed 'big things') of the Plan:-

- (i) Keeping Children and Young People Safe;
- (ii) Prevention and Early Intervention;
- (iii) Tackling Inequalities;
- (iv) Transforming Rotherham Learning.

The Scrutiny Panel discussed the differences and similarities of the new Plan with the previous (2007 to 2010) Children and Young People's Plan and also the importance of multi-agency co-operative working in localities.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents of the Children and Young People's Plan, 2010 to 2013, be noted.

**139. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES - IMPROVEMENT NOTICE AND ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 114 of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 5th February, 2010, consideration was given to a report presented by the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services concerning the Children and Young People's

Services' Improvement Plan summary. Members noted that detailed regular monitoring continues to take place against a number of actions across several themes.

The report provided an overview of the progress made since the Minister of State's Notice to Improve was received, included the RAG (red, amber, green) rating and direction of travel for the areas of improvement and identified some areas of good performance and key risks to meeting the stretching targets set for the Council and its strategic partners.

Discussion took place on the continuing improvements made since the writing of the report and upon progress with the recruitment and retention of social workers in Children's Services.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the progress being made against the targets set in the Notice to Improve be welcomed.

**140. GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS (KEY STAGE 4) 2009**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Director, Schools and Lifelong Learning containing details of the GCSE (Key Stage 4) examination results for 2009 and how they compare to previous years, to the national average and to the results of this Council's statistical neighbours.

The Scrutiny Panel discussed the actions being taken to continue the improvement of the academic performance of boys, of black and minority ethnic pupils and of pupils who are looked after children.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the improved levels of performance across all indicators at the end of Key Stage 4 be welcomed.

(3) That all schools be encouraged to continue to improve their results and strive to achieve outcomes at least in line with the national rate of improvement.

(4) That endorsement be given to the drive to:-

(a) reduce the gap between Rotherham's performance and the national average performance especially in relation to 5A\*-C including English and Mathematics;

(b) continue to improve boys' attainment;

(c) continue to improve the attainment of black and minority ethnic (BME)



pupils; and

(d) continue to improve the attainment of Looked After Children.

**141. MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT - UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Senior Director, Schools and Lifelong Learning concerning the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 which became operational on 1st April 2010 and brings about radical change in post-16 learning, including:-

(i) the dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council and placing upon local authorities a new duty to secure sufficient, suitable education and training provision for all resident 16-19 year olds, 16-25 year olds who have learning difficulties and disabilities and young people in young offender institutions;

(ii) the establishment of the Young People's Learning Agency to have responsibility for funding 16-19 education and training and for overseeing the allocation of post-16 resources to Academies;

(iii) the creation of a Skills Funding Agency that will have overall responsibility for the performance and resourcing of Further Education colleges and, through the new National Apprenticeship Service, for securing sufficient apprenticeships for all young people who are suitably qualified and who want one;

(iv) recognising, for the first time, Sixth Form Colleges as a distinct legal category and make them the responsibility of the local authority.

The report stated that preparations for the transfer are being made at national, regional and sub-regional level. Details of the sub-regional implementation plan and its monitoring were included with the submitted report.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the transfer of 16-19 responsibilities from the Learning and Skills Council to the Borough Council be noted.

(3) That the preparations being made by officers for the adoption of these new responsibilities and commissioning powers, as now reported, be endorsed.

(4) That it be noted that the Strategic Director of Children and Young People Services is to draw down funds from the Young People's Learning Agency for the purposes detailed in the report submitted.

(5) That a further report on these issues be submitted to the next meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel, to be held on Friday,

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - 09/04/10 7C**

4<sup>th</sup> June, 2010, such report to include proposals for the future scrutiny of the revised machinery of government for post-16 education and learning.

**142. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 5TH MARCH, 2010**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**143. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL HELD ON 24TH MARCH, 2010**

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel held on 24th March, 2010 be noted.

**144. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER AND ADVISERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES HELD ON 10TH MARCH, 2010, 23RD MARCH, 2010 AND ON 24TH MARCH, 2010**

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services, held on 10th March, 2010, 23rd March, 2010 and on 24th March, 2010, be noted.

**145. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN'S BOARD HELD ON 10TH MARCH, 2010**

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Board held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 be noted.

**146. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 19TH FEBRUARY, 2010, 26TH FEBRUARY, 2010 AND ON 12TH MARCH, 2010**

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meetings of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 19th February, 2010, 26th February, 2010 and on 12th March, 2010, be noted.

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES  
7th April, 2010**

Present:- Councillor S. Wright (in the Chair); and Councillor Currie.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Havenhand and Tweed.

**D152. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 23RD MARCH 2010 AND ON 24TH MARCH 2010**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meetings held on 23rd March, 2010 and on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 be approved as correct records.

**D153. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN'S BOARD HELD ON 10TH MARCH, 2010**

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Board held on 10th March, 2010 be noted.

**D154. 'THE LEARNING REVOLUTION: MAKING IT HAPPEN' - LEAD ACCOUNTABLE BODY STATUS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Learning Network Manager concerning the intention of the Learning and Skills Council and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills that, with effect from 2011/12, all of the Learning and Skills Council funding for informal adult learning will be channelled through the Local Authority. Reference was made to the advice issued by the Local Government Association on this matter.

The report stated that, in April 2010, the Learning Skills Council would be abolished and adult learning will be managed by a new successor body called the Skills Funding Agency. Local authorities are being invited to take responsibility for the local agenda and to provide local leadership and the infrastructure to create a joined up, innovative local learning offer.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That, in accordance with the requirements of The Learning Revolution, it be agreed in principle that Children and Young People's Services shall become the Lead Accountable Body for adult learning in the Borough area.

(3) That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services, after receipt of additional information on the key leadership responsibilities of the lead accountable body.

**D155. REVIEW OF DIRECT PAYMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Children and Families Special Needs Service Manager concerning recommendations relating to Children and Young People's Services' use of Direct Payments.

Appended to the report was the action plan to address the review's recommendations. The action plan was prepared for implementation between November 2009 and July 2010 and essential to its success was an immediate review of the criteria for direct payments and of current allocations against those criteria. This review should have regard to the latest statutory guidance, Community Care Services for Carers and Children's Services (Direct Payments) (England) Regulations 2009 and use eligibility criteria in line with those used in this Authority's Neighbourhoods and Adult Services. An essential action prior to conducting any review is the preparation of practice guidance, based on those for Neighbourhoods and Adult Services but related to risk assessment for Children in Need, so that the review, and future allocations, may be conducted consistently.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That approval be granted for the development of practice guidance for assessing eligibility for direct payments allocations in Children and Young People's Services.

(3) That the practice guidance for Children and Young People's Services shall be consistent with that in Neighbourhoods and Adult Services in applying the "critical" and "substantial" criteria of risk in the Fair Access to Care guidance to the Children in Need framework in assessing eligibility for future Direct Payment allocations.

(4) That a review of current Direct Payments allocations against the practice guidance shall be undertaken as soon as the guidance is in place.

(5) That the outcome of the review, referred to (4) above, shall be reported to a meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services during July 2010.

**D156. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES NOTICE TO IMPROVE AND ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. D128 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services held on 24th February, 2010, consideration was given to a report presented by the Performance and Quality Manager concerning the Children and Young People's Services' Improvement Plan summary. Members noted that detailed regular monitoring continues to take place against a number of actions across several themes.

The report provided an overview of the progress made since the Minister of State's Notice to Improve was received, included the RAG (red, amber, green) rating and direction of travel for the areas of improvement and identified some areas of good performance and key risks to meeting the stretching targets set for the Council and its strategic partners.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the progress being made against the targets set in the Notice to Improve be welcomed.

(3) That further progress reports continue to be submitted to the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services.

**D157. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2007 TO 2010 - PROGRESS UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. D98 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services held on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2009, consideration was given to a report presented by the Performance and Quality Manager, summarising progress against the commitments within the Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2010. It was noted that quarterly progress reports are collated for each commitment outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2010. The previous progress reports (October 2008, April 2009 and December 2009) showed that significant progress had been achieved across the Children and Young People's Service and with the Authority's partners in relation to the commitments agreed within the Children and Young People's Plan. The latest update (January 2010, covering the period September to December, 2009) shows that this progress is continuing.

It was noted that preparations were taking place for the publication of a new Children and Young People's Plan during the Summer, 2010.

Resolved:- That the report be received and its contents noted.

**D158. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2010 TO 2013 - CONSULTATION AND EMERGING PRIORITIES**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Performance and Quality Manager stating that later this year the Children's Trust Board will publish a new Children and Young People's Plan, replacing the existing Plan which lasts until June 2010. The new Plan will continue to set the strategic priorities for the work of partners on the Children's Trust Board and will last from 2010 until 2013. It is now also a requirement for the Children and Young People's Plan to be prepared and owned by the Children's Trust Board. The report stated that the guidance issued by the Department for Children, School and Families is explicit in its requirement for broad consultation about the Children and Young People's Plan.

Members noted that the findings of the consultation on the new Plan have been considered in the context of other factors affecting Children and Young People's Services, including the Notice to Improve and the annual Audit of Need. A draft of the Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013 (appended to the submitted report) has been prepared for the purposes of further consultation.

Reference was made to the four priorities (termed 'big things') of the Plan:-

- (i) Keeping Children and Young People Safe;
- (ii) Prevention and Early Intervention;
- (iii) Tackling Inequalities;
- (iv) Transforming Rotherham Learning.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the report and draft Children and Young People's Plan 2010 to 2013 be submitted to the meeting of the Children's Board to be held on Wednesday, 21st April 2010.

(3) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services on the outcome of the consultation process about the Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013.

#### **D159. FOUNDATION STAGE ASSESSMENT RESULTS - SUMMER 2009**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Assistant Head of School Effectiveness Service containing details of the primary schools' Foundation Stage assessment results for 2009 and how they compare to previous years and to the national average.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the marked increases in the outcomes as reported through the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile be noted.

(3) That the drive to encourage all schools to continue to improve their results and to strive to reflect outcomes more in line with national averages be endorsed.

(4) That the drive to improve standards, particularly in Communication, Language and Literacy, throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage together with the attainment of boys and other vulnerable and underachieving groups, be endorsed.

(5) That the drive to narrow the gap between the average for the lowest 20% band and the Local Authority median be endorsed.

**D160. TEENAGE PREGNANCY STRATEGY - UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Sexual Health Lead Officer (NHS Rotherham) concerning the progress of Rotherham's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. The report stated that the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (1999) established the requirement for local authorities to reduce the under-18 conception rate by 50% by 2010, from the 1998 baseline of 56.4 (under 18 conceptions per 1,000 girls aged 15-17 years). Whilst the overall trajectory for Rotherham is downward, 2008 has seen a slight increase and progress against the target is unlikely to be sufficient to achieve the 2010 target. The under-18 conception rate target is a Local Area Agreement top 35 indicator and included within the Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Health Authority Vital Signs performance measures. These targets would require a 27% reduction for 2008/09 and 39% in 2009/10.

Rotherham is an area monitored by Government Ministers, who are pleased with the Borough's current progress in relation to the increased efforts towards reducing under-18 conceptions.

The current priorities of the strategy are:-

: targeted interventions with high risk young people;

: increasing the role of parents in improving outcomes for young people particularly around talking to them about sex and relationships;

: a more systematic approach to comprehensive contraceptive provision.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the current position of Rotherham's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy be noted and the various actions identified in the submitted report be endorsed.

(2) That the report be also submitted to the meeting of the Children's Board, to be held on Wednesday, 21st April 2010.

**D161. EXTENSION TO COLERIDGE CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Early Years and Childcare Strategy Manager describing a proposal to improve the capacity of the Coleridge Children's Centre in order to meet the needs of children and families within its local reach area. The proposal was to extend the foundation unit within the Coleridge Primary School in order to increase the space available to the Children's Centre. This increase in space will increase the capacity of the room which accommodates the children aged two years, from eight children to twenty-three children. The size of the

family room will also be increased to provide more space for service delivery.

The report stated that funding for this scheme was available from the Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Grant and it was anticipated that the construction work should be completed by March 2011.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the plans and expenditure for the extension of the Coleridge Children's Centre, as detailed in the report now submitted, in order to increase the accommodation available for the delivery of Children's Centre services, be approved.

(3) That an appropriate press release be issued on this matter.

**D162. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs, indicated below, of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

**D163. PROPOSED REVIEW OF YOUTH SERVICE PROVISION**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services concerning a proposed review of Youth Service provision. The report included a methodology and timetable to create a model across the Borough that meets existing demands and ensures an effective value for money delivery, in line with key recommendations from the Scrutiny Review "Future Challenges for the Youth Service". Reference was made to the specific proposal to prepare a business plan for Outdoor Learning service provision.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services containing a strategy for the next stage of the Youth Service review.

(3) That, at a future meeting, further consideration be given to the option to develop a Business Case for the Outdoor Learning Service.

(4) That the Youth Service review be informed by the current Visioning Initiative being led by the Voice and Influence Unit within the Children and



Young People's Services' Directorate.

(Exempt under:-

: Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to financial or business affairs;

: Paragraph 4 of the Act – information relating to consultations about labour relations matters)

**D164. DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR PARENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN CHILDREN'S CENTRE REACH AREAS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Early Years and Childcare Strategy Manager concerning the proposed extension of the existing Service Level Agreement with the Rotherham Advocacy Partnership to deliver the Supporting Parents with Additional Needs project for a further three months, in order to progress with tendering for the new contract. Members noted the intention to invite tenders for a new contract which would last for a period of two years, until 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2012, subject to the availability of the necessary grant funding.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That, in accordance with Standing Order No. 38, the extension of the existing Service Level Agreement with the Rotherham Advocacy Partnership, for a period of three months, shall be exempt from the contract requirements of Standing Order No. 48, as detailed in the report now submitted.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to financial or business affairs)

**D165. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH MARCH, 2010**

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the Education Consultative Committee, held on 4th March, 2010, be noted.

(Exempt under Paragraph 4 of the Act – information relating to consultations about labour relations matters)

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**  
**20th April, 2010**

Present:- Councillor S. Wright.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Currie, Havenhand and Tweed.

**D166. APPOINTMENT OF LEA SCHOOL GOVERNORS**

Pursuant to Minute No. C50 of January 2000, consideration was given to nominations received to fill Local Authority vacancies on school governing bodies.

Resolved:- (1) That, with the effective date of appointment as shown, the following appointments be made to school governing bodies, subject to satisfactory checks being undertaken:-

**New Appointments**

Wath Central Primary	Mr. Paul Mangham	20.04.2010
Thrybergh Comprehensive	Miss Amy L. Holden	20.04.2010

**Re-appointment**

Aston Springwood Primary	Mrs. Jennifer Hudson	06.06.2010
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(2) That the application in respect of Mr. M.S. be not approved.

(3) That consideration of the remaining application be deferred, pending receipt of additional information.

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**  
**Wednesday, 28th April, 2010**

Present:- Councillor S. Wright (in the Chair); and Councillor Havenhand.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Currie and Tweed.

**D167. CABINET MEMBER**

Councillor Shaun Wright informed everyone that this was his last meeting as Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services. Councillor Wright paid tribute to the support he had received from Councillor Jane Havenhand (Senior Adviser), Councillor Simon Currie (Adviser) and Councillor Simon Tweed (Adviser) during his time as Cabinet Member.

In addition, Councillor Wright paid tribute to the support provided by Mrs Joyce Thacker (Strategic Director) and all staff of the Children and Young People's Services' Directorate during the past five years.

The Councillors and Officers present also expressed their appreciation of Councillor Wright's work as Cabinet Member and wished him well in his future roles with the Council.

**D168. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 7TH APRIL, 2010 AND ON 20TH APRIL, 2010**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meetings held on 7th April, 2010 and on 20th April, 2010 be approved as correct records.

**D169. PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF THE MALTBY CRAGS INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

Further to Minute No. 132 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services held on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2010, consideration was given to a report presented by the School Organisation, Planning and Development Manager detailing the outcome of the pre-statutory consultation process on the proposed amalgamation of the Maltby Craggs Infant School and the Maltby Craggs Junior School. The report stated that the amalgamation would be achieved by the closure of the Junior School and the expansion and change of age range of the Infant School from 3 - 7 years to 3 – 11 years. The new School would have 420 places (Reception to Year 6) with a Nursery Unit of up to 78 places, which is the same as the combined number of the two existing schools and an admission number of 60 pupils. The School also incorporates the 'Stepping Stones' Children Centre. It was proposed that the amalgamation would take effect at the beginning of the 2010/2011 academic year in September, 2010.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the statutory consultation take place on the proposal to amalgamate the Maltby Craggs Infant School and the Maltby Craggs Junior School, as described and in accordance with timetable contained in the report now submitted.

(3) That a further report, detailing the outcome of the formal statutory consultation process, be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Children and Young People's Services.

**D170. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE PROJECT BOARD HELD ON 23RD MARCH, 2010**

Consideration was given to the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the Building Schools for the Future Project Board, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2010.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

**D171. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended (information relating to financial or business affairs).

**D172. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ALLOW SIBLINGS TO BE PLACED TOGETHER**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Looked After Children Service Manager concerning an application from a couple who are adoptive parents, for financial assistance from the Council to enable them to be considered as prospective adopters for the younger sibling of their adopted daughter. The application was being made and considered in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption Support Services (Local Authority) (England) Regulations 2003.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the application be approved and financial support be provided to the prospective adopters as detailed in the report now submitted.

**CHILDREN'S BOARD  
WEDNESDAY, 21ST APRIL, 2010**

Present:- Councillor S. Wright (in the Chair); Ruth Bastin, Alan Hazell, Anne Lawrence, Jenny Lingrell, Joanne Martin, Gani Martins, Dorothy Smith, Joyce Thacker, Richard Tweed, Julie Westwood and Janet Wheatley.

Apologies for absence were received from Russell Brynes, Andy Buck, Martin Kimber and Pat Ward.

**74. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE CHILDREN'S BOARD HELD ON 10TH MARCH 2010**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Children's Board held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2010, were approved as a correct record.

**75. MATTERS ARISING**

Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy

Further to Minute No 71 of the previous minutes, the Director of Children and Young People's Services confirmed that the launch of the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy would be taking place on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010 and so far 114 people had indicated that they would be attending.

**76. ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

South Yorkshire Police - Crime Statistics

Chief Superintendent Richard Tweed reported that the year end performance figures had now been produced and were showing a 13% reduction in crime. However he was concerned about the crime figures relating to young people under the age of 17. The last 3 years figures were:

- 2007/08      324 Victims
- 2008/09      306 Victims
- 2009/10      317 Victims

Concerns were expressed mainly around the safety of young people, particularly in respect of assault and robbery. It was suggested that he undertake an analysis of the last 3 years figures and report back to the Board with his findings.

**77. CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD**

The Director of Children and Young People's Services reported on progress made in respect of establishing a Children's Trust Board.

One model could be that the Children's Trust Board would consist of a body of non-executive members made up of people resident in Rotherham and executive members group drawn from primary schools, special schools, government office etc. The non executive board would hold officers to account in respect of Children's Services.

The purpose of the Board would be set out in a constitution and advice was currently being sought in statutory guidance via Legal Services.

A document would be produced in the next few weeks and would be sent out to members of the Board during May for discussion and approval at the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

#### **78. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN'S TRUST**

The Director of Resources, Planning and Performance gave an update in respect of Resource Planning for the Children and Young People's Plan.

She reported that a self assessment had been carried out, with contributions being made by partner organisations and an action plan was currently being drawn up. She suggested that a discussion should take place at the next meeting regarding key risk areas with a view to developing a risk register.

#### **79. PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL HEALTH INDICATORS**

Consideration was given to a report presented by Joanne Martin from NHS Rotherham concerning the performance of National Health indicators.

An update was given in respect of the indicators relating to:

- Breastfeeding
- Smoking in Pregnancy
- Childhood Obesity.

The Board noted that there had been problems relating to the recording of data which had resulted in Rotherham's performance figures being rated poorly. Measures had been put in place to improve this in the last year which had resulted in more accurate figures being provided and improvements being noted.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

#### **80. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES NOTICE TO IMPROVE UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services which provided an overview of

progress made since the Notice to Improve was received in December.

Based on a RAG rating the following was the current position as at 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010:

Red:	3
Amber:	23
Green:	17

It was noted that the high risk areas were:

- NI59 – Initial assessments within 7 days
- Improve the quality of serious case reviews
- Improve the outcomes of the satisfaction of CYPs surveys

Targets which had been completed were:

- PDR guidance had been issued to managers for 2010 with a May deadline set for the completion of PDRs
- The Director of Children & Learners at GOYH was now a member of the improvement panel.
- Additional administration staff were now in place in the social care locality teams with the resources having a positive impact.
- The Portal development for sharing social care reports for social workers and managers was in place
- Social work staff now had access to the VPN home working solution with the roll out of laptops completed and SWIFT desk guides had been issued to localities

Improvements had also been made in the following areas:

NI 60 – core assessments carried out within timeframes had reached the 80% target set for March. However this had been left as an amber rating in the hope that it would continue to improve and not fall back to previous levels.

The CAF training re-commenced in February with 215 out of 490 staff being trained since the training commenced.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> March all initial and core assessments were being audited with a bank of good practice being developed.

## 81. **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2007-2010 PROGRESS UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Policy Planning and Research Manager which summarised progress against commitments within the Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2010 for the period September to December 2009.

It was noted that the commitments currently at red status were:

- Continue to reduce the rate of women who smoke in pregnancy by 1% year on year
- Continue to increase the initiation and maintenance of breastfeeding by 2% year on year
- Continue to reduce the rate of under 18 conceptions by implementation of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
- Improving advice on nutrition and reducing obesity
- Target attainment at Key Stage 2 on an ongoing basis
- Reduce the incidence of offending of Looked After Children by monitoring protocols of behaviour intervention in Children's Units and improve timeliness of multi-agency risk assessments
- Target service to enable families to develop effective communication and integration into the community

Agreed:- That the report be received and the progress noted.

## **82. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2010-2013 - CONSULTATION AND EMERGING PRIORITIES**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Policy Planning and Research Manager and the Policy Planning and Research Officer concerning the Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013, Consultation and Emerging Priorities.

The Board noted that consultation had taken place in a number of ways, including face to face interviews and meetings, focus groups, local media and postal surveys. Participants were asked to choose five priorities from the seventeen priorities in the existing plan and to rank them in order of importance to them.

Although each individual's response to the existing priorities was different, a body of opinion formed behind five of the existing priorities:

- To improve the safety and security of vulnerable children and young people;
- To reduce the impact of Domestic Violence;
- To halt the rise in infant mortalities;
- To ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to live healthy lifestyles;
- Ensuring higher quality education/learning for all children and young people

Featured in the plan were "Four Big Things" which would guide our activity in the next three years. These were:

- Keeping Children and Young People Safe
- Prevention and Early Intervention



- Tackling Inequalities
- Transforming Rotherham Learning

Some areas of work which had emerged and would be highlighted in the new Children and Young People's Plan were:

- Communication, language and learning
- Domestic abuse
- Looked After Children
- Obesity
- The 14-19 offer
- Post 16 options for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Giving babies a healthy start
- Understanding and responding to the needs of migrant communities

The purposes of these areas of focus was to draw attention to work that may need significant investment of resource, forensic attention and/or change management in order to change the direction of travel or significantly accelerate along a chosen path.

The Board noted the areas of work which would be highlighted in the new plan and it was suggested and agreed that Obesity be removed as this had now stabilised and for which strategies/pathways and funding were now in place and be replaced by Alcohol abuse and its effects on families.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received.

(2) That the amendment referred to above, be made to the plan.

### **83. SECONDARY LIFESTYLE SURVEY**

Consideration was given to a report concerning the Secondary School Lifestyle Survey 2009.

The purpose of the Lifestyle Survey was to fill existing gaps in information, to validate existing information and to enable Children and Young People's Service and partners to identify what matters to young people of Rotherham and improve service delivery.

The Secondary Survey period commenced on 15th June 2009 and concluded on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

It was noted that 12 schools took part and 2589 pupils undertook the survey, which was an increase on the number of pupils the previous year.

Having collected the data from the surveys the next steps would be:

- That the Healthy Schools Team would work with schools to look at the results of the survey and include them in their action plans
- That the findings would inform the new Children and Young People's Plan
- To produce a newsletter to thank students for taking part and to feedback the main headline results, and to send a letter out to all schools thanking them for their participation
- To place the Executive Summary on the website and widely circulate and to promote the findings across all partner agencies. Also to place the full report and data tables on the intranet.
- To monitor developments and results from national surveys such as Tellus 4 to enable us to compare and contrast data.

Resolved:- That the report be received.

#### **84. TEENAGE PREGNANCY STRATEGY UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report relating to the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Update.

It was noted that the current priorities of the strategy which were:

- Targeted interventions with high risk young people
- Increasing the role of parents in improving outcomes for young people particularly around talking to them about sex and relationships
- A more systematic approach to comprehensive contraceptive provision

The 2008 data provided by the Office for National Statistics showed an increase in the rate of teenage pregnancies during that year, which had resulted in an overall percentage reduction of only 1.4% from the baseline in 1998.

Work during 2009/10 had seen increased efforts within priority areas, which was starting to be reflected in the local estimated statistics. Using local hospital episode data for births and terminations, it was now possible to more accurately estimate progress. Recent analysis had given an indication that the final year figure for 2009 was likely to see a steep decline.

The priority areas and work undertaken during 2009/10 were as follows:

- The creation of the Early Intervention Teams who had provided an essential mechanism for assessing the needs of young people prior to their issues escalating, and ensuring that they received support from the most appropriate service.
- The Maltby Linx Young Women's Project, were working with girls at high risk of teenage pregnancy to raise aspirations and self esteem

and address sexual health needs. This had been rolled out in Rotherham North and Wentworth South.

- The development of a Care Pathway for teen parents was currently underway to address repeat conceptions, help young parents to gain the skills they needed to be successful parents and move into education, employment or training. This was due to be implemented in April 2010.
- The development of a Post Termination Care Pathway to address contraceptive issues and provide appropriate emotional support including referral mechanism to services such as the Targeted Women's Projects, Youthstart and Risk Business.
- The introduction of a clinical post dedicated to improving the uptake of Long Acting Reversible Contraception, which targets vulnerable groups, works with the Youth Offending Services, Children's Homes.
- Increase in hours offered by the Contraceptive nurse within Rotherham Foundation Trust Maternity and Termination Services
- Additional Contraception and Sexual Health clinics have opened in line with identified gaps, making a total of twelve in all.
- Implementation of school nurse "drop in's" in or near all secondary schools offering condoms
- Developments of the contraception outreach services were due to be made via the CASH service
- There have been increases in the number of professionals and distribution points offering the Hardwear Condom Distribution Scheme
- The help72 Free Emergency Hormonal Contraception Scheme (EHC) had provided EHC to 201 under 18's since December 2008. This scheme was currently operated by 23 pharmacies.
- A Locally Enhanced Service had been implemented to incentivise GP's to promote Long Acting Reversible Contraception amongst their under 18 patients.
- Increased sexual health services available within colleges
- Thomas Rotherham College were now holding weekly Genito Urinary Medicine and Contraception and Sexual Health clinic which was proving successful
- Dearne Valley College now had an additional Contraception and Sexual Health Youth Clinic session.
- Resources available in a number of venues across Rotherham to assist on how to talk to your children about relationships and sex.
- The 'S-Word, we need to talk about sex' website and campaign was launched in August 2009 to promote sexual health services and provide safe sex messages that relate and engage young people.

Resolved:- That the current position of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy be noted and the actions identified be endorsed.

**85. MINUTES OF THE SAFEGUARDING BOARD HELD ON 19TH MARCH 2010**

Key issues and concerns from the minutes of the meeting of the Safeguard Board held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2010 were discussed and noted.

**86. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Chair of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board in respect of the Local Safeguarding Board Annual Report.

Under the revised guidance to “inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children” Working together to Safeguard Children, published in March 2010, Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to produce and publish an annual report on the safeguarding in the local area.

Under this revised guidance, the annual report must include assessments of policies and procedures to keep children safe including:

- The policies and procedures for the safe recruitment of frontline staff;
- An assessment of single and inter-agency training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to meet local needs;
- Lessons learned about the prevention of future child deaths which have been identified by the Child Death Overview Panel
- Progress on priority issues (identified in Rotherham’s draft Children and Young People’s plan for 2010/11 as domestic abuse)

The report must include a clear account of progress made in implementing actions from individual Serious Case Reviews completed during the year in question, plans to evaluate the impact of those actions, and to monitor how the improvements were being sustained over time.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be accepted;

(2) That the annual report for 2009/10 and business plan for 2010/11 be presented at the next meeting

(3) That the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children’s Board’s first statutory annual report be received during March 2011.

**87. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 16TH JUNE, 2010 AT 4.30 P.M.**

A discussion took place about increasing the frequency of the meetings during the period that the Authority was under “Notice to Improve”. It was agreed that they should take place on a monthly basis for the foreseeable future.

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Children's Board take place in May, on a date to be confirmed, and that further dates be agreed at that meeting.

**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**26th March, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Boyes, Jack, License, McNeely and G. A. Russell.

Also in attendance was Councillor Kaye for Item 165 below (Proposed Transfer of Bar Park)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gilding, J. Hamilton and Swift.

**163.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**164.       QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**165.       UPDATE ON PROPOSED TRANSFER OF BAR PARK, THORPE HESLEY**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Kaye (Ward Member) and Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager.

Further to Minute No. 39 of the meeting of this Committee held on 24th July, 2009, Phil Gill presented the submitted report updating on the situation regarding the proposed transfer of Bar Park, Thorpe Hesley from Sheffield to Rotherham.

The report covered:-

- estimated legal and other professional costs of Sheffield City Council
- estimated legal and other professional costs of Rotherham MBC
- Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport deliberations
- funding position

Councillor Kaye outlined the position regarding the Friends of Bar Park Group, their attempts to secure grant monies and frustrations that the Park had not yet been transferred.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- Cabinet Member position

- funding position
- management arrangements
- budgetary situation
- officer meetings with Sheffield City Council
- Sheffield City Council costs and clarification of fees element
- boundary change implications of this and other areas in the borough
- costs to make the site good due to lack of maintenance
- area assembly support
- possibility of establishing a community trust
- barriers to securing grant monies
- guidelines covering impact of such changes to boundaries
- potential review of similar areas within South Yorkshire affected by boundary changes

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That Phil Gill investigate the following points raised and report accordingly to the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport:-

(a) clarification of Sheffield City Council's costs/fees etc., and further discussions with them regarding revising said costs downwards

(b) survey of park and updating estimates to make good any liabilities

(c) potential for establishing a community trust – discussion with Friends of Bar Park about their willingness/ability as a group, or another local group, to take responsibility for the site (including insurance and maintenance)

(d) review of 2010/11 service budgets to try to identify possible funding to cover the transfer costs

(3) That arrangements be made for a sub-regional review of shared assets covering such cross border pockets of land within the four local authorities and a further report be submitted in June, 2010.

Carole Haywood, Partnership Manager, presented the submitted report which set out the renegotiation of Local Area Agreement indicator targets which formed part of the completed refresh element of the annual review and was now pending approval from Central Government.

The performance picture was very mixed with a significant number of indicators on target and performing well. However a substantial number also appeared unlikely to reach the target set for 2011. The review focused on those areas.

As the more detailed analysis revealed performance to be varied, this was compounded by the number of indicators where the Council was unable to assess accurately the current position, or project future performance. Examples of good and weak performance existed across all of the five themes. There was a concentration of 'red' rated indicators under Alive, although several of these were closely linked. There were also a significant number of indicators where current performance was unclear, particularly under Proud and Safe, although in some cases data was imminent, which would help to address this. The report set out in detail the current performance for each of the themes.

There was up to £2 million of Local Area Agreement Reward Grant available under the terms of the current Local Area Agreement 2008-11. The way in which Reward Grant was calculated had changed and was significantly more complicated than in the previous round. The Rotherham Partnership Team was working currently with colleagues at the Council to estimate the level of Reward Grant the Partnership would be likely to secure under different performance scenarios. Although it had been delayed, the Government was set to release a 'Reward Grant calculator' in April, 2010 which should assist with this and make clearer the full financial implications. Although the detailed work referred to had not yet been undertaken the sense was that on current performance we would be unlikely to secure very much of the available £2 million.

Details of performance on the indicators were submitted as an appendix.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- awareness of Breathing Space
- recommendations from the Breastfeeding scrutiny review
- NI056 'Obesity in primary school age children in year 6' : need to develop more effective way of measurement rather than BMI
- Obesity scrutiny review findings
- NI120a All age all cause mortality rate – males



- concerns regarding reduced school lunchtimes and effect on activity
- concerns regarding Government's rationale for leisure activity that counts
- ongoing review on the image of Rotherham
- need for an assessment of what we need from the Partnership
- need for clarification of roles and relationship of the Safe Theme board and Safer Rotherham Partnership
- NI135 ' Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service or advice and information'
- 2008 Place Survey
- elected member involvement in Partnership performance clinics
- need to liaise with ward councillors and area assembly chairs, area partnership managers and parish councils to help ascertain what is happening in local areas
- NI136 'People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)'

Resolved:- (1) That the review process be noted.

(2) That the revised LAA targets, agreed with Government Office as part of the review process, be endorsed.

(3) That Carole Haywood and Cath Saltis liaise regarding the presentation of future reports.

(4) That a mechanism be devised to:-

(a) invite partners to scrutiny

(b) refer relevant indicators to respective scrutiny panels

(5) That Andy Buck and Brian James be invited to a future meeting of this Committee to discuss health issues.

**167.**

**SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS**

Rachel O'Neil, Customer Access Client Manager, presented the submitted report detailing the final position on the implementation of the recommendations from the scrutiny review of corporate complaints undertaken in May, 2008.

The report covered:-

- performance and response rates across directorates
- formal definition of a complaint
- expertise for officers with complaint handling roles
- improving intelligence from information received by customers

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- website accessibility
- navigation of the website
- VOIP
- "you said – we did" principle : feedback to the customer on what we did not do was just as important

Resolved:- (1) That the actions taken to implement the recommendations from the scrutiny review of corporate complaints be noted.

(2) That future reports be submitted annually.

#### **168. MINUTES**

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That, arising from the minutes regarding VOIP, the Committee felt that it should be a requirement that, wherever possible, staff should be on a 'hunt' group and the viability of this be looked into.

#### **169. WORK IN PROGRESS**

Members reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor Jack reported she had attended the following events-

- health event in York
- event in Sheffield regarding the reconfiguration of the Northern General and Royal Hallamshire hospitals
- South Yorkshire Trading Standards event last Friday regarding tobacco issues and links to quit smoking

- Mind the Gap event on Tuesday regarding immigrant health

(b) Councillor Austen reported that the devolved budget review was ongoing and the corporate parenting review would be submitted to the next meeting.

(c) Councillor Boyes reported that meetings had been held and were scheduled regarding the review of the image of Rotherham.

(d) Councillor G. A. Russell reported that the latest meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel had considered:-

- Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy
- Young Carers' Strategy
- School Meals Research
- CYPS Performance Indicators – Quarter 3

**170. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no formal call in requests.

(The Chairman authorised consideration of the following item to enable arrangements to be made.)

**171. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY ANNUAL CONFERENCE - LONDON - 30TH JUNE, 2010**

Resolved:- That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, or substitutes, be authorised to attend the above.

**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**Friday, 16th April, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Gilding, J. Hamilton, Jack, McNeely, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell and Swift.

Also in attendance was Councillor Burton for Item 177 below (Scrutiny Review – Breastfeeding for Rotherham : A Health Future)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Boyes and License.

**172.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**173.       QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**174.       500 BABIES**

Julie Slatter, Head of Policy and Performance, gave a presentation on the imagined prospects of 500 notional babies born in Rotherham if nothing changed (250 living in the 10 most deprived areas and 250 living in the 10 least deprived areas).

The presentation covered:-

- Rotherham in 2010
- Rotherham has:
  - 7 area assemblies
  - 21 wards
  - 166 Super Output Areas (SOAs)
- Most and least deprived SOA's
- Impact of inequality on life chances
- Demographics
- Home and family
- Education
- Crime experiences
- Work

- Health
- Later years
- Summary of inequalities
- Are we making a difference?
- Corporate priorities?
- Possible priorities
- Next steps?

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- criteria for deprivation
- likelihood of living in council rented home
- likelihood of earning above £30,000
- differences made utilising funding regimes
- early years as a priority needed stressing
- impact on shared services
- impact of locality teams on deprivation in areas
- information held locally but not covered in presentation regarding for example :-
  - drugs
  - prostitution
  - child abuse
  - alcohol
  - long term disability
- need to present statistics at area assemblies
- need to break down the relevant information for discussion at respective scrutiny panels with an open invitation to all members of the Council
- need to link emerging corporate priorities with the work programme

Resolved:- (1) That the presentation be welcomed and endorsed.

(2) That Cath Saltis and Julie Slatter liaise regarding spreading the message.

(3) That the information be disseminated and referred to respective scrutiny panels.

(4) That Miles Crompton report to a future meeting of this Committee on information that is held locally.

#### **175. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

Rob Houghton, Governance and Risk Manager, presented the submitted report which showed the Council's most significant risks and a summary of how they were being managed.

The reporting format had two key features:-

- An 'at a glance' picture showing the pattern of risk assessments for corporate priorities or projects both before and after risk management actions
- A more detailed summary of the risk register that reflected the current risk assessments for each corporate priority or project as at 31st December, 2009

Changes to the previous style of presenting information and the significant changes to the register since the previous report were outlined.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- evidence to support that the new power of wellbeing for parish councils, Councillor Call for Action and new scrutiny functions were being implemented
- evaluation of the closure of Chesterhill
- discussions with directorates regarding risk levels
- direction of travel and timescale implications
- comparisons with numbers of risks in similar organisations
- role of the Corporate Improvement Board
- possibility of bringing risk champions to the Committee to discuss performance

Resolved:- (1) That the updated Corporate Risk Register be noted.

**4D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 16/04/10**

(2) That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of scrutiny panels liaise with scrutiny advisers to identify any specific risks that needed consideration at the respective scrutiny panel.

**176. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL REVIEW OF CORPORATE PARENTING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Austen presented a report which set out the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review into corporate parenting arrangements undertaken by the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel. The Sub-Panel supported a comprehensive presentation on the review outlining the process, findings and draft recommendations. The review document was submitted.

Highlighted were the background to, and rationale for, the review, membership, scope, terms of reference, findings and recommendations.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- need to keep children informed and up to date
- timeliness of the review
- scrutiny arrangements
- creation of the Corporate Parenting Board to replace the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel
- suggested alternative titles for the Corporate Parenting Board
- corporate parenting as part of the induction process

Resolved:- (1) That the review, together with the findings and recommendations, be supported.

(2) That further consideration be given to the title of the proposed board.

(3) That the review and its recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration for response within two months.

**177. SCRUTINY REVIEW - BREASTFEEDING FOR ROTHERHAM : A HEALTHY FUTURE**

Councillor Burton presented the submitted report which set out the findings and recommendations of the joint Adult Services and Health and Children and Young People's Services scrutiny panel review into the social and community aspects of breastfeeding in Rotherham. The report was endorsed by the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 1st April, 2010. The review document was submitted.

Highlighted were the background to, and rationale for, the review, membership, scope, terms of reference, findings and recommendations.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- linking to the Rotherham 500 Babies work
- facilities for breastfeeding in public
- breastfeeding friendly Council buildings
- promotion of breastfeeding
- awareness of the working group, dealing with the new Council building, regarding provision of facilities
- importance of Rotherham as a breastfeeding friendly area
- need to promote and disseminate the health benefits of breastfeeding
- need for mothers to have an informed choice

Resolved:- (1) That the review, together with the findings and recommendations, be supported.

(2) That the review and its recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration for response within two months.

(3) That, with regard to (2) above, Cabinet be requested to refer the health aspects to NHS Rotherham for consideration.

(4) That Cath Saltis clarify with Paul Smith the issues now raised regarding the new Council building.

#### **178. PLANNING DAY/WORK PROGRAMME**

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny, referred to emerging issues and the need for a planning session to consider the work programme.

Resolved:- That a half day planning session be held in the Eric Manns Building on Tuesday, 18th May, 2010 commencing at 10.00 a.m.

#### **179. MINUTES**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.



**6D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 16/04/10**

**180. WORK IN PROGRESS**

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor Whelbourn reported :-

- Acting Chief Superintendent Richard Tweed was attending the next meeting of this Committee. Members needed to consider issues to raise
- Recent issues regarding direct payments and the need to re-visit the previous review of direct payments

(b) Councillor Jack reported that the Rotherham Women's Counselling Service was in receipt of funding from NHS Rotherham

(c) Councillor Swift reported:-

- a meeting had taken place with the Chief Executive regarding the review of the image of Rotherham
- the review of PE and sport in schools was completed and the draft report would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee

(d) Councillor G. A. Russell reported that the latest meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel held on 9th April, 2010 had considered:-

- Young People's Mental Health Services
- Personal, Social and Health Education : Scrutiny Review
- Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013
- Children and Young People's Services Improvement Notice and Action Plan
- GCSE Examination Results Key Stage 4
- Machinery of Government

(e) Cath Saltis reported that Cabinet, at its meeting on 7th April, 2010 recommended to Council "That the Head of Scrutiny Services and Member Support be designated as the Council's "Scrutiny Officer" under Section 21ZA of the Local Government Act, 2000."

**181. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no formal call in requests.



**PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**30th April, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Barron, Boyes, Jack, McNeely, G. A. Russell and Swift.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Hamilton and P. A. Russell.

**182.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**183.       QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**184.       POLICING IN ROTHERHAM**

The Chairman welcomed temporary Chief Superintendent Richard Tweed, South Yorkshire Police and Steve Parry, Safer Rotherham Partnership Co-ordinator, who gave a presentation on policing in Rotherham.

The presentation covered:-

- last year's performance against previous year
- new priorities
- challenges
- priority setting
- priorities 2010/11
- performance

Also submitted were:-

- recorded crime statistics by class in Rotherham for the single months of March, 2009 and March, 2010 and also for the periods April, 2008 to March, 2009 and April, 2009 to March, 2010
- Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Performance Suite March, 2010 (provisional year end)

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- background context including average number of incidents per day

and the number of police officers in Rotherham

- perception, particularly of women, that the town centre was not a safe place
- perception, in rural areas, of groups of youths hanging around and that no action was taken against off road motorcycle nuisance
- 'operation coverage'
- public sector budget constraints
- need for consistency of approach to elected members attending meetings of safer neighbourhood teams (SNT's) and neighbourhood action groups (NAGs)
- acknowledgement that elected members were also key to the success of the process
- role of victim support officers and provision of feedback information to victims even when the designated police officer was not on duty
- improved situations on the ground due to working in partnership
- importance of communication
- provision of sessions on how the Council works

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and Richard and Steve be thanked for the informative and interesting presentation.

(2) That the view that elected members should attend SNT meetings and be part of the process be cascaded to facilitate a consistent approach to welcoming elected members at SNT meetings.

(3) That training sessions on how the Council works be made available, as appropriate, to newly recruited police officers and officers attending SNT meetings.

## **185. ECONOMIC DOWNTURN - ONE YEAR LATER**

Colin Earl, Director of Internal Audit and Governance, presented the submitted report which detailed how, in February, 2009, the Local Strategic Partnership approved its strategy and action plan for responding to the economic downturn.

This report referred to a document entitled 'Economic Downturn: One Year Later', which identified how the Council and its partners had responded to the downturn and the positive outcomes from the work done and investment made.

Proposals were, therefore, included for publicising the document.

The report showed that the impact of the downturn appeared to stabilise during the second half of 2009, after major redundancy announcements and a large increase in the number of people claiming jobseekers' allowance during late 2008 and early 2009 and highlighted the significant prevention work done by partners including:-

- Providing a wide range of support to people finding themselves unemployed, helping 85% of people to find new jobs or training within 1 year.
- Providing loans to 340 families to secure private sector rented accommodation and saving over £2 m in homelessness costs to use on other services.
- Providing 300 furnished properties to residents who might not otherwise have been able to afford to take up a tenancy.
- Making £200,000 available through the Rothersave Credit Union to assist residents in greatest financial need, including mortgage arrears.

The report also summarised the impact of the additional investment of £174,000 made by the Council (£121,000) and NHS Rotherham (£53,000) in voluntary sector advice services between February, 2009 and March, 2010. Citizen's Advice Bureau statistics showed that the investment enabled Rotherham to help a greater proportion of its residents than other districts.

This has been a significant success story, with an extra 5,000 residents helped in 2009/10.

It was proposed to place the document on the Council's credit crunch website and on partners' sites. It was proposed to draft an article for inclusion in Rotherham News and to send a press article to relevant agencies.

The document had been sent to the Audit Commission, for consideration as part of the 2010 comprehensive area assessment.

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- publicity arrangements
- ongoing commitment next year
- advice centre leaflets

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and welcomed.

**4D PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 30/04/10**

(2) That advice centre leaflets be provided for ward members to utilise.

**186. REVIEW OF PE AND SPORT IN SCHOOLS**

Councillor Boyes presented the submitted report which set out the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review of P.E. and sport in school.

The review was received by the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 9th April, 2010. The review document was submitted.

Highlighted were the background to, and rationale for, the review, membership, scope, terms of reference and recommendations.

The report covered:-

- overview of policy framework
  - o national level
  - o local level
  - o structure for sport and physical activity in Rotherham
  - o local performance in P.E. and sport
  - o Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) data for Rotherham schools
- factors that hinder 100% P.E. and sport provision
  - o limitation of PESSYP statistics
  - o curriculum timetabling
  - o skilled P.E. teachers
  - o children disengaged from P.E. and sport
  - o extended school services
- services linking to the provision of P.E. and sport
  - o healthy schools programme
  - o P.E., sport and buildings schools for the future
  - o funding and resources

The Chairman welcomed Peter Harper (Partnership Development Manager, Wickersley School Sport Partnership) and Matt Wainwright (Partnership Development Manager, Rawmarsh School) and a discussion and question and answer session ensued.

The following issues were covered:-

- glossary details
- reasoning behind schools not offering a minimum of two hours P.E. and sport per week
- clarification of NI 57

- deletion of recommendation 16 in the review document
- progress made since the review
- impact of the structuring of lessons in secondary school
- transport issues such as mini bus provision, training staff to drive mini buses, costs etc.
- P.E. time not to be used for catch up initiatives
- accessibility issues for unaccompanied under sixteens to gymnasium facilities
- sports action groups
- need to appreciate that exercise covers more than sport on a field
- participation levels in TAKE 10
- walk to school initiative
- Playground to Podium initiative
- school governor awareness of issues affecting provision of P.E. and sport in schools

Resolved:- (1) That the review, together with the findings and recommendations, be supported.

(2) That the review and its recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration and response within two months.

(3) That the Committee's thanks to all concerned with the review be placed on record.

#### **187. UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD**

The Chairman welcomed Carrie Warr, Director of External Relations at the University of Sheffield, who outlined briefly hopes that the University could work in partnership with the Council and referred to early discussions that had taken place with officers and the Leader.

Carrie explained the work of her team in the neighbourhood and desire to do something in Rotherham. She also outlined available monies that could be tapped into and bids that were being worked on. Reference was also made to the outreach work conducted in schools.

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and prospective joint working

be welcomed.

(2) That a further report be submitted on the way forward.

(3) That Carrie provide a list of schools participating in the University's outreach programme.

**188. MINUTES**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**189. WORK IN PROGRESS**

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor McNeely reported that the latest meeting of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel had considered the scrutiny review of climate change activities. Each of the subject matters would be looked at individually.

(b) Councillor Boyes reported that there had been further meetings of the town centre review group and assessment of the evidence taken was ongoing.

She also reported that, prior to the latest meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, members had taken a tour of the town centre developments. Particular reference was made to the need for (i) the opening up of space and removal of hoardings in All Saints Minster Square and (ii) better signage to indicate to the public that the Imperial Building was open and occupied.

(c) Councillor Austen reported:-

- positive response to debt recovery review and updated position on review recommendations
- corporate parenting review had been submitted to Cabinet on 28th April, 2010

(d) Councillor Jack reported that the joint meeting of the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel and LinkRotherham had taken place yesterday to consider the draft quality of accounts for Rdash and the Rotherham Foundation Trust.

(e) Cath Saltis reported that the session on the role of co-optees had been well attended and the co-optee positions would be considered at the Committee's away session on 18th May, 2010.



**190. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no formal call in requests.

**191. COUNCILLOR GEORGINA BOYES**

The Chairman reported that, as Councillor Boyes was not seeking re-election, this was her last meeting of the Committee.

Members of the Committee placed on record their thanks to Georgina for her services to Scrutiny and to the Council over the last twenty two years and wished her all the very best for her new life in Belgium.