

Cabinet member for Children and Young People – report to Overview and Scrutiny

Finance

The 2009-10 budget recognised the need to address the issues which had been identified in Children's Safeguarding by the (Ofsted) Joint Area Review. Provision was made for an additional £4.2m which was earmarked for the actions set out in the agreed JAR Action Plan submitted to the Government in February 2009. In addition the Council agreed to direct £0.75m from the Dedicated Schools Grant for safeguarding purposes.

Despite this additional resource, which is largely for one-off additional work targeted at improving safeguarding practice, current projections indicate a significant overspend. This is a result of increasing numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) and in particular their placement and associated legal costs. Virtually all local authorities have experienced significant increase in referrals and the need for placement.

The key points relating to the overall increase in the number of Children in Care can be summarised as follows:

- (i) The number of LAC children has increased from 464 in April 2009 to 612 now.
- (ii) Similarly, the number of children subject to child protection plans has increased from 180 in March 2009 to 293 now.
- (iii) The Southwark Judgement, which requires all 16 and 17 year olds presenting to the Council as homeless, to be considered as Looked After Children, has increased pressure in this area.
- (iv) The improvements in safeguarding practice have undoubtedly helped to identify children needing services.

Many other London authorities are also experiencing large increases in LAC numbers and nationally the reported increase is around 17%.

Educational achievements

Haringey schools improved by 20.1% in the percentage of pupils attaining 5+ A* - C grades at GCSE from 2005 - 2009. This compares with a national improvement of 13.2% in the same period. Provisional improvement in 2010 is a further 4.3%. National data for 2010 has not been released yet. Haringey's provisional result in 2010 is now 72% compared to the 2009 national result of 70%.

- In the 5+ A* - C (including English and maths) measure, Haringey schools improved by 13.5% from 2005 to 2009 compared to a national improvement of 5.1%. Provisional improvement in 2010 is a further 2.3%. National data for 2010 has not been released yet. Haringey's provisional result in 2010 is now 48% compared to the 2009 national result of 49.8%.
- There are no Haringey schools below the government threshold of 30% 5+ A* - C (including English and maths). Greig City Academy has not yet released its overall school results since it is pursuing some discrepancies in marking with the exam boards.
- As Corporate Parents you will be pleased at this year's results for Looked After children. Provisional results at GCSE being better than ever; 17% passed 5 A* - C grades including English and Maths, 31% passed 5 A* - C grades and 69% passed 1 A - G grade.
- The levels of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) has remained at 6.8% (2009-2010 figure). The figure for those young people who are unknown has reduced from 11.2% to 5.0% over the same period. These figures now bring us in line with statistical neighbours and close to national figures. The further the unknown figure reduces the more pressure will be put on the NEET figure to rise. The challenge will be to continue this improvement in 2011 against an economic down turn. The current July 10 figure shows an improvement for NEET and unknown levels of 0.3% and 1.6% respectively over the previous July.

Areas of Focus for the future

- Plans for post 16 commissioning of places are going well and we have fully met the government requirements. This also gives an opportunity to look at future plans and make sure that the post 16 provision meets the needs of our young people. A priority will be to ensure effective transition for LLDD learners within a reduced funding package. Responsibilities for managing LLDD funding will transfer to local authorities from 2012-13.
- Following the change in government and the announcement of public sector cuts, we are having to review our services to schools to ensure that they are within constrained budget limits but still provide a good quality of support and challenge for our schools.

Investment in primary schools

Haringey has continued to respond to the London-wide primary reception places shortage pro-actively, with work progressing on the expansion of Rhodes Avenue and planning in progress for additional places in the east of the borough. In recent years 120 new primary admission places have been created, with 30 more at Rhodes Avenue for 2011.

We remain in dispute with the Department for Education (DfE) over the withdrawal of £8.57m previously allocated for new primary places in Haringey. Without this funding our plans for meeting the primary places shortage will necessarily be short-term and potentially disruptive to some schools.

At Broadwater Farm we are creating a new primary special school linked closely to a rebuilt primary school as an innovative learning campus, providing the best for some of our most vulnerable children alongside a superb mainstream primary school environment.

BSF

The Building Schools for the Future programme remains on target, with the new secondary school - Heartlands High School - opened on time and within budget in September this year. The Octagon (secondary pupil referral unit) has just opened with vastly improved facilities for pupils. Works are now completed at John Loughborough; Hornsey school for Girls; Alexandra Park and Highgate Wood.

School meals

Haringey's school meals service introduced healthy eating menus a year before the new national menus and nutritional standards were required. Meal take up in the all-important primary years has increased by 10% over the last three years.

Children's Networks

Children's Networks deliver prevention, early intervention and support services to children and young people who have additional needs.

Areas of Focus

- Planning for the cessation of significant levels of grant funding - likely to affect play, extended services, youth and behaviour support;
- reviews of Youth and Connexions, Participation and Play in the light of expected cuts

- Discussions advancing with Enfield regarding a shared EPS/CAMHS service.
- Development of an Early Years Policy and Early Years Single Funding Formula.
- further development of multi-disciplinary teams to deliver more integrated support to children/young people identified through the CAF as requiring targeted services e.g. family support, behaviour support, speech and language provision, education welfare etc
- extension of partnership arrangements with other statutory, voluntary and community agencies so children, young people and families receive coordinated and joined-up support;
- consolidation of an intense piece of work across the CYPS and partners, particularly NHS Haringey and the Mental Health Trust, to develop a strategy to support children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties to ensure that the needs of these children are appropriately identified, that they receive the right support at the right time and, wherever possible, they are retained in Haringey provision.
- Development of a Preventative and Early Intervention model and thresholds for all staff working with children, young people and families.

Children and Families

The focus has been to embed the good practice in the Multi agency Team and First Response and strengthen other service areas. The recent Ofsted unannounced inspection of contact referral and assessment arrangements acknowledged the transformation in frontline services and identified seven areas of strength. In particular it was noted that:

- Decisions taken at this filtering stage are well evidenced and timely. Re-referral rates are comparatively low reflecting the accuracy and quality of assessments of need and risk analysis.
- Strong community networks are in place and are enabling joint services to respond promptly to the assessed needs of children and the appropriate identification of children who are at risk of harm.
- Performance management arrangements and case auditing systems are firmly in place. Managers obtain weekly performance information on work flow and quality which is used to target social work activity and the use of joint resources.

- Managers at all levels in the organisation have a strong commitment and vision for services based on good quality social work practice. They have a visible presence and have established a culture which sustains good direction and guidance on cases and continuous improvement. Staff morale is good.

The challenge is to continue to improve with efficient and effective services working in partnership with key agencies and the community.

Activity in all areas has continued to increase since April but this has now begun to slow down with more stability in levels of referrals assessments and children requiring statutory intervention. A workforce strategy is in place to support services to vulnerable children, this includes ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and trained social workers and this will remain a priority.

The Children in Care Council will be put in place shortly and this will provide a forum for looked after children and care leavers to have a greater say in the services that support them.