



Joint area review

Rutland Children's Services Authority area

**Better
education
and care**

Review of services for children and young people

Adult Learning Inspectorate
Audit Commission
Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)
Healthcare Commission
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Court Administration
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
Ofsted

Audience	Published	Reference no.
All	23 June 2006	857



© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the local authority or at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Contents

	Page
Introduction	2
Context	3
Summary report	4
Grades	8
Recommendations	8
Main report	9
Outcomes for children and young people	9
The impact of local services	11
Being healthy	11
Staying safe	13
Enjoying and achieving	15
Making a positive contribution	17
Achieving economic well-being	19
Service management	21
Annex: the children's and young people's section of the corporate assessment	25

Introduction

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under Section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of nine inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), the Healthcare Commission (CHAI), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the inspection of children's services*.

2. The review was linked to the contemporaneous corporate assessment of the local council by the Audit Commission and its findings are represented in the relevant part of the corporate assessment report.

3. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up in the Rutland area and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being.

4. The review evaluates the collective contribution made to each outcome for children and young people by relevant services in the area. It also judges the contributions made by the council's services overall and, specifically, its education and children's social care services. Particular attention is given to joint action by local services on behalf of those groups of children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. Two such groups are covered in detail: children and young people who are looked after by the council; and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

5. The review took place in two stages consisting in total of three weeks over a six-week period. The first stage reviewed all existing evidence including:

- self-assessment undertaken by local public service providers
- a survey of children and young people
- performance data
- the findings of the contemporaneous inspection of the youth service
- planning documents
- information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day-care provision
- evidence gathered during the earlier Youth Offending Team inspection
- briefings from staff within inspectorates, commissions and other public bodies in contact with local providers.

6. The second stage involved inspection fieldwork. This included studies of the extent to which local services have improved outcomes for a small sample of children and young people, some of whom have the most complex needs,

and a study of provision in a neighbourhood in Oakham and in the village of Edith Weston. It also included gathering evidence on seven key judgements, selected because of their critical importance to improving outcomes for children and young people in the local area. Discussions were held with elected members of the local authority and their equivalents in other public agencies, officers from these agencies, service users, and community representatives. A review of case files for children and young people receiving support from a number of local agencies was also included.

Context

7. With a population of 36,500, Rutland is the smallest county in England. It has operated as a unitary authority since 1997 but, given its size, provides many services in conjunction or in partnership with neighbouring councils. Rutland is primarily rural, with two market towns, Oakham and Uppingham, and 58 parishes. The area is socio-economically advantaged with very low unemployment and eligibility for free school meals well below average. Less than 2% of the population is of black or minority ethnic heritage. In terms of housing costs, Rutland is one of the most expensive areas in England outside the south east. The Formula Spending Share (FSS) grant is comparatively low and the council tax level is the second highest in the country. Despite its generally favourable position, there are families in parts of Oakham and in some villages with relatively low incomes and potentially at risk of social exclusion. For some, living in very rural locations presents challenges in accessing health, welfare services and recreation. Rutland has high levels of mobility, in part due to the presence of military bases. Such mobility brings with it challenges for families and for local providers.

8. Rutland has 17 primary schools, three community colleges providing secondary education to 16, one special nursery, and a small further education (FE) college in Oakham. There are two independent 11–18 schools, albeit that the majority of pupils are from out of the area. Other than mainly A-level provision at The Rutland College, students travel to colleges in Melton, Stamford or Corby to access further education. Strategic oversight of 14–19 provision is accomplished through a partnership that includes the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Training providers offer apprenticeships, with one offering Entry to Employment for those not in education or training. The Connexions service spans Lincolnshire and Rutland. Informal learning opportunities are provided by the council's youth service.

9. Rutland, Melton and Harborough Primary Care Trust (PCT) has responsibility for primary care. Access to acute services is through the hospital trusts in Leicester, Peterborough and Stamford. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust provides mental health services to Rutland. Children's social care is delivered through a small generic fieldwork team, one full-time equivalent foster care support worker and two senior managers. There are a small number of foster carers and no residential homes in the county. The council depends on

out of county placements. The youth offending service is managed by Leicestershire Youth Offending Service.

10. The council created an integrated Children and Young People's (CYP) services directorate in mid-2005. Staff appointments have yet to be finalised. A director and lead member are in place and scrutiny arrangements reflect the new structure. The structure focuses on the provision of universal learning services and targeted inclusion services. An officer leads on each of these strands and a new appointment has recently been made to coordinate the development of policy and performance management. In parallel, the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) was established, comprising key multi-agency stakeholders across Rutland. The CYPSP works in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and operates through an executive group. The draft Children and Young People's Plan 2006–07 (CYPP) was launched for consultation during the period of the joint area review. A second policy document, Vision 2010+, informs the longer term future shape of education provision.

Summary report

Outcomes for children and young people

11. From the evidence gathered, outcomes for most children and young people in Rutland are good. Children and young people are safe, with those most at risk safeguarded by prompt and effective action by all agencies. Most children and young people are healthy, but lack of Rutland-specific data means there is insufficient knowledge of the health needs of all. Children in early years provision and school pupils more generally enjoy strong parental support, which contributes to them achieving well. Attainment in schools is better than the national average, but this is less the case for looked after children, whose attainment is too low. At age 16, a higher proportion of students remain in further education than is the case nationally, with a good number eventually moving to university. In the last two years, new vocational opportunities have been developed linking schools with colleges and employers. Most children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are educated in mainstream school. Children and young people are able to make use of a reasonable range of recreational opportunities. For some, however, transport difficulties and the cost of activities are barriers. Good opportunities to have a say and contribute to developments that affect them have been enjoyed by some young people. There is limited but increasing engagement with children, young people and their families in the delivery and development of services. Services work together to help with concerns such as drug and alcohol misuse and sexual health, but young people find it difficult to access this support locally and independently.

The impact of local services

Being healthy

12. **The work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** The general support given to parents and carers to keep their children healthy is good. However, while universal services are good, targeted support for more vulnerable groups is less well developed. For instance, support for mothers who smoke and for teenage parents is insufficient. The combined work of local partners in promoting healthy lifestyles amongst children and young people is good. Much of this work is geared towards the National Healthy Schools Programme and there is also a good range of out of school activities. However, there is a failure of local agencies to identify and refer young people who misuse drugs. There is good provision of services for the physical health needs of the population and very good provision for their mental health needs, although the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) only accommodates those who are attending school. Generally, looked after children have their health needs met. However, liaison with the health services for this vulnerable group is not fully effective. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also generally well supported, especially via the Service Co-ordination Scheme. Families need to wait too long to access occupational therapy services.

Staying safe

13. **The combined work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** Children most at risk are safeguarded well by prompt and effective action by all agencies. There is a strong and active Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) that generates practice improvements. There has been good planning for the Local Safeguarding Board (LSB), due to be implemented in February 2006. Performance indicators are good, with high numbers of assessments responded to within timescales. The threshold for intervention is at an appropriate level and agreed by the different agencies. There is evidence of good communication and collaboration to provide a personalised service to individual children and their families. Social care case files are in good order and accessible, with evidence of regular supervision and auditing. A high proportion of looked after children are placed outside Rutland, causing delays in accessing services in some cases. The council has made arrangements to improve the robustness of data and recording schemes. The quality of longer term planning is variable. Families who access services are satisfied with the support for disabled children, but less attention has been paid to the needs of children who do not reach the threshold for these services. The range of family support services is adequate, but not strategically planned. Children and young people are provided with a safe environment in schools and childcare settings, and there are low levels of serious accidents and admissions to hospital. Partners have agreed plans for positive alternative arrangements for access to the child protection register outside office hours, which are currently unsatisfactory.

Enjoying and achieving

14. **The overall contribution of services to helping children and young people enjoy their education and recreation is good.** Parents and carers have effective support, although some in villages have difficulties accessing services. The council gives good support to early years settings and has strengthened its processes for monitoring and challenging the performance of its schools. Pupils' attainment is good and their progress is satisfactory overall. Standards have improved in each key stage in 2005. The local authority has analysed systematically the attainment and progress of some groups of children, but actions to improve the low rate of achievement of looked after children have not been identified. Support for behaviour is effectively minimising exclusions. Attendance is thoroughly monitored and is consistently high in both primary and secondary schools. The local authority monitors the performance of schools well, but there is insufficient detailed analysis of certain small cohorts. Recreational and voluntary learning activities are good in schools, but Rutland's youth service is failing to provide a sufficient range of opportunities to enough young people. The local authority is responsive in supporting voluntary initiatives in the wider community, which helps secure recreational opportunities for young people, particularly in sport. Transport difficulties and the high costs of some activities are barriers to participation and there is a general lack of recreational facilities in the two main towns.

Making a positive contribution

15. **The combined work of services in helping children and young people play a positive role and contribute to society is adequate.** Children and young people are well supported through good relationships with adults in all services, helping them develop positive attitudes from their early years and during their school life. The majority of young people, including the sizeable minority transferred to the area with the armed forces, settle into new schools well and make good progress. Young children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given well coordinated help. Many pupils are encouraged to help each other through friendship and mentoring schemes. Services exist to help young people face greater challenges such as offending, drug and alcohol misuse, sexual health problems and teen parenthood. However, these services are not always accessible, their facilities are not always ideal, and some staff lack the necessary skills to identify the needs in these areas.

16. Consultation on decision-making and young people's involvement, although improving and valued, is not a consistent feature of service delivery. There are limited opportunities for some vulnerable groups, as well as the parents and carers of pre-school children, to participate in democratic processes or influence services and the work of the council. Partners work together to prioritise action to reduce antisocial behaviour. Information-sharing on offending is at a basic level and data has not been sufficiently disaggregated for Rutland to identify trends and enable local targeted action.

Achieving economic well-being

17. The combined work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good. Partnership work ensures there is enough childcare for parents seeking to enter employment or study and that the nature of the care matches families' needs. Information on childcare is generally accessible. Rutland has a higher than national level of participation in post-16 learning, with 92% of young people continuing into education and training after the age of 16 in 2005. A higher proportion than average continues on to university. The local authority has worked closely with the LSC and other stakeholders to bring about improvements in the provision of education and training for young people aged 14–19, including a greater variety of vocational options in schools. There are good indications that this strategy is beginning to succeed. Very few young people are registered as not in education, employment or training. External funding and grants have helped to create alternative approaches to vocational training and family support work. However, not all of this type of work is sustained, leading to frustration on the part of those parents and families who had been benefiting. Despite progress in providing housing for young families, there is little crisis accommodation for young people in need.

Service management

18. The management of services for children and young people is adequate. Effective leadership is provided by the council's senior officers and politicians. The improvement of outcomes for children and young people is a clearly stated and high priority for Rutland. Progress has been made towards the provision of integrated services, with a CYP directorate in place. A vision has been drafted that aligns with the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda and the draft CYPP forms an agreed base from which to consult and to develop shared ambitions and agreed priorities. However, the CYPP is only interim as there is currently a lack of a comprehensive needs analysis and of baseline data upon which priorities for action and realistic and challenging targets can be based. Uncertainty, however, regarding the future structure of partner agencies in part supports a one year plan. Partnership working is a strength and the CYPSP consists of an appropriate and wide range of statutory and voluntary groups. The overall capacity of the council and its partners to improve outcomes for children and young people is adequate. However, performance management is weak. The council uses resources effectively in the provision of services to children and young people and the value for money that it achieves are adequate, although the costs of home to school transport and of fostering provision are high. The self-assessment appropriately identifies priorities for action, although it is not fully realistic regarding the degree of progress achieved in some areas.

Grades

Grades awarded:

4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate

	Local services overall	Council services	Health services
Being healthy	3		
Staying safe	3		
Enjoying and achieving	3		
Making a positive contribution	2		
Achieving economic well-being	3		
Service management	2		
Capacity to improve	2	2	
Children's services		3	
The education service		3	
The social care services for children		3	
The health service for children			3

Recommendations

For immediate action:

- the council should instigate a comprehensive area-wide needs analysis process, involving partners, children, young people and their families, to provide a secure base for prioritisation
- ensure young people aged 16 to 18 have access to appropriate mental health services.

For action over the next six months:

- revise and implement robust performance management procedures across all services for children and young people
- the Local Safeguarding Children Board should ensure that access to the child protection register outside office hours is robust
- implement diversity strategies to give greater access to all services for the most vulnerable groups and those children and young people in remote areas
- provide better support for teenage parents and towards reducing smoking among pregnant women
- develop more strategic approaches to family support services
- minimise dependency on external placements for looked after children
- partners should ensure that young people who are misusing drugs are identified and, where appropriate, referred for more specialist interventions
- build on existing mechanisms to introduce a broader diversity of children and young people in decision-making
- improve the amount, range and quality of informal learning opportunities provided by the youth service.

For action in the longer term:

- work with statutory voluntary and private partners to broaden and improve the range of leisure and recreational activities for all children and young people
- systematically analyse the educational attainment and progress of specific groups of children to identify trends and patterns in their progress.

Main report

Outcomes for children and young people

19. **Children and young people are healthy.** In line with its high level of affluence, children and young people in Rutland are generally healthy, although there are some exceptions to this trend. A significantly high number of mothers smoke during pregnancy, and breast feeding rates appear to be decreasing, albeit from a high baseline. Infant and perinatal mortality rates are both higher

than benchmark group averages, although there are small numbers involved. Most other indices demonstrate good health outcomes for children and young people. The area has high rates of immunisation coverage, low rates of admission to hospital, with the notable exceptions of substance misuse and gastro-intestinal disease, low rates of teenage pregnancy and low rates of decayed, missing or filled teeth. Children surveyed consider themselves to be healthy, and a higher proportion than the national average rated themselves as very healthy.

20. On the basis of the evidence, children and young people are safe.

Suitable action is taken by all agencies to protect those most at risk. Most young people surveyed feel safe at school and in the local area. Indicators are generally in line with or better than the national average, with a higher completion of initial and core assessments within timescales. Outcomes of inspections of schools, childcare providers and fostering settings are good, and agencies undertake the appropriate staffing checks. A lower rate of children and young people are killed or seriously injured in traffic accidents than the national average, and there is a low rate of admissions of under 18s to hospital. There are no unallocated cases in social care. All partners report prompt and effective multi-agency responses to protect children and meet their needs, and thresholds for intervention are agreed at an appropriate level. There is a low number of looked after children but a significant proportion are placed externally. Although these placements are close to Rutland, some children face delays and difficulties in accessing health and other services.

21. Children and young people achieve well. Most feel life is enjoyable and get involved in recreational and leisure activities. Young children have enough early education and childcare places to meet their needs. They are well prepared for and enjoy school. Education standards achieved by most up to the age of 16 are good. They are better than the national averages and in line with or above similar authorities. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall both in the primary and secondary phase of their education and outcomes continue to improve. In 2005 there was a marked improvement in the number of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A*–C grades, particularly by boys. There is some underachievement by boys, whose attainment in writing is below that of the girls. More generally, scope exists for pupils to achieve even better. Attendance is consistently high, being well above the national average. The level of permanent exclusions is low, while fixed-term exclusions are falling and are in line with the national average. The attendance of those children looked after by the authority who go to Rutland schools is good. All looked after children undertaking GCSEs in the last year achieved at least one pass, which is better than the national picture. Their overall achievement is, however, too low. School inspections indicate that the achievement of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is at least satisfactory.

22. Children and young people have an adequate range of opportunities to make decisions and take personal responsibility. Most make good contributions to their communities. They are well supported to

develop socially and emotionally. The vast majority enjoy living in the area and cope well with the normal changes in life when starting and transferring between schools. Many feel that they have the opportunity to have a say in how things are run in schools and take part in consultation about services in the wider area. However, some groups find it more difficult to take part and be of any influence. Most children and young people behave responsibly and make a personal contribution to the community. A high proportion takes part in voluntary activities. There is a low rate of offending among young people in the area, although the number of young people offending for the first time is growing.

23. Children and young people are able to achieve economic well-being and are prepared well for working life. The proportion of young people continuing into education and training beyond the age of 16 is high. Young people receive good quality advice and guidance about the range of education and training opportunities available to them. More vocational options are now available, at age 14, for those who choose to pursue that route. School leavers wishing to undertake entry and level one vocational courses are not sufficiently well served. There are more work-based learning (WBL) opportunities available. Overall, course achievement is high and success rates in work-based learning are good, especially for advanced modern apprenticeships and non-vocational qualifications. There is insufficient crisis accommodation for young single people within the area.

The impact of local services

Being healthy

24. The work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good. A wide range of support is provided to parents and carers to keep their children healthy. There are a large number of maternity service providers serving the area. Information regarding local services, support groups and health promotion advice is provided to parents and carers in a wide range of places and formats. However, targeted support to parents and carers and more vulnerable groups is less well developed. Insufficient attention, for example, has been given in how to support pregnant women to stop smoking, and plans for adequate breast feeding support have only recently been approved. Support is provided for teenage parents but it is of poor quality. In contrast, there is a good range of support provided for parents and carers of children with behavioural or complex care needs, for instance the Child Behaviour Intervention Initiative and Diana Service. Nevertheless, some parents and professionals are of the view that the thresholds for entry to these services may be set too high.

25. Good work is taking place to promote healthy lifestyles amongst children and young people. There has been good implementation of both the National Fruit and Vegetable Scheme and the Healthy Schools Initiative. A new school meals contract ensures that national nutritional guidelines are being met. All

children receive advice and support on healthy lifestyles, including road safety training – an issue that is particularly relevant in the largely rural setting of Rutland. The Huff and Puff programme and the provision of a sports and physical activity officer have improved the proportion of children enjoying two hours of physical exercise each week. The council has committed itself to a Local Public Service Agreement stretch target of 80% of children reaching that benchmark. There are too few leisure facilities in the area, but a number of schools, the council and the voluntary sector have provided out of schools sports activities, including during the summer holidays. The impact of this health promotion work is difficult to gauge as there has been no adequate health needs analysis for the area. This absence of information also prevents the health promotion work from being targeted more effectively. The Jules One Stop Shop provides confidential advice and support to teenagers in a more informal youth-orientated setting. However, the quality and availability of such support for young people here, and in the area generally, is weak. In particular, substance misuse issues are not being adequately identified or addressed. There is a high level of admissions to hospital for young people with substance misuse-related problems.

26. Universal health surveillance is well developed, and the PCT achieves generally good immunisation coverage, with targeted programmes where necessary. There is good access to primary care professionals, and the Leicester Royal Infirmary Accident and Emergency department serving the area has an excellent children's section including a commendable adolescent waiting area. In contrast, the minor injuries unit in Oakham is insufficiently child friendly.

27. In collaboration with partners, the Specialist Community Child Health Services provide a range of quality services for children and young people. Of particular merit are the Diana Service and the Service Co-ordination Scheme. The therapy services have made great efforts to ensure that the children most in need are prioritised. However, a number of families continue to experience difficulties in terms of long waiting times or unhelpful answering services, especially in relation to orthotics and the local authority occupational therapy service. This is a problem that had previously been identified in an inspection in May 2004. Although most dentists in the area provide some NHS services and the proportion of children with decayed, missing or filled teeth is lower than the national average, parents complained about the lack of adequate NHS dental provision.

28. A good service is being provided to support the mental health needs of Rutland school children. The Pyramid Trust delivers an appropriate programme of support for the social and emotional well-being of children in primary schools. This is supported by the work of teachers, school nurses and other tier one professionals in promoting a good level of emotional and mental well-being among pupils. These professionals are well supported by the Primary Mental Health Workers (PMHW) who provide training, support, consultation and supervision. The training programme run by the PMHW is especially impressive.

A well-regarded telephone consultation service successfully negotiates referrals to the specialist CAMHS, which operates very effectively as a fully integrated multi-agency team at every stage of the referral process. A Young Person's Team addresses the mental health needs of young people who are looked after, homeless or who have offended. A Learning Disability Team, which includes an in-patient unit, supports those young people with combined mental health and learning disability problems. However, at present, CAMHS only provides services for young people who are at school. This is unsatisfactory.

29. There are generally good health outcomes reported for looked after children, all having dental checks and immunisations. However, the number of health assessments undertaken is below the levels achieved by other similar authorities. Until recently the health assessments were not centrally coordinated, although this is now occurring. Similarly, the health agencies have not always been consulted in advance of placement decisions out of county when significant health issues for the young person would have warranted such consultation. The recent development of the child health file – the 'Clayton File' – is to be welcomed. A number of specialist services exist for families of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In particular, the Service Coordination Scheme is an example of good practice, providing families of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with positive support and a seamless service including multi-agency planning meetings and key workers.

Staying safe

30. **The combined work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** Children who are most at risk are well safeguarded by prompt and effective action by all agencies. Thresholds for intervention are agreed at an appropriate level. Multi-agency involvement and collaboration protects and meets the needs of children and young people, and responses are personalised and individually tailored. Partners within Rutland have maximised the advantages of working in a local authority area with a small population, and communication between the agencies over individual cases and in wider collaborations is good. The rate of initial and core assessments completed within timescales is above the national average. The number of children who need to be re-registered on the Child Protection Register (CPR) as a result of a repeat concern is half the national average, and children on the CPR are reviewed within timescales. No looked after children are on the CPR.

31. All cases have an allocated social worker, and child protection cases are managed by qualified staff. Case files are in good order and accessible, and there is evidence of routine supervision that addresses individual cases. In addition, an external agency was, until recently, contracted to audit a sample of cases. This led, for example, to a training session for the social work team to enhance their analytical skills. Some cases analysed were weak on linking individual care plans with longer term arrangements. Children and young

people are provided with a safe environment in schools and childcare settings, and there are low levels of serious accidents and admissions to hospital.

32. Rutland agencies are active partners in, and benefit from, involvement in a very strong single Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) that covers Rutland, Leicester and Leicestershire. The ACPC produces an innovative range of protocols and practice improvements. Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements are secure and the ACPC has a domestic violence worker who responds promptly and effectively to referrals. There have been no serious case reviews. Agencies meet regularly in active partnership and professional practice network groups to develop and disseminate child protection practice improvements at their local levels. Access to the CPR for Rutland, Leicester and Leicestershire is located out of hours through the Accident and Emergency unit at Leicester Royal Infirmary. Partners have recognised that this arrangement is not sufficiently robust and there are plans to relocate it more appropriately with the Emergency Duty Team when new computer systems are installed in early 2006.

33. A Local Safeguarding Children Board has been collaboratively planned and will be implemented in February 2006. The opportunity has been taken to clarify and reinforce the accountability of the Board. It will formally report to a Chief Executive Group, which itself has been well-established since its creation to respond to the Bichard Report. Health services support practices to safeguard children through named staff, network groups and training. The police recognised a shortfall in resources to meet their safeguarding responsibilities adequately. They have increased their staffing to enable them to respond more effectively to joint investigations, undertake checks more promptly, and ensure routine attendance at child protection conferences.

34. The council, ACPC, police and other agencies provide information to carers and children about risks in various settings and ways to combat these. The council offers guidance and support on child protection to voluntary organisations and sports organisations. Schools all have designated staff responsible for child protection, and report that they receive good or satisfactory support from the council about safeguarding. Additional work has been undertaken by the council with headteachers to reinforce child protection procedures, and this has increased the volume and quality of communication.

35. The range of family support services is adequate although geographically dispersed and not extensive. It is used effectively and partners work innovatively to meet individual families' needs, but have to rely on external resources in neighbouring authorities. There is a very low number and a low rate of children looked after compared to the national average; a high proportion of these are placed outside the county. Although these placements are close to Rutland, a small number of the sampled cases underlined the challenges in securing health and other provision for them. The council does not involve health services when considering external placements and this can lead to subsequent delays in accessing service for the children. Staff have a

good level of knowledge about individual looked after children but the organisation and accessibility of recording systems and data are weaker. These deficiencies have been recognised by the council, which has begun to address them.

36. The Bridges project is being developed in conjunction with neighbouring councils as one of the national pilots to share information between agencies at a very local level. It is providing more prompt and effective family support. Partners have still to develop a single referral form and not all agencies have so far agreed to supply core data. Parents receiving support for children with disabilities report positively about the services. Independent advocacy is underdeveloped and some parents note the need to be assertive before services are provided. Parents of children with disabilities report that mainstream schools, for instance, have not always displayed sensitivity and awareness when they and their children made an initial visit.

37. Protocols protect specific groups of children who go missing, including looked after children and those missing from the CPR, and a protocol for children missing from education has been drafted. There is a successful series of measures to combat truancy, including reporting systems and sweeps. Staff are insufficiently aware of the Safe4U collaboration, which provides a helpline for children who run away.

Enjoying and achieving

38. The overall contribution of services to helping children and young people enjoy their education and recreation and achieve well is good.

39. Parents and carers receive a good range of impartial information and access to targeted support from the council and its statutory and voluntary partners to help their children enjoy and achieve. Early years' provision is good overall. The quality of childcare is in line with the national picture and the majority of children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Monitoring of the quality of early years provision is good and early years networks and partnerships are strong. The surplus capacity in nursery education is being addressed through the developing extended services strategy. Support is provided for very young children through, for example, the mobile toy library and the Bookstart programme. A significant number of primary aged children in Rutland have participated in a Pyramid Trust programme to enhance their self-esteem.

40. In the last year, Rutland has secured more comprehensive data on attainment and progress for individual pupils. Detailed analysis is carried out by the new CYP directorate, which has strengthened the process of monitoring and challenging the quality of school provision. This has resulted in more effective targeted support for school leadership. The relative newness of the systems and processes has limited the extent to which the performance of different groups of children and young people have been effectively analysed. Such efforts have been concentrated on individual schools, on gender differences and

the performance of the small number of minority ethnic children and young people within Rutland. The local authority has begun to evaluate the performance of gifted and talented children and young people but still does not have a collated list of this group. Neither has it analysed the impact of the relatively high level of inward mobility experienced by a significant number of its primary schools. A start has been made on monitoring the attainment and progress of looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

41. The percentage of schools judged to be good by Ofsted reports in the last three years has improved and is now in line with comparable authorities. None are currently in a formal category of concern. Standards are good both at primary and secondary level and improved in each key stage in 2005. Progress of children and young people is satisfactory overall in both the primary and secondary phases of their education. Parents and carers receive clear guidance on admission arrangements for schools. Plans are in place to remove the high level of surplus places in the primary sector. These plans are linked to the developing strategy to deliver integrated services for children and young people based around three main partnership clusters.

42. Attendance in both primary and secondary schools is consistently high, being above statistical neighbours and well above the national average. The monitoring of attendance is thorough, and robust approaches have been developed to target small groups of existing and potential non-attendees, particularly in secondary schools. A full range of measures is used to deter truancy, including parenting contracts, truancy sweeps and the issuing of penalty notices. Consequently, levels of unauthorised absence are low. Effective multi-agency preventative action is improving behaviour and minimising permanent exclusions. No children were permanently excluded from Rutland primary schools in 2004–05 and there was a fall in the number of secondary aged young people who were permanently excluded. Fixed-term exclusions in both primary and secondary schools are in line with the national average but are being successfully reduced in a number of schools. Although partners work hard to ensure appropriate alternative provision is arranged for excluded children, it does not always meet the recommended number of hours.

43. A high percentage of children and young people who contributed to the 'Tellus' survey feel life is enjoyable and get involved in activities at school. Most schools provide a good range of enrichment activities and give children and young people good opportunities for out of hours learning. Voluntary and private providers also enable young people to become involved in sports, music and the arts. There is a strong sense of community spirit that helps secure opportunities for young people, particularly in sport. The local authority is responsive in supporting voluntary initiatives. Funding is provided for those looked after children living in Rutland to access recreational and leisure activities. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are subsidised to attend council-provided activity schemes. Nevertheless, some children and young people are excluded from participating in these activities

either because of the cost or because there is no appropriate transport for them. Some parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have chosen not to enrol in particular mainstream schools having received advice that the child would be denied access to school sports due to their condition. Parents bemoan the lack of facilities even in the two main towns. The council has undertaken an audit of its youth service but, currently, relatively few young people participate in the limited range of activities that are available through it.

44. Rutland has identified improving the educational achievement of looked after children as a priority for improvement. However, it has undertaken little coordinated action to achieve this priority. In addition, there are major challenges to improving performance as the majority of looked after children do not attend Rutland schools. More looked after children placed by other authorities attend Rutland schools than its own children. All schools have designated teachers for looked after children who have been trained and supported by the local authority. Not all looked after children have an up to date personal education plan and some schools find the varying demands of the differing authorities they have to deal with difficult to manage. The attendance of looked after children is good. Their achievement generally is low, but few leave school with no qualifications.

45. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and supported well both through specialist nursery provision and multi-agency work and support groups for parents and carers. The local authority's commitment to inclusion is demonstrated through the very high proportion of children and young people with a statement of special educational needs that are educated in mainstream schools. School inspection reports from the last three years consistently judge that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well integrated into the lives of the schools they attend and that their achievement is at least satisfactory. Provision in schools is regularly monitored and evaluated against criteria set out in the local authority's special educational needs policy. However, there is no systematic analysis of data to identify trends and patterns in their progress. Draft plans are in place for further delegation of SEN funds from the council to schools but insufficient consensus has been reached about the benefits of this proposal to the individual child.

Making a positive contribution

46. **The overall contribution of services in helping children and young people play a positive role in society is adequate.** Staff working directly with children and young people provide positive relationships, and build the self-esteem of those in their care. As observed in the neighbourhood study areas, schools make every effort to settle the significant number of children and young people moving into the area, for instance those arriving with forces families or moving out of towns. Services are highly effective in developing a sense of belonging. Most children and young people say how much they like Rutland and want to play a part in keeping the area trouble free. A higher proportion of young people than average take part in volunteering activities.

47. Services work together well to help young children when starting and changing schools. Most young people cope well when transferring between schools and on to further education, employment and training. Particularly good arrangements are made to ease the transition of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from The Parks special needs nursery school into primary schools with sensitive, skilled professional support. The schools and community colleges encourage pupils to help each other and support new arrivals through a range of schemes.

48. Help for children and young people facing more than routine challenge in their lives is not always as readily accessible or as good. Local services, voluntary organisations and agencies such as the PCT Connexions and the Leicestershire Youth Offending Services (YOS) all have different, overlapping catchment areas for their work. Too many staff are insufficiently aware of referral routes for support in other agencies. The Jules One Stop Shop brings Connexions and Youth Services together, with some good, targeted advice provision within general sessions. The centre is not readily accessible to young people outside Oakham, which makes it more difficult for the young people with the most complex problems to get coordinated help. In addition, the limitations of the building make it unsuitable for some work, such as work with young parents.

49. The majority of Rutland families who have access to transport accept the idea of travelling around and using cross-border services as a normal part of living in the area. However, young people say it is very hard for those living in the villages to get prompt, independent and confidential help for issues such as substance misuse and sexual health. The potential lack of confidentiality and privacy for those living in small communities results in some choosing to seek support outside the area. Some young people, for instance, seek drug-abuse treatment in Corby, keeping their identities hidden. This hinders services working together effectively. Some young people in need of support for offending or drug and alcohol abuse are not known to service providers in the area.

50. The council and its partners are increasingly seeking the views of children and young people. Young people have been involved in conferences to discuss Vision 2010+, a councillors' question time and a debate on setting the council tax. More widely, some took the trouble to respond to parish questionnaires. A long-standing group known as the 'Dream Team' has acted as a good vehicle for young people's views and its members have gained much from their involvement. Elected members and officers are receptive to such views but consultation is not yet a consistent aspect of service design and delivery. Young people do not always have enough information when they are consulted or useful feedback to understand the processes or outcomes. For instance, young people feel frustrated at the lack of progress on the issue of transport and access to services. They express a view that 'toddlers always win out' when prioritising provision in villages.

51. There are good examples of children and young people contributing to school issues through involvement in school councils. In one instance, a consensus about healthy eating among students led to significant improvement in school meals, whilst in other cases pupils contributed views to the management of behaviour and in bettering the school environment. Many take part in elections for school councils and the youth parliament, although links between them at the area level are not yet fully developed. A few young people have played a part in council and Connexions staff appointments. Some act as 'young inspectors' and comment on the quality of youth provision, whilst others have had a say in the design of the Oakham youth drop in centre. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities feel their views are taken into account in school. Weaknesses in this area include too few looked after children contributing to the periodic reviews of their plans or in helping to design services that affect them. Insufficient attention has been given to improving the diversity of young people taking part in county consultations, such as those from transient populations, public schools and those looked after outside Rutland. The council is currently exploring ways to gather the views of very young children.

52. The great majority of children and young people behave responsibly. Compared with the national picture, the proportion of young people who offend, including looked after children, is low. There have been some successes through the community safety partnership targeting activities to deter antisocial behaviour, with a designation order banning alcohol consumption in a specific part of Uppingham, and provision of the mobile youth unit in Essendine. The programme of holiday activities is growing but the impact on positive behaviour is not yet measured. Once a young person is known to the justice system there is access to help from the YOS. The YOS and Rutland share basic data but Rutland does not systematically collect data on important measures such as the impact of types of work being carried out and risk factors specific to the county. Consequently, too little is known about re-offending and first-time offending in Rutland although it is accepted that both are rising in the whole YOS area.

Achieving economic well-being

53. **The combined work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** Local services are making a good contribution to the economic well-being of children and young people. Information on childcare and early education is available through a range of different media and outlets across the county. Information is distributed through the Children's Information Service, health visitors, schools, early years settings, and publications such as *Growing up in Rutland* and *Childcare matters*. There is sufficient good quality childcare for parents seeking to enter employment or study. Childcare places are available for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this work is effectively supported by an area coordinator. This enables their parents in general to have flexible care packages suiting their work and study patterns.

54. Young people are given good support to help them prepare for the next stage in their education or for work. There are effective links between Connexions personal advisors and careers coordinators based in the community colleges. Rutland has a high level of participation in post-16 learning, with 92% of young people continuing into education and training in 2005. Options at 16 have improved in the very recent past. Choices include attending FE colleges in neighbouring counties, or pursuing A-level courses at The Rutland College or the independent schools. Employer-based training opportunities have increased. Work-related initiatives at Key Stage 4 encompass opportunities for enterprise education and a two-week work experience. Young people at one of the community colleges are able to visit FE colleges during an annual activities week. A higher proportion than average continues on to university. The community colleges use events and activities provided by the 'Aim Higher' initiative to inform young people more fully about the possibilities provided in higher education. Care leavers are well supported in obtaining employment, further education or training. Advice and guidance for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

55. Rutland has a good 14–19 strategy for learners. A coordinator has been appointed and developments thus far have resulted in increasingly strong partnerships to develop a broader base of vocationally related opportunities. Vocational opportunities, especially for 14–16 year olds, have now improved significantly. New funding has led to the introduction of various initiatives as part of the National Increasing Flexibility Programme (IFP), including the Young Apprenticeships Scheme and the first phase of Rutland's Opportunities for Vocational Achievement (ROVA). Employers and FE colleges have been well involved in the design of the scheme and parents have particularly welcomed such new local provision. The three community colleges have aligned aspects of their timetables with the FE colleges to provide joint curriculum opportunities. An employment engagement officer has worked to increase opportunities for work placements. Very few young people are registered as not in education employment or training. They, and young people who offend, are well linked with a Connexions Personal Advisor.

56. Transport difficulties prevent some learners from gaining access to the courses or training of their choice. A number of creative approaches have, however, been adopted to tackle this issue. The local authority, for instance, provides transport for students travelling over 3 miles to college and young apprentices aged 14–16 years are provided with free transport. Parents of 14–16 year olds undertaking the ROVA programme have provided private transport in support of this successful scheme.

57. Support to particularly isolated families, for instance those attached to army barracks, has been variable. Pockets of external funding, including European Social Fund monies, have enabled a longer term view to be taken about the training and employment needs of army wives and partners. This has included bespoke training opportunities, driving lessons and access to transport and family support through the 'Steps into Employment' scheme. LSC-funded

basic skills provision is helping parents improve their employability prospects. Having identified a clear need for such job-related schemes they remain erratic and are not being sufficiently sustained. The council has encouraged economic development, for example developing business units at local schools.

58. The quality of work-based learning (WBL) is satisfactory. There has been a steady increase in participation in WBL for 16–18 year olds over the last two years. NVQ success rates are relatively good. Foundation modern apprentices succeed less well than the national average, but success rates for advanced modern apprentices are high. School leavers wishing to undertake entry and level one vocational courses are not sufficiently well served. Young learners on the Entry to Employment programme achieve well and work viewed by inspectors in this area was good. Outcomes reflect the individual young person's need and range from accreditation in numeracy and literacy to the self-esteem gained through achieving a Duke of Edinburgh award.

59. The council has taken the needs of children and young people into account in formulating its strategic approach to housing. Lengths of stay in bed and breakfast for families with children are good compared to the national average. Rutland has provided funding to the Citizen's Advice Bureau to offer support to teenage parents, young people with specific needs and other young people who wish to enter the housing market. Gaps still exist however, and short-term arrangements for young single people are insufficient.

Service management

60. **The overall management of services for children and young people is adequate.** The ambition of Rutland Council and its partners for children and young people is good. A clear and challenging vision has been drafted aligned to the five outcomes in Every Child Matters (ECM). This emerged from a multi-agency conference that included young people as well as statutory and voluntary organisations. The vision is contained in a draft CYPP, which links appropriately with the council's strategic aims, as well as with partners' plans and with the ECM agenda. The draft CYPP is currently out to consultation. An agreed basis from which to consult and develop shared ambitions for children's and young people's services has been formed.

61. Prioritisation is adequate. The improvement of outcomes for children and young people is a clearly stated high priority for Rutland. It is one of the five priorities within the council's corporate plan, and one of six themes in the local strategic partnership's community plan. The allocation of resources reflects the importance attached to services for children and young people. The council has consistently spent above its FSS allocation on education. Although expenditure on children's social care has been lower than FSS, it is rising and is now close to the FSS level. The county's commitment to children and young people is manifest.

62. There is no clear statement of the priorities for action for the CYP directorate. However, the council is taking effective action to push forward the

children's and young people's agenda. It is clear that internal integration of services, establishment of the CYPSP and development of the CYPP have been regarded as the main initial steps. Vision 2010+, focused on ensuring high quality primary school and/or children's centre provision by 2010, is a longer term priority for the council. While progress is being made, actions are not prioritised. This has been recognised as an objective in the CYPP.

63. Priorities for delivery within the CYPP are not yet evident. The CYPP sets out what it wants to achieve in the form of ten objectives or 'strategic priorities'. These are further broken down, as appropriate, into aims aligned with the ECM five outcomes, and they are supported by a list of actions. The consultation process is intended to help prioritise the actions within the plan. While the council and its partners know what they want to achieve, it is currently unclear what the priorities are to ensure that further development occurs in a logical and coherent manner.

64. There has been no comprehensive needs analysis and there is a lack of some baseline data, both within the council and in partner organisations, such as health services. Work has commenced in this area, but no dates have been set for outcomes. Meanwhile prioritisation cannot be based on a secure understanding of existing needs and gaps in provision and this is impacting on the development of the CYPP.

65. The council and its partners have good intelligence about individual children and young people. Effective approaches are taken towards ensuring good school attendance and avoiding the need to exclude pupils. Measures to avoid the escalation of needs are taken in social care audits, and nursery provision for pre-school aged children provides early support to individuals. Although the various initiatives and measures have not been drawn together in a strategic way, the cumulative effect of the actions taken is that needs are usually addressed before problems become intractable.

66. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve outcomes for children and young people is adequate, although some essential building blocks are not yet in place. The focus in services for children and young people had been heavily on operational issues, but restructuring has increased officer capacity to enable greater attention to be paid to strategic issues. The Director of Children and Young People's Services has been in post since Summer 2005, and the lead councillor is effectively supported by another cabinet member who has taken on responsibility for service provision to 14 to 19 year olds. The council provides strong leadership and the director plays a prominent role within and outside the council, actively promoting the changes needed to achieve effective integrated services. Staff were well engaged in developing the structure and vision for the newly formed CYP directorate and as a consequence are fully committed to the provision of an integrated service.

67. Partnership working is strong. The CYPSP has an appropriate and wide range of statutory and voluntary groups. This engagement of the key players is helping to ensure a coherent approach towards future service delivery.

68. Resources are used effectively, and value for money within the council's service for children and young people is adequate. The structural changes have been achieved within existing budgets and the new CYP directorate is effectively addressing its new role. There is a commitment in the 2003/08 school organisation plan to the removal of surplus school places, thus improving value for money. However, fostering services' costs are very high, as are those for home-school transport. Value for money is challenged at a corporate level and home-school transport costs are currently being examined by a scrutiny working group, but value for money is not routinely reviewed at service level and benchmarking is limited.

69. Pooling of funding already occurs within the council and with partners, for example increased domestic violence worker provision was secured through pooled funds from a range of council services and extended schools funding. The council has an open approach towards commissioning. There are high levels of delegation of funding to schools and the voluntary sector is effectively involved in the delivery of services, for example the family centre.

70. However, future deployment of resources is unclear. The council's service plan for 2006/07 is in draft form, with no indication of the financial resources needed to deliver its objectives and limited allocation of responsibility for tasks. The draft CYPP gives no indication of the resources needed to deliver its objectives. Consequently, the council and its partners cannot demonstrate that the improvements they wish to make for children and young people will be delivered.

71. Capacity to further improve is adequate, although many of the elements to ensure effective delivery are still in a developmental stage. The CYPSP is established and working cooperatively on development of the CYPP. There is commitment towards a children's trust type arrangement by the council and its partners and a united approach towards its development. Workforce planning is underway within the CYP directorate. A training needs analysis has been carried out and draft training objectives developed. Priority development areas in the current CYP workforce have been identified and a wider workforce strategy is in preparation. However, absence of comprehensive baseline data and analysis of needs and gaps in provision means that there is no robust base upon which priorities for action to improve outcomes can be founded.

72. Performance management is currently inadequate. While management of school performance has been effective in helping to improve standards of achievement, some areas, for example the educational impact of mobility of some cohorts, are not as effectively monitored. Whilst staff are well aware of the needs of looked after children, formal record-keeping is weak. Performance management within the CYP directorate is embryonic and procedures have yet

to be set in place for the CYPSP. The self-assessment appropriately recognises issues that need addressing and is generally realistic, but overstates the progress achieved so far in some aspects of social care. Targeted action to improve performance is not possible at present. In the absence of sufficient needs analysis, the council and its partners are not yet in a position to be able to set challenging and appropriate targets. Success measures are given for CYPP actions but do not provide measurable targets, nor is responsibility for their delivery assigned. The 2006/07 service plan for the CYP directorate is aligned to the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes, but no priorities for action or timescales for achievement have yet been put in place. The council recognises the need to improve performance management. The self-assessment notes this as a priority for the coming year and the CYPP can consequently only be an interim plan for a year until detailed needs analysis has been carried out and benchmarking data obtained.

Annex: the children's and young people's section of the corporate assessment

1. The council is providing strong leadership and working effectively with a range of statutory and other partners towards the provision of integrated children's and young people's services. The Director of Children and Young People's Services, the lead councillor and the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership are in place and working effectively together. The improvement of outcomes for children and young people is a clearly stated high priority for Rutland. A draft Children's and Young People's Plan (CYPP) has been produced. This contains a clear and challenging vision aligned to the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes. The plan is supported by ten objectives, further broken down as appropriate, into aims linked to the ECM five outcomes. The draft CYPP is currently out to consultation and provides a good base for the development of integrated services.
2. The council and its partners acknowledge that a comprehensive needs analysis is essential to effective prioritisation and target setting, but that this is currently lacking. Action to address this is amongst the priorities for action for the CYP directorate, demonstrating awareness of the building blocks essential to maintain and improve the quality of service. There is effective use of resources, and overall service management, value for money, and the capacity to achieve further improvements in children's and young people's service, are adequate.
3. Local services in Rutland have a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people. The combined work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good. Children most at risk are well safeguarded by prompt and effective action by all agencies. Childcare providers and fostering arrangements are good and agencies undertake the appropriate staffing checks. A significantly lower rate of children and young people are killed or seriously injured in traffic accidents than the national average, and there is a low rate of admissions of under 18s to hospital.
4. The general support given to parents and carers to keep their children healthy is good. However, targeted support for more vulnerable groups is less well developed. There is good provision of services for physical health needs and very good provision for mental health needs, although 16 to 18 year olds who have left school cannot access mental health services. An absence of a sufficient needs analysis prevents effective targeting, for example of substance misuse.
5. Children and young people generally enjoy their education and where they live, and achieve well. The council gives good support to early years settings and has strengthened its processes for monitoring and challenging the performance of its schools. Pupil attainment is good and their progress is satisfactory overall. Standards improved in each key stage in 2005 and are

better than the national averages and in line with or above similar authorities. There is good participation in recreational and leisure activities. However, cost and transport issues can be barriers for some children and the youth service is currently inadequate. Young people in more isolated villages have difficulties accessing recreational and other services.

6. Most children and young people behave responsibly. The council and its partners are increasingly seeking the views of children and young people and elected members and officers are receptive to such views. Consultation is not yet, however, a consistent aspect of service design and delivery and it is not clear that action is taken as a result of this consultation or that the outcomes are fed back to young people.

7. Local and regional services work well together in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being. There is a high proportion of young people continuing into education and training beyond the age of 16, and more vocational options are now available at age 14 than in the recent past. Very few young people are not in education, employment or training. Overall course achievement is high, and success rates in work-based learning are good. There is insufficient Rutland-specific data available on achievement upon which the local authority can monitor the progress of local young people. Insufficient short-term crisis accommodation is available for young single people within the area.