



Joint area review

Redbridge Children's Services Authority Area

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		



© Crown copyright 2007

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

Introduction	2
Context	3
Summary Report	4
Grades	10
Recommendations	10
Main Report	11
Outcomes for children and young people	11
The impact of local services	14
Being healthy	14
Staying safe	15
Enjoying and achieving	17
Making a positive contribution	19
Achieving economic well-being	21
Service management	23
Annex: The children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report	26

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 eight 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 Redbridge 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:

- a 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 included inspection fieldwork. This included studies of how far 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 Hainault. It also included gathering evidence on five key judgements, selected because of their critical importance to improving outcomes for children and young people in the local area. This included discussions 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. Redbridge is an outer borough of North East London, local to both Docklands and the City. It is influenced by two major regeneration initiatives: the Thames Gateway London Partnership and the London-Stansted-Cambridge Growth Corridor. Redbridge is in the Mayor of London's priority area for growth and regeneration and Ilford is an Opportunity Area in the London Plan. These developments and the 2012 Olympics will provide important commercial and social opportunities.

8. Redbridge has a changing demographic structure, with wealthy areas in the north and inner-city characteristics in the south. Ranked 163 out of 354 districts in terms of deprivation, Redbridge is placed in the lower 50% of all local authorities in England. There is a significant and widening gap between the poorer and more affluent wards.

9. In 2005, the borough's population was estimated as 251,500. It is expected to grow by 6% by 2016, requiring an additional 8,000 to 10,000 new homes. There is an expanding children's population with 66,400 young people aged 0-19 years and 24% of the population aged under 18.

10. An increasingly diverse ethnic profile is emerging, with more people from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh settling in the local area. In 2001, the minority ethnic population accounted for 36.5% of the total population, making it the ninth most diverse authority in the country. Currently, 33% of the school age population is White British, compared with 55% in 1998. The proportion of pupils from Asian backgrounds has increased from 27% to 39%, compared with a national average in 2005 of 7%. The number of asylum seekers and refugee pupils has increased from 2000 in 2002 to 2149 in 2006. In secondary schools, 44.5% of pupils now speak English as an additional language compared with 9.5% nationally; the figure for primary schools is 50.55% compared with 12.5% nationally. These figures are the 11th highest in the country for both phases.

11. Redbridge was granted Pathfinder Children's Trust status in 2003 and the Trust was created in two phases, using section 31 agreements. Phase 1 in May 2004 incorporated services for disability and special educational needs: phase 2, in June 2005, brought together the remainder of social care and primary health care services for children along with early years, educational psychology and the Education Welfare Service.

12. There are seven infant, six junior and 37 primary schools, with 17 secondary schools, nine community comprehensive schools, two community grammar schools and two foundation comprehensive schools. There are four special schools and two pupil referral units (PRUs).

13. The 14-19 strategy is overseen by a partnership which comprises: the local authority, the London East Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Redbridge College of Further Education, the 17 secondary schools and two work-based training providers, Quest and CTC (Childcare Training Consultancy). Post-16 education and training is provided by the college, all 17 secondary schools and the two training providers. Redbridge College and Quest jointly provide Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes as members of the East London Training Association. Adult and community learning, including family learning, is provided by the local authority. Redbridge College is also one of the 11 members of the all-London consortium that manages a 'Train to Gain' workforce development contract.

14. Primary care for children in Redbridge is provided by the Redbridge Primary Care Trust (PCT). Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospital NHS Trust is the main provider of acute health services. Other children's hospital services and accident and emergency (A&E) services are provided by Whipps Cross University NHS Trust, which also provides services to Barking and Dagenham, Waltham Forest and Epping Forest. Children's mental health services are provided by the North East London Mental Health NHS Trust, which also provides services to Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Waltham Forest and parts of Essex. The trusts providing health services for the children of Redbridge, with the exception of the Ambulance Service, fall within the NHS London Strategic Health Authority.

15. There are no young offender institutions in the area.

Summary Report

Outcomes for children and young people

16. **Outcomes for children and young people in Redbridge are good and some are outstanding.** Most are healthy, enjoy their education and achieve highly, are well prepared for working life and have a good range of opportunities to make decisions and to take responsibility. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged and the area is on course to meet the National Healthy Schools Standard by December 2006. Breastfeeding rates are higher than nationally and dental care is very good, with outstanding provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although teenage conceptions are low, the rate of reduction has slowed. Most children and young people are safe. Educational standards are mostly above average but, in the Foundation Stage, there is below average performance against early learning goals. Provision for those not attending school is outstanding. The number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system has reduced; however too many children and young

people known to the Youth Offending Team (YOT) are not in full-time education, training or employment. Most children and young people have opportunities to contribute to the development of services. Results achieved by young people at GCSE are among the highest nationally and in London, which encourages a high proportion to continue in education after 16. Apprenticeship completion rates are above the national average, but the proportion of young people in work-based learning is very low at 5%.

The impact of local services

17. The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people is good.

18. The council and its partners know the needs of Redbridge very well and are effective in meeting new challenges. They are responsive to the changing cultural diversity of the area. The self-assessment is accurate and this joint area review broadly corroborates the strengths and weaknesses identified. All services for children and young people are good and sometimes outstanding. The effective implementation of trust status has had a very significant impact on improving outcomes. There is a respect for, and a confidence in, the contributing professional cultures. This has strengthened the delivery of local services for children and young people.

19. Education standards are high and action is being taken to improve outcomes at the Foundation Stage. Preventative services that focus on the most vulnerable groups are very good and protection for those most at risk is outstanding. The management of children's services is good and leadership is highly effective. Current management of resources and value for money is good.

20. The overall effectiveness of children's services, strong leadership and very effective performance management mean that the capacity of the council and partners to build on this is outstanding. The partners' ambition for children's services is good and the area has taken a measured and well evidenced approach to the setting of priorities. Children and young people have opportunities to contribute to strategic planning and they are well prepared for their working life.

Being healthy

21. The work of local services in supporting children and young people's health is good. Services are effectively integrated and the expansion of the Children's Trust is helping to improve outcomes for children and young people. Access to acute services is good and the children's ward is well staffed with children's nurses.

22. A higher percentage of mothers than nationally start breastfeeding and a low percentage of pregnant mothers smoke. Compared to national figures, teenage conception rates are low but they are declining more slowly than

nationally, and meeting the national target for 2010 is a significant challenge for the area. Immunisation rates are improving between the ages of two to five except in relation to measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). The Children's Trust is working effectively to minimise the impact of financial cuts in the PCT on outcomes for children and young people. Support for smoking cessation is good.

23. The Healthy Schools Programme effectively promotes healthy lifestyles and the area is expected to reach the national healthy schools target by December 2006.

24. The service to support children and young people with mental health problems is good. Attendance rates for appointments are outstanding and waiting lists are well managed. There is a good emphasis on providing mental health services in places most readily accessed by groups of young people with high levels of mental health need, for example those known to the YOT and the substance misuse services. Most children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who have mental health problems are also served well.

25. The health needs of looked after children are effectively met by a multi professional team and the performance on completed health checks puts the area in the top band nationally.

26. The health needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well met through universal services and good additional services, some of which are commissioned from the voluntary sector. There is good access to specialist paediatric consultants but some families have to wait too long for speech therapy.

Staying safe

27. **The impact of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is outstanding.** Social care support to keep children and young people in their families is very good and the number of children who are looked after is low. Specialist services for the most vulnerable children are based on skilled assessment of need and child protection is outstanding. There are low numbers of children on the child protection register and the number of referrals and re-referrals is low in comparison with similar areas.

28. There are very effective performance management processes which ensure excellent compliance with procedures by qualified social workers and their managers. All social worker visits, reviews and core conferences meet statutory timescales. Corporate parenting for looked after children is outstanding, with the service effectively monitoring outcomes for them wherever they are placed. This responsibility extends to other children living away from home such as those living in boarding schools or private fostering placements. All of the children looked after by Redbridge have an allocated social worker.

29. The implementation of the Children's Trust has created opportunities to develop new services in response to changing need and there is a good understanding of the needs of black and minority ethnic (BME) children and families. Good links with the community are maintained through the Faith Forum.

30. Support for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. In addition to inter-agency services, Barnados is commissioned to provide a range of specialist support. However, some families told inspectors that they do not always find services easy to access.

Enjoying and Achieving

31. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is good.** The quality of support to ensure good provision in schools is outstanding. Very good data analysis is used to target effective support and intervention. As a result, no school is in special measures and only one primary school currently has a notice to improve.

32. Standards are high and children and young people make excellent progress across all key stages so that, by the age of 16, attainment is well above national averages. Early years provision is adequate, although the achievement of early learning goals remains below the national average. Good practice is shared effectively through the network learning community groups. Leadership of the school improvement service is very effective and there is a good understanding of the changing needs and increasing diversity of the community.

33. Strategies for improving attendance and reducing truancy are good. Attendance is above average in secondary schools and slightly below, and improving, in the primary sector. The attendance of children and young people who are looked after is good. The number of permanent exclusions is falling and provision for pupils who are excluded from school is outstanding. Half of those excluded in Key Stage 3 are successfully reintegrated into mainstream settings; those remaining achieve well.

34. The support for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and they achieve well. Effective monitoring and provision helps to ensure that children and young people who are looked after achieve better than similar children nationally.

35. Children and young people in Redbridge generally enjoy school and feel safe. Schools offer a satisfactory range of activities and a growing range of extended school provision. The council has increased the range of activities it provides as a result of consultation with children and young people. Some young people feel that there are insufficient indoor and affordable opportunities within walking distance of their homes.

Making a positive contribution

36. **The overall contribution of services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** Services effectively promote children and young people's personal, emotional and social development. Good provision encourages children and young people to develop healthy relationships and a sense of personal responsibility. Young people are well supported in developing their understanding of citizenship and decision making through school councils. Some children and young people participate in good opportunities to extend this understanding and contribute to the development of council initiatives. The youth service, however, does not sufficiently involve young people in developing and running provision.

37. Children's services and the Children's Trust demonstrate a very strong commitment to consulting children and young people and this enables some to make a robust and valued contribution. However, this does not yet reach all children and young people. This is also true of the good feedback that some targeted groups of young people receive.

38. Good support and advice is available to help children and young people manage change and cope with the difficulties they experience in their lives. Vulnerable children and young people are generally well supported, with excellent specialist services providing advice and help to those who are looked after. Some good preventative programmes to reduce anti-social behaviour have been developed, which engage children and young people well. The need to improve education and training provision within the YOT is a recognised priority. There is also clear acknowledgement of the need to ensure that this team is adequately resourced.

Achieving economic well-being

39. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** Good quality provision in schools and improved standards in college and work-based learning results in some of the highest post-16 participation rates in the country. Partnership working has been effective at reducing the number of children and young people not in employment, education or training.

40. The good support given to care leavers and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables a higher proportion than average to continue in education, employment or training. However, post-19 provision is insufficient to meet the needs of some young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The take-up of direct payments has greatly increased over the last two years. Improved partnership working is extending the range of vocational options to young people at 14 and 16 and around 500 young people take part in a 14-16 increased flexibility programme in school and college. However, employer engagement is in its early stages, and there is insufficient work-related provision at entry level or level 1.

41. Housing support for care leavers is good but a shortage of local authority or housing association accommodation makes it difficult for some vulnerable young people to gain permanent tenancies.

Service management

42. **The management of services for children and young people is good.** Partners' ambition for children's service is good. Priorities, as detailed in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), are based on a good needs analysis and informed by the views of children and young people. This includes the development of a range of preventative services. There is a clear plan in place for implementation, although some outcomes and targets are unclear. Capacity to deliver these priorities is good.

43. The Children's Trust has played a key role in integrating services and has contributed to strong partnership working. Partner capacity is being used effectively to provide a range of services to children and young people, with a clear focus on meeting individual needs. Value for money is good. However workforce planning is at an early stage.

44. Performance management across the area is good and is strong across most council-run services. Rigorous performance monitoring and management by senior officers within the council ensures that good performance is maintained and most underperformance is promptly tackled. The PCT is in the early stages of refining performance measures for some of its activity. Not all children and young people are routinely involved in performance management.

45. The council's self-assessment is accurate and demonstrates good self-awareness of both strengths and areas for development. The council's capacity to improve further is outstanding.

Grades

Grades awarded:

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

	Local services overall	Council services	Health services
Being healthy	3		
Staying safe	4		
Enjoying and achieving	3		
Making a positive contribution	3		
Achieving economic well-being	3		
Service management	3		
Capacity to improve	4	4	
Children's services		3	
The education service		3	
The social care services for children		4	
The health service for children			3

Recommendations

For action over the next six months

- The Children's Trust should ensure that there is effective performance management to secure progress towards key health targets on immunisation and teenage pregnancy.

- The 14-19 strategic partnership should improve the take-up and availability of work-based learning opportunities and strengthen the partnership with local employers.

For action in the longer term

- Ensure workforce planning contains strategies for ongoing recruitment and retention of key groups and ensure that training targets are met.
- Improve the range and availability of housing for vulnerable young people.
- Improve education and training opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities over the age of 19.
- Develop the consultation process so that it involves a wider cross-section of children and young people.

Main report

Outcomes for children and young people

46. **Outcomes for children and young people in Redbridge are good.**

47. **Children and young people in Redbridge are generally healthy.**

Most of the national indicators for children and young people show good outcomes. Rates of smoking among pregnant women are very low and falling, while rates of breastfeeding are high. Children and young people have few decayed, missing and filled teeth, and dental provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. Infant mortality is close to national and benchmark norms and is falling. Over the last 10 years there has been good progress in achieving a reduction of 42% in road traffic accidents.

48. There are low levels of teenage conceptions but, if the current trend continues, there is a risk that the national target will not be met by 2010. Immunisation rates improve between the ages of two to five but improvements are needed in the take up of the MMR vaccine. A baseline of childhood obesity has been established, but it is too early to judge any impact of actions to reduce obesity.

49. The area is on course to achieve the target that half its schools meet the National Healthy Schools Standard by December 2006. There is also good progress towards achieving a comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in 2006 with plans to improve the overall provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of completed health checks for children and young people who are looked after is very good.

50. **Most children and young people are safe in Redbridge**, with those most at risk of significant harm protected by highly effective child protection interagency services. All children looked after are allocated to a suitably qualified social worker and have their care plans reviewed on time; almost three-quarters attend their review conferences. A high number are placed in fostering or adoptive places, and placement stability is good and continues to improve. The quality of care planning ensures that looked after children are well supported in school, with attainment higher than comparator authorities. Their health needs are monitored and responded to by specialist staff and they leave care with the life skills to live independently.

51. Support services provide a level of support that sustains children at home. As a result, there are low numbers of children looked after and on the child protection register compared to similar authorities. Children's needs are very effectively assessed, with a flexible range of services provided to meet those needs. Staff are well-trained practitioners who are supervised by highly effective managers within an established culture of good performance management.

52. Outstanding corporate parenting ensures good support for looked after children and others placed outside of the borough.

53. The arrangements for protecting children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effective with some high quality specialist services in place, although not all parents are able to access these services equally.

54. **Children and young people achieve very well, enjoy their education and feel safe and happy at school.** Educational standards at all key stages are mostly above national averages and those of similar areas. Trends in performance are mostly rising. Children and young people make very good progress as they move through the key stages so that by the age of 16, their attainment is well above national averages. The gap between boys' and girls' performance at GCSE is narrower than that found nationally. In the Foundation Stage, there is below average performance against early learning goals.

55. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and those looked after by Redbridge perform better than the national average for these groups. The performance of different ethnic groups varies. Black African, Black other and White European groups under perform across all key stages, but Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi groups achieve better than national average results for their respective groups.

56. Attendance rates are above average in secondary schools. In primary schools, they are slightly below the national average but improving. Truancy is declining as is the number of permanent exclusions. These decreased from 60 in 2004/5 to 41 in 2005/6. There are now no schools in special measures. One primary school has a notice to improve.

57. Children and young people have a good range of opportunities to make decisions and take personal responsibility; many make a good contribution to their schools and communities. Children and young people are involved in a good range of activities where they develop personal and social skills. Two-thirds of the children and young people surveyed for the inspection feel they are able to contribute to discussions about school affairs. Many make a positive contribution through school councils and children and young people actively participate in Redbridge Youth Council and major initiatives such as the Play Strategy. Limited opportunities prevent young people from making stronger contributions through the work of the youth service.

58. Vulnerable children and young people, including those who are looked after and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities respond well to opportunities to be involved in decisions that affect them and their views make a difference. The number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system has reduced and only a small percentage of children and young people engaged with prevention services since 2003 have moved to the YOT. However, too many children and young people known to them are not in full-time education, training or employment.

59. Children and young people are able to achieve economic well-being and are prepared well for working life. Results achieved by young people at GCSE are among the highest in London and well above the national average, which encourages a high proportion to continue in education after 16. Apprenticeship completion rates overall are above the national average and A-level success rates have all improved to be close to the average.

60. Three-quarters of young people achieve a level 2 qualification by the age of 19 and nearly half progress to higher education. Over half of young people completing the entry to employment programme progress to other courses. The number of young people not in education, employment or training is the second lowest in the East London Connexions partnership and the proportion of care leavers in education, employment and training is much higher than average. The proportion of young people in work-based learning is very low at 5%. Apprenticeship completion rates at level 3 are improving but remain well below average.

61. Redbridge has less local authority housing than almost any other borough in London, with fewer than 5000 properties. Thirty-eight per cent of housing in the borough is below the decent housing standard, though this is an improvement on previous years. The use of bed and breakfast accommodation has steadily reduced over the last three years. More young people leaving care live in suitable housing than in comparable authorities.

The impact of local services

Being healthy

62. **The work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** Local health services are well coordinated and the expansion of the Children's Trust, to include child and family health services from the PCT, is improving outcomes for children and young people. For example, the integration of multi-professional staff teams in Children's Resource Centres enables families to have a single point of access to services. It also reduces duplication and improves the professional understanding of children's needs.

63. There is a good range of services to support parents and carers in keeping their children healthy. Provision for dental care is very good, with good access to dentists and low rates of decayed, filled and missing teeth. The new health centre in Hainault has specially adapted dentistry equipment for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and appointments are arranged to take account of children's needs. This is especially helpful if they are anxious or have difficulty waiting. Consistently better targeting of services to communities at risk of poor health is reducing health inequalities. For example, a well targeted child accident prevention programme has been based at the Sure Start programme in Loxford. This is an area where a high proportion of the borough's child deaths through road traffic accidents have occurred and numbers are now reducing. The financial position of the PCT is placing pressure on some aspects of preventative services for children and young people. However, the Children's Trust is working effectively to minimise the impact; the role of the lead professional is being developed to ensure that key expertise is not lost where posts are reducing. The local children's ward is well staffed with children's nurses and access to acute services is good.

64. Breastfeeding initiation rates are good and higher than those found nationally. Teenage conception rates are low; they declined between 2001 and 2003 but more slowly than the national rate. If the current trend continues, however, achieving the national target for 2010 will pose a significant challenge for the area. Nationally recognised good practice guidelines are being introduced to improve this service.

65. Immunisation rates improve between the ages of two and five but the take up of the MMR vaccination remains below the national average. Currently, the data is not sufficiently differentiated to enable the area to target effectively those wards where the take up is lowest.

66. There is good liaison between public health and education, which is demonstrated by the approach to tackling obesity. Groups that are particularly at risk are identified and targeted action is taken. The healthy schools programme effectively promotes healthy lifestyles, most schools have water and fruit available, while school meal menus provide healthy options. Most children and young people receive good advice on alcohol and substance

misuse. The service has consulted effectively with young people on these issues and responded to their concerns.

67. Support for smoking cessation is generally good and, as a result, figures for giving up are better than those found nationally. However, the smoking cessation rates of males under 18 are significantly lower than for other groups and just below the national average. The smoking rate of pregnant mothers is less than one-third of the national average.

68. CAMHS provision is good with a wide range of innovative and high quality services. For example, the Parent-Infant Mental Health Service offers a good range of interventions to develop early parent and child attachment. Data is used to target services in those areas and for those groups with higher levels of need. The management of waiting lists and times is outstanding. Ninety-five per cent of those offered appointments attend and this is significantly above the national average. There is a strong commitment to providing specialist CAMHS alongside other children's services in the community, for example YOT and the substance misuse services. The service is very involved with the broader children's services agenda and there is capacity for further improvement through the Children's Trust. The integration of the counselling service Hear and Now with specialist CAMHS is good, but currently this provision is available in only nine of the 20 secondary schools.

69. A multi-professional team effectively meets the health needs of looked after children. Performance on completing health checks on time is very good, which places the area in the top band nationally. The addition of a dedicated worker to address mental health needs is a good example of targeting resource to an area with a high level of need.

70. The health needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met by both universal services and good additional services. For example parents find the availability of school nurses in special schools very helpful. Speech and language therapy services have been redesigned to try to ensure better access, but some families still have to wait for a long time to receive them. There are not enough therapists to meet the demand, the council recognises this and is trying to recruit more staff. There is good access to specialist consultant paediatric advice for children with specific impairments.

Staying safe

71. **The work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is outstanding.** The range of safety information and advice available to parents and children is good. This includes information contained on the council's 'Redbridge Now' website and safety training for children in school, provided by the police.

72. A Safer Communities Partnership Board provides highly effective strategic leadership in ensuring a safe environment for children and young people. Community wardens help to make children feel safe and contribute to reducing

anti-social behaviour. Redbridge's parks and open spaces are patrolled by 12 recently recruited parks police officers and a recent survey showed that more parents and children now feel safe to enjoy using them.

73. The implementation of the Children's Trust has seen some services replaced in response to changing needs and this has improved outcomes. Social care support services to maintain children in their families are very good; the numbers of children on the child protection register and looked after are low. Referral and re-referral rates are low compared with other comparator authorities, and successful work with children on the child protection register leads to children being appropriately removed from it. This low rate prompted a recent audit which showed that children receive effective care planning without the need for re-registration. Although not all core assessments are completed on time, the quality and timing of initial assessments is so outstanding that this does not delay necessary intervention and help. Very good support for families includes a residential resource for family assessment and many services are provided outside working hours in response to need. Parents also speak highly of parenting courses which are available in schools and family centres; one spoke of how it had changed her life.

74. At the time of the inspection, there was a police investigation into a child protection issue. This investigation had not been completed before the end of the inspection.

75. All partner agencies are represented on the highly effective Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and sub-groups have been set up to oversee child protection in line with government priorities. There is a good understanding of the thresholds for intervention across agencies and they are part of all training on child protection. Partnership working between children's services and the police, health and CAMHS is particularly strong. There is a mutual respect and professional confidence between all partners. Most schools receive an effective social care service. The council is placing an increasing emphasis on developing social care skills in wider professional groups; as a result of this increased knowledge and understanding, some schools feel that it does not take enough referrals through the initial assessment process. Excellent information-sharing protocols are in place and all children on the child protection register are allocated to a suitably qualified social worker. Very effective systems ensure that social worker visits, review conferences and core groups all take place within statutory timescales. This contributes to the outstanding support received by families: one man felt that his social worker really had his interests at heart. Effective monitoring systems for safeguarding are in place including referral to an innovative casework panel which checks why progress may have stalled. Parents receive encouragement to attend conferences and core group meetings or to contribute their views. There are good recruitment practices in place ensuring appropriate CRB checks for all social care and health staff. In response to an over representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) children on the child protection register, close links have

been made to the leaders of faith groups. A Faith Forum contributes to increased understanding of the needs of BME children.

76. Excellent support by a highly effective team ensures that all children in the care of the authority are allocated to a suitably qualified social worker and have their care plans reviewed on time. When possible, children choose the time and venue for their review meeting and a high percentage attend in person or contribute their views. Short-term placement stability is good and long-term stability is improving; there are increased numbers of children and young people in foster or adoptive placements. There is evidence on case files of extremely good permanency planning.

77. Corporate parenting is outstanding; a steering group of elected members provides strategic leadership which effectively oversees the work of a multi-disciplinary corporate parenting team. Mental health issues are identified early and, if necessary, a referral is made to a community psychiatric nurse based in the team. This leads to a child receiving the right help more quickly. This highly effective corporate parenting team monitors the progress of children and young people who are placed out of the local area; including care leavers and children placed in boarding schools. Thirteen out of 45 young people leaving care went on to university.

78. Specialist staff who provide services for children with learning and physical disabilities have received child protection training. Their specialist knowledge in disability enables them to support staff in the child protection team when undertaking investigations into allegations of abuse against children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In addition to a range of inter-agency services, additional specialist services are commissioned from Barnados, which includes respite care, a service highly valued by parents and young carers. In-house family-based respite is being developed to increase capacity. Ninety per cent of children and young people have transitions plans although the appointment of additional transitions workers is planned to further develop services for disabled young people approaching adulthood. Those families receiving a service find it effective, but some parents felt that access to services is not always easy.

Enjoying and achieving.

79. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is good.** Parents and carers receive very good support and that provided for teenage mothers is outstanding, helping them to continue with their education. The information service 'Find' provides an excellent range of guidance through the 'Redbridge Now' website and high quality publications such as the parenting handbook. The council uses partnerships well to reach different community groups, for example the Toy Library in Loxford run by the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the Sikh Community Care Project. In Hainault, schools appreciate

the council's proactive approach to fund Parent Support Advisers to help schools identify and support vulnerable families.

80. Early years provision is generally adequate and sometimes good. Effective monitoring and evaluation, using the authority's Quality in Learning and Teaching programme helps to ensure that fewer settings than nationally are issued with actions following registration. However, achievement of early learning goals remains below the national average. The council has a good grasp of emerging childcare needs in the context of an increasingly mobile population.

81. The quality of support to ensure good provision in schools is outstanding and no school is in special measures; one primary school has a notice to improve. Analysis of data is good and this leads to sharply targeted and effective support and intervention. Schools value this and believe that it is a major factor in the increased rigour of the last 18 months. Variations in the performance of pupil groups and schools are monitored and schools are clustered in family groups with similar contexts. This enables good practice to be compared and shared. The network learning community working groups also make sharing good practice easier. The council has appointed consultants to lead school improvement. They are respected by schools and have managed the introduction of school improvement partners sensitively and effectively. The consultants provide powerful leadership and have an extremely well-informed strategic understanding of the emerging demographic challenges.

82. The council's strategies for improving attendance and reducing truancy are good and they have helped to improve attendance in primary schools. They include good support from the educational welfare service, successful use of Fast Track case management and effective truancy sweeps in partnership with the police. These, in addition to proven school approaches such as effective supervision of school gates and an incentive scheme run by the local police, have led to improvements in attendance in line with improvement nationally. The education welfare service is also working positively with faith groups on issues that affect schooling, including attendance. The attendance of children and young people looked after by Redbridge is good.

83. The council and schools work hard to retain those children and young people in danger of exclusion through personal development sessions such as those delivered for Year 9 pupils at Hainault Youth centre. The New Rush Hall federated provision for excluded pupils is outstanding: it achieved Trailblazer specialist school status in 2005. The one pupil excluded from a primary school in 2005/6 and nearly half of those at Key Stage 3 were reintegrated into mainstream schools. There is a hard-to-place protocol which operates well. The local authority faces a challenge to reintegrate more young people in Year 10 but those aged 14-16 following GCSE, work-related and vocational courses achieve well. Outreach work by the tuition service is good and well monitored. Children and young people educated other than at school generally achieve well in relation to their capabilities.

84. The support for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and they achieve well in schools. The work of the special needs advice and support team is valued by schools. There are good levels of outreach work in mainstream schools and facilities are being developed to increase opportunities for pupils from special schools to attend mainstream schools on a more permanent basis. The youth service provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, with many individuals gaining self-confidence and making tangible progress in their personal development.

85. Children and young people who are looked after are well supported and they attain better than similar children nationally. Schools play an active part in monitoring their welfare, designated teachers are well supported and there is good inter-agency support for carers.

86. Children and young people in Redbridge generally enjoy school and feel safe. Schools offer a satisfactory range of activities and an increasing range of extended school provision. The council has broadened the menu of activities it provides as a result of consultation with children and young people. It provides adequate play, sporting and arts activities and has provided leisure cards to children and young people who are looked after and who have disabilities to give them cheaper access. Nevertheless, in some areas, the participation rate of girls in youth service activities is low and many young people feel that there are insufficient indoor and affordable opportunities within walking distance of their homes.

Making a positive contribution

87. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** The council and local partners effectively promote children and young people's personal, emotional and social development. A wide range of opportunities, particularly through children's centres and schools, help children and young people develop the skills necessary for establishing positive and healthy relationships. The youth service and the Manford and Newbridge special educational needs project make a particularly strong contribution to the personal development of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is some well structured and highly valued support for parents and carers in maintaining strong and positive relationships with their children. An excellent example of this is the work of the parent's group at Loxford Children's Centre.

88. In general, children and young people receive good support and advice in managing change and coping with difficult periods in their life. Effective support is provided by Connexions personal advisers to young people who are making choices about education and employment. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well served through the help they receive to secure valuable work experience. Mentoring schemes in schools provide positive support to individuals.

89. Vulnerable children and young people generally receive good support and advice. The Young Parents Project successfully helps this vulnerable group of young people, and the Indigo Programme, led by Barnados and jointly commissioned by the local authority, effectively supports young carers and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

90. Children who are looked after receive excellent specialist support from a range of services and they have the opportunity to be fully involved when key decisions are made about their lives. Their views are taken seriously and they have confidence in the excellent advocacy service. They are supported well as they prepare to lead independent adult lives.

91. Children's services and the Children's Trust have a very strong commitment to involving children and young people in decision making processes. There is a clear understanding of the principles and practices underpinning effective consultation. These are evident in some examples of good quality consultation including that on the Play Strategy. Well focused consultation with children and young people clearly influenced the priorities in the CYPP. This measured approach secures good quality consultation with significant numbers of children and young people, including some hard to reach groups. Consultation is not yet universal. Of particular note is the lack of consultation and involvement of young people in the running of the youth service. Similarly the views of children and young people are not sought systematically in the health service except on matters relating to mental health provision. Although there are some examples of good feedback to targeted groups of children and young people, this aspect of consultation is limited and the area recognises this as an area for development.

92. There are some good opportunities for children and young people to participate in the community. School councils are often the means by which children and young people influence policies that directly affect them; examples include improving their immediate environment and promoting healthy eating. Redbridge Youth Council is effective in providing enthusiastic young people with opportunities to develop their understanding of citizenship and participate in decision making. Members of the youth council influenced the borough council's initiative on improving school meals and trained young people to administer the Youth Opportunities Fund designed to help young people improve their lives. Redbridge young people are represented on local, regional and national forums by their elected members on the UK Youth Parliament.

93. Children and young people are increasingly involved in improving services. For example, excellent contributions have been made by them in the selection of senior officers and looked after children contribute to the review of the work of the staff providing them with support.

94. The Safer Communities Partnership secures excellent working relationships between the police and other agencies and there is a good range of preventative action to reduce anti-social behaviour by children and young

people. Early intervention strategies engage children and young people well. Careful targeting and monitoring of initiatives leads to some positive outcomes such as in the leadership development programme for Black and Asian young people at risk of disaffection.

95. The Youth Crime Prevention Team (M-Power) and the YOT work in close partnership and run some good programmes to prevent offending and reduce re-offending. For example, the Retail Theft Initiative is targeted at reducing the number of first-time shop theft offenders returning to crime, and the Education Nurture group targets young offenders for whom English is a second language in order to support their transition into education. Young people receive effective and well coordinated support to address any mental health or substance misuse related issues.

96. The YOT is well managed and provides an adequate service for children and young people and their parents and carers. A substantial increase in workload over the previous 12 months has meant that there are insufficient resources within the YOT to meet the level of need. This has adversely affected performance. Currently, interventions are not evaluated adequately to assess their impact on reducing offending behaviour. Provision of education and training for children and young people in the criminal justice system is inadequate but there are plans to improve this. There are good arrangements in place to address mental health needs.

Achieving economic well-being

97. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** The children's information service and its outreach workers work closely with partners including Jobcentre Plus, the Redbridge refugee forum and community groups to guide parents to appropriate childcare and to sources of financial support where necessary. Childcare providers have enough vacancies to meet demand, although not all the provision is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of all parents. Despite the good support for parents who access the service, only around 5% of lone parents known to live in the borough have contacted the service to seek advice about childcare. Just over half of teenagers who are pregnant are still in education, employment and training which is good.

98. Young people receive good impartial advice and guidance to help them make career decisions at 14 and 16. Connexions, the youth service, voluntary organisations and a sub-contracted careers management company work closely to provide advice and guidance through group and individual discussions in schools and town centre drop-in facilities. For those making choices at 16, the advice is supported by a website and comprehensive directory of all available provision across the borough and the neighbouring areas. Young people are well informed about the academic, vocational and work-based pathways open to them. Connexions advisers also work directly with the work-based training providers and young people referred by the YOT.

99. Vocational opportunities for 14-19 year olds are adequate with most schools offering some provision at 14, some through the increased flexibility programme with Redbridge College. The Redbridge business education partnership (EBP) works with all but one of the borough's secondary schools to arrange work placement programmes in Year 10, and with five to offer a vocational inclusion programme to young people at risk of being disaffected. There are links between the local authority and the EBP but the partnership is not yet giving sufficient support to the planned introduction of specialist diplomas.

100. Fourteen schools have subject specialist status, but only two of these are in business or enterprise. Although there are enough work-based providers there are too few apprenticeship places available with employers to meet demand.

101. Redbridge has one of the highest post-16 participation rates in London; this good rate extends to vulnerable young people. Entry to employment courses attract a high proportion of young people referred by the YOT. The authority has created 30 places within its offices for the hardest to place young people not currently in education, employment and training, and the Connexions partnership is funding a further 19 placements. The partnership has introduced a good range of activities and initiatives to target young people who are not in education, employment or training, such as activity agreements for those who have been unemployed for 20 weeks or more.

102. After a slow start, Redbridge has now taken strong action to establish 14-19 collaborative working. Relationships between the authority, London East LSC, Redbridge College and the 17 secondary schools are now much improved, particularly following the appointment of a permanent 14-19 coordinator. There are some examples of good partnership working between the college and individual schools to offer vocational options at Year 10, albeit directed at underachieving young people. The authority is making good progress in its plan to introduce specialist diplomas in 2008 in order to extend vocational options to all and introduce the learner entitlement. However, employers are not yet sufficiently engaged in the planning of work-based learning. The area recognises this and is working with Redbridge College to explore how it could make use of its newly refurbished and upgraded facilities such as the training kitchen and construction workshop.

103. An effective youth council enables young people to develop their awareness of citizenship and to participate with enthusiasm in local decisions, including those involving regeneration. Redbridge is currently engaged in a major public consultation on a significant regeneration project. Part of the focus of the project is to extend leisure and recreational facilities to make them more appropriate for young people and the different community groups now moving into the borough. The proportion of homes that fall below the decent housing standard is high but the borough has a target to reduce this figure by 2010.

104. Half of young people leaving care remain in education, employment or training, which is very good in comparison with the national average. All young people leaving care have annually reviewed pathway plans. They receive very good guidance and support, and priority status when they seek accommodation, including through the new choice based lettings route. Young people at risk of becoming homeless can be referred to a well-designed sheltered housing and training centre. They continue to be well supported for a further year by outreach workers as they move into independent housing. Support workers find it hard to find appropriate accommodation for all those leaving the centre.

105. The proportion of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who continue in education, employment or training is very high at nearly 80%. Transition arrangements are satisfactory and improving, and relationships between children and adult education services are good. All young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been assessed for their support needs on reaching school-leaving age. The work of the youth service is particularly effective in supporting young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to grow in confidence and make tangible progress in their personal development. Partnership work is improving, although the authority recognises that it has yet to gain the confidence of smaller voluntary sector providers in joint working. Post-19 provision is insufficient to meet the needs of some young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Service management

106. **The management of services for children and young people is good.** Partners' ambition for children and young people within Redbridge is good. There are challenging ambitions across the five outcome areas as laid out in the CYPP. These have been based on the good use of a comprehensive range of information. Performance data and demographic information have been used to inform the needs analysis and to identify gaps in existing services.

107. Good use has been made of consultation with a range of partners, parents and children to help form the ambition. The views of children and young people have clearly informed the CYPP. Areas which children see as important are prominent within the plan such as improving play and leisure facilities; this has led to plans to increase the provision of such facilities. As part of the CYPP, a comprehensive implementation plan, shared across services, is in place. It clearly identifies resource needs, but some desired outcomes and targets are not well defined. This makes it difficult to assess progress in a specific and measurable way.

108. Prioritisation is good. The area has taken a considered and thorough approach to the identification of a number of ambitious priorities. They focus well on areas that need improvement such as attainment at foundation level. Appropriate attention is given to the needs of BME children, who are recognised as a large and increasingly diverse group within Redbridge.

109. Priorities focus well on prevention and effective work is taking place to deliver them. The development of the first phase of children's centres in areas of disadvantage demonstrates a targeted approach to tackling inequalities. Service provided for children and young people are becoming increasingly differentiated to take account of the diverse range of needs in Redbridge. For example, some targeted work is taking place to engage with hard-to-reach children such as refugees. There is a good range of services for children and young people with disabilities and or difficulties; however, provision for those over the age of 19 is less well developed.

110. Capacity to deliver priorities is good. Partnership working across children's services is strong. At a strategic level, this occurs through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Group and the Children's Trust Advisory Committee. At an operational level, cross-agency working is effective and there are some early signs of good outcomes for children. The Children's Trust is now in phase two of its development and further integration of services is taking place. The co-location of professionals from different agencies means that services can respond flexibly and quickly to meet the needs of individual children.

111. Leadership for most children's services is strong particularly amongst officers and partners. The Director of Children's Services and Managing Director of the Children's Trust perform their roles very effectively. There is strong support across the elected members. In contrast, the management of the youth service has been unsatisfactory but this is now being addressed.

112. Value for money is good. Robust financial management and monitoring of council run services ensured that children's services remained within budget last year. Education spend is broadly in line with similar boroughs whilst educational attainment is generally higher. Redbridge spends less than similar boroughs on placements for looked after children. Its plans to increase use of local authority foster care are on track to further improve value for money.

113. Very effective use is being made of a section 31 agreement (under the 1999 Health Act) to align education, social care and health budgets as part of the arrangements to set up the Children's Trust. The financial position of the PCT means that capacity is constrained across the area but ongoing monitoring and management of the situation by senior managers in the Children's Trust is enabling a flexible approach to be taken to minimise the impact on the delivery of services to children.

114. Good use is being made of the independent and most of the voluntary sector to improve capacity. Effective partnership working with the voluntary sector such as the Indigo programme has improved support for hard to reach groups. Commissioning across children's services operates well and there are plans to further develop and extend joint commissioning arrangements in partnership with the voluntary sector.

115. Workforce planning is at an early stage. The workforce strategy is in draft form and it is acknowledged that further work is needed to identify future workforce needs. Plans to develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach to recruitment and retention for key groups such as teachers and social workers are generally short-term, despite some small scale initiatives such as the trainee social work scheme. Similarly, whilst a range of training courses are offered, progress on workers achieving post qualification Level 1 and NVQ3 training is below that for neighbouring authorities.

116. Joint working on the development of a single assessment process is effective. The Children's Trust and Lead Professional pilot means that children and families benefit from a single point of contact for a range of services. Generally children, young people and their parents are involved in identifying their needs and designing services. Care leavers and looked after children, who have given feedback on the services they receive, are an example of this.

117. Performance management is good. The council's performance management framework is used across the area to assess progress in implementing priorities. Effective use of performance information has been used to drive improvements particularly within the council such as the increased take up of Direct Payments by some families. Performance is monitored regularly, using a risk-based approach, by both senior officers and the lead member for children's services. Good use is made of benchmarking data to track performance against other authorities. The Scrutiny Committee receives regular reports on the progress of children's service. Children and young people have been involved in assisting scrutiny in some aspects of performance management, such as improving school meals and there are good examples of their involvement at a local level. Young people in residential homes contribute to staff appraisals. However children do not have a wider role in performance management. Plans are in place to obtain views from children on the progress of the CYPP.

118. Multi-disciplinary partnership groups such as the Children's Trust Executive Steering Committee receive regular reports of performance against performance indicators for both council run and health services so partners are able to identify how key agencies are performing against national and local performance indicators. Refinements to the information collected by the PCT are planned to enhance the quality of performance measures. Performance monitoring by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership group of the CYPP is in the process of development.

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

1. The council and its partners achieve good outcomes for children and young people in Redbridge and very effective leadership from senior officers makes a significant contribution to this. Currently the youth service is inadequate but this is being addressed through new staff appointments and more rigorous planning. As a result of good consultation with partners, parents and young people, challenging ambitions have been set across all five outcome areas and the Children and Young Persons plan is based on good quality information. This is drawn from effective data and demographic analysis which enables the council to respond flexibly to the increasing diversity and changing needs of the borough. Consultation with young people has also made a significant contribution to the setting of priorities. Capacity to deliver these is good although this may be stretched by the current financial position of the primary care trust (PCT). The trust is working effectively to minimise the impact on the quality of children's services. Clear priority is given to improving outcomes for vulnerable groups and there is a good range of services for children and young people with learning difficulties but the provision for those over 19 with moderate to severe learning difficulties is less well developed.

2. Partnership working in the Children's Trust is good and there are examples of very effective partnerships with the voluntary sector. The Indigo programme provides good support to young carers and other hard to reach groups. Children and families benefit from one point of contact with services through the development of a single assessment process. Performance management across children's services is good and effective use of performance information has led to improvements such as an increase in the number of families claiming direct payments. Regular reports on children's services are provided for scrutiny.

3. Most children and young people are healthy, enjoy their education, are well prepared for working life and have opportunities to make decisions and take responsibility. From the evidence gathered the majority of young people are safe and there is outstanding protection for those who are at most at risk. Outcomes for vulnerable children are good and the provision for those not educated in school is excellent; the numbers who are not in any education, employment or training is the second lowest in the East London Connexions partnership. Those children who are looked after by Redbridge achieve standards that are better than the national average and the proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training is higher than average.

4. Cross agency work is good and the co-location of professionals from different agencies means that they can respond flexibly and quickly to meet individual needs. Local health services work well in the community and the healthy schools initiative is effectively promoting health lifestyles for children and young people.

5. Children and young people who are most at risk are very well protected through very good inter-agency collaboration and outstanding professional practice. Social care support services maintain children in their family and evidence of the impact of services is indicated by the low numbers of children on the child protection register and those who are looked after. Corporate parenting is outstanding in Redbridge with a steering group of elected members providing strategic leadership. Children looked after do well in education with 13 out of 45 care leavers going on to university.

6. School improvement practice is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to the good standards achieved by most children and young people. Strategies for improving attendance and reducing truancy are good. Attendance in secondary schools is above average and in primary schools it is only just below while the attendance of those who are looked after is good. The authority is working closely with faith groups on issues that affect attendance. Provision in early years is adequate but the achievement of early learning goals is below the national average.

7. The council and local partners effectively promote children and young people's personal, emotional and social development. The Children's Services and the Children's Trust have a very strong commitment to involving children and young people in decision making processes and there is a clear understanding of the principles and practices underpinning effective consultation. Children and young people are increasingly involved in improving services. For example excellent contributions have been made by them in the selection of senior officers and looked after children contribute to the review of the work of the staff providing them with support. Vulnerable children and young people generally receive good support and advice. Looked after children and those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent specialist support from a range of services and they have the opportunity to be fully involved when key decisions are made about their lives.

8. Good quality provision in schools and improved standards in college and work-based learning results in some of the highest post-16 participation rates in the country. Improved partnership working is extending the range of vocational options for young people and around 500 young people take part in increased flexibility programmes in school and college. Housing support for care leavers is good but a shortage of local authority or housing association accommodation makes it difficult for some vulnerable young people to gain permanent tenancies.