

Joint area review

Leicester City Children's Services Authority Area

Review of services for children and young people

Audit Commission
Healthcare Commission
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
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Introduction

1. The most recent Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for Leicester City judged the council's children's services as good and its capacity to improve as good.
2. This report assesses the contribution of local services in ensuring that children and young people:
 - at risk or requiring safeguarding are effectively cared for
 - who are looked after achieve the best possible outcomes
 - with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.
3. The following investigations were also carried out:
 - the impact of the partners' strategy in reducing teenage pregnancy and improving outcomes for young parents in West Leicester
 - the impact of the 13–19 strategy in improving outcomes for young people.

Context

4. Leicester City is the largest city in the East Midlands, with a population of 288,000, including over 70,000 children. It is one of the most diverse cities in the United Kingdom. In the 2001 census, nearly 40% described themselves as being from Black and minority ethnic communities, with the largest group, over 25%, being of Indian origin. School rolls show that 52% of pupils are from Black and minority ethnic communities. A new range of migrant workers from the European Union is further changing the demographics of Leicester, with the largest groups being from Poland, Slovakia and Portugal. The number of new arrivals and the associated language and cultural barriers bring many challenges.
5. Leicester is a city of contrasts and some parts of the city, predominantly but not solely in the west, face significant economic and social obstacles. The city ranks 29th out of 149 local authorities, which places it high on the Index of Deprivation.
6. A range of services is planned and delivered in partnership with Leicestershire and Rutland.
7. Pre-16 education is provided through 278 childminders, 11 children's centres, one family centre, 21 infant and junior schools, 60 primary schools, 17 secondary schools, eight special schools and two pupil referral units.

8. The Learning and Skills Council operates across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

9. Post-16 education and training is provided through one further education college, three sixth form colleges, four sixth forms and 23 work-based learning providers, with Leicester College as the largest provider. Rathbone Training has the contract to deliver Entry to Employment.

10. The Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership provides a strategic forum for the dispersed delivery of adult and community learning, including family learning.

11. Primary care is provided by Leicester City Primary Care Trust. Acute hospital services are provided by the University Hospital Services of Leicestershire NHS Trust. Mental health services are provided by the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust.

12. Children's social care services are provided through: 166 foster carers, 60 kinship carers, four remand carers, five children's residential care homes, a duty and assessment service, ten childcare teams, a children's and maternity hospital social work team, a disabled children's team, a 16+ team and an emergency duty team. Children's residential respite facilities are accessed by 36 families for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

13. The police service operates across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Services to children and young people who are at risk of offending, or who have offended, are provided through the Leicester Youth Offending Service. There are no young offender institutions in the area holding juvenile prisoners.

14. During the course of the review, the inspection team met with and spoke to 211 children and young people, and 56 parents and carers.

15. During the inspection, the chief executive post became available and was filled by the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services whose post was filled in turn by the Service Director, Social Care and Safeguarding.

Main findings

16. The main findings of this joint area review are as follows:

- Arrangements to safeguard children and young people are good, and referrals receive a timely response. The work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is outstanding and offers a strong lead, and partners work effectively together at strategic and operational levels to deliver good services to children and families. All agencies ensure that recruitment procedures protect children

well. Action has been taken to reduce first-time offending significantly, but re-offending rates remain too high. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provide insufficient out-patient services.

- Services for looked after children are good. The number is relatively low and reducing and a high proportion live in family placements. Placement stability is very good. The inspection of the council's fostering service judged it as excellent. Young people have good opportunities to contribute to strategic and operational changes and to their reviews, which are timely. Good educational support is provided, the number of looked after young people attaining one A*–G grade at GCSE is high and increasing numbers are attending higher education. The high number of fixed-term exclusions from school contributes to a poor attendance rate, and other educational outcomes, including the number attaining five or more A*–C grades at GCSE, require improvement. Looked after children have good access to mental health services. The offending rate of looked after children is slightly higher than comparators, although numbers are small. Action continues to be effective in increasing the number of looked after children who have a qualified social worker. The number of children adopted is good.
- The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate. Services for young children are good, as are the specialist teaching services. Children and young people make at least satisfactory progress at school and many make good progress. Outcomes at post-16 are good. However, while the proportion who are not in education, employment or training has decreased, this figure still remains too high. There is too little specialist therapy support. The evaluation of the effectiveness of provision is insufficient and strategic and action planning is underdeveloped.
- Teenage pregnancy rates remain too high and there has been insufficient improvement in health outcomes for young parents in West Leicester. The newly established Teenage Partnership Executive and strong partnership working at strategic and operational levels demonstrate recent prioritisation to drive improvements in these areas. However, the partnership lacks robust local data to inform planning and evaluation of the impact of its preventive work.
- Standards and achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4 are too low. The numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is reducing, national and local area agreement targets have been met, but NEET figures remain too high. Effective work supports and retains young people in learning, and young

people in post-16 provision show good or better progress and attainment. Coordination and evaluation of strategies are insufficiently robust. Target setting at strategic and local level is not sufficiently challenging.

- Ambitions for children and young people are good and based on inclusive consultation and needs analysis. Leadership is strong and is driving action to address areas of underperformance. Priorities are good, owned by the partnership and supported by the redirection of resources towards areas of underperformance. Some strategies are new and have yet to make an impact. Capacity, though adequate, is not sufficient to ensure a good rate of service improvement in some areas. Performance management is adequate and improving but is not consistently driving service improvement. Overall value for money is adequate, but systems to deliver value for money across the partnership are insufficiently developed.

Grades

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

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	3
Looked after children	3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2
Service management	2
Capacity to improve	2

Recommendations

For immediate action

The local partnership should:

- ensure that an appropriate way is found for the successful dissemination of the findings of this report to children and young people in the area
- review its provision and reprioritise action to reduce the number of vulnerable young people, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are not in education, employment or training

- develop a performance management system for school improvement which is fit for purpose
- ensure that all looked after children have qualified social workers allocated to them
- implement the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team recommendations in order to improve the quality of data and analysis to inform action to reduce teenage pregnancies.

For action over the next six months

The local partnership should:

- develop a coordinated strategy and detailed action plans to coordinate and improve services for children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- improve the evaluation of provision for children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and use this information to improve the progress they make
- reduce the rate of offending by looked after young people and re-offending in the 13–18 age group
- set clear and challenging targets at partnership, school and individual levels which will improve the educational progress and the attainment of young people between the ages of 11 and 16
- establish a clear focus on value for money through strategic commissioning and service planning across the partnership
- tackle problems of capacity through joint workforce planning and development
- set challenging targets for service improvement across the partnership and establish a robust system of service management across the partnership
- ensure the sufficient availability of specialist therapy service provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- increase the capacity of out-patient services in CAMHS.

For action in the longer term

The local partnership should:

- improve health outcomes for young parents and children

- improve educational attainment by looked after children and young people.

Equality and diversity

17. The partnership is committed to equality and to meeting the needs of its very diverse community. Good examples of promoting equal access to services were evidenced during the inspection, including the team working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and the panels which monitor and support staff in a number of different services to meet the diverse needs of children. Looked after children are a priority for partners and their outcomes are good overall, with evidence of good placement matching with foster carers.

18. The council has achieved Level 3 of the equality standard and is seeking to reach Level 4 by March 2008. Representatives of minority communities are involved in strategic planning, and senior and middle managers in the council's children's services link well with local community groups. The council has not yet succeeded in establishing a workforce which represents the diversity of the local population, although good progress has been made. There are significant health inequalities across the city, with some specific socio-economic groups among those achieving poorer outcomes. The quality of services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. However, strategic planning for this group is underdeveloped and performance management is not yet sufficiently rigorous or comprehensive in monitoring their educational progress or that of Black and minority ethnic groups.

Safeguarding



19. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or requiring safeguarding is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Outstanding LSCB.</p> <p>Effective and timely multi-agency response to child protection concerns.</p> <p>Good rate of initial and very good rate of core assessments completed on time.</p>	<p>Insufficient out-patient services in CAMHS.</p> <p>High re-offending rate.</p> <p>Slow progress in implementing the Common Assessment Framework.</p>

<p>Reduction in, and rate of, children re-registered on the child protection register.</p> <p>Safe recruitment practice among agencies.</p> <p>Good reduction in first-time offending and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Effective child accident prevention strategy.</p> <p>High proportion of initial child protection conferences on time.</p>	
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20. The APA in 2007 judged the contribution of the council's services to improving outcomes in staying safe as good and improving.

21. The council and its partners are investing well in improving the safety of children and young people. Most young people responding to the Tellus survey reported feeling safe in their local area and at school. A comprehensive range of leaflets and publicity is available to children, young people, parents, carers and the general public on safeguarding and on the services which are available to them. Primary school children have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, and public concern about crime and anti-social behaviour has reduced. Racist incidents in schools are reported and analysed appropriately.

22. An effective child accident prevention strategy has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children and young people who have been killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents. The reduction is well above that in similar authorities and nationally. 'Warning Zones' are increasing the awareness of children about fire and road safety. Pedestrian training is given to 300 children per year.

23. The Healthy Living partnership is prioritising and promoting health improvement for children and young people well through a range of good initiatives, including a review of primary school menus, advice on the content of lunch boxes and cycling training. One project has increased the number of children cycling at eight Leicester schools by 300%. Services have been effective in reducing smoking among young people and delivering a significant rise in the number receiving treatment from drug and alcohol advisory services. A good number of schools achieved Healthy Schools status by the end of 2007, in line with the national standard. A large number of teaching staff have obtained accreditation in personal relationship and sexual education. An obesity reduction strategy has been recently drafted but this is yet to demonstrate its impact.

24. The youth offending service and other initiatives have successfully reduced anti-social behaviour by young people and there has been a significant reduction in the number of young people who become first-time offenders. The partnership is aware that the rate of re-offending remains too high and is beginning to address this.

25. Schools and the voluntary sector report good guidance and systems for reporting concerns to social care and effective response to referrals. Initial assessments are completed in a timely manner and performance, at 63%, is better than that of comparable authorities, which achieve 56%. At 91%, the proportion of core assessments completed on time compares very well with that of similar authorities, at 72%, and the national average of 78%. Case files demonstrate good collaborative working between social care, health and school staff. The council has taken effective measures to refine its recording of contacts and referrals, and this has resulted in the appropriate reduction in, and accurate data about, the number of referrals and re-referrals it receives. Social workers demonstrate a good awareness of the need for services to be delivered in a culturally sensitive manner and the Black Cases Panel has been very effective in supporting the delivery of appropriate services to children in need. Managers regularly audit case files to ensure the quality of planning and record keeping. Staff and managers receive regular advice and supervision, annual appraisals and good access to a range of training.

26. Children at risk of harm are identified effectively and investigated promptly by the duty and assessment service, which agrees joint investigations appropriately with the police. A high proportion, 71%, of initial child protection conferences are held within timescales and this compares very well with the rate in similar authorities, at 37%, and the national average of 35%. Independent chairs of child protection case conferences both ensure that decision making is robust and contribute to service development and improvement. The number of children on the child protection register rose last year, and partners have identified this and are analysing the possible reasons. Effective intervention for first-time entrants onto the child protection register has led to a steady and positive downward trend in re-registration. At 8.5%, the re-registration rate is good and lower than that of similar authorities, at 10.5%, and much lower than the national average of 13.4%. All children on the register are allocated a qualified social worker and all their reviews are held on time. The percentage of children from Black and minority ethnic communities on the child protection register is 29% and lower than might be expected. The reasons for this have been investigated by the council, which is satisfied that thresholds are applied consistently.

27. The Common Assessment Framework and integrated service hub have been successfully established in one area of the city. This has had a positive effect on information sharing and enabling early identification of need and multi-agency intervention. The partnership plans to implement the arrangements across the city by the end of 2008, but this misses the national

target and the pace of implementation will need to increase if the internal target is to be achieved.

28. The authority has fully complied with the regulations concerning private fostering arrangements and has produced publicity regarding the requirement for private foster carers to notify the authority of placements. As a result, the number of notifications has increased in the last year and is at a satisfactory level.

29. Progress towards the development of comprehensive CAMHS is good, and sound partnerships have led to the appointment of a joint commissioning manager to support this progress. There is good access to specialist services. A 24-hour emergency service is in place, with all specialist referrals seen within 13 weeks and urgent referrals seen within two to seven days. Waiting times for non-specialist cases are good and better than the national average. Effective support is available within young people's services for 16 and 17 year olds, and discussions are underway to formalise flexible and permanent transition arrangements with adult services. Out-patient services for children and young people are currently under-resourced.

30. The council has invested effectively to ensure and verify that all excluded students receive full-time educational provision. Sound arrangements for tracing children who are not receiving education include education welfare officers retrospectively tracking all children of statutory school age who have not been on a school roll. A good procedure is in place to identify and respond to children missing from care.

31. The LSCB is outstanding. The LSCB covers Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and is well established and resourced, and meets its targets well. The independent chair and the LSCB provide robust leadership and a clear set of priorities for the authority and its partners. Strong strategic partnership arrangements are evidenced in the attendance of senior managers and their commitment to promoting the safeguarding agenda effectively across the city. The LSCB has strong business planning, performance management, and quality assurance functions which enable it to fulfil its wider safeguarding role well and drive initiatives without losing its focus on core child protection responsibilities. Subgroups provide effective scrutiny. A well-received and effective initiative by the council with a number of madressahs in the city has increased their awareness of, and response to, child protection. As a result, the madressahs in the initial phase are actively engaged in rolling this out to other madressahs which is proving a very effective approach. Appropriate arrangements are in place to fulfil the new responsibility for reviewing child deaths. The LSCB delivers good quality and extensive safeguarding training to partner agencies and this is well targeted to the needs of specified staff groups. Action plans arising from two serious case reviews are being implemented and monitored appropriately.

32. The council's Safeguarding Unit provides good support and advice to staff across the partnership. An inter-agency domestic violence strategy is well established and led by the Safer Leicester Partnership, with a strong focus on children and young people. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are well embedded and effective and there are good links between the MAPPA panel, the LSCB and the youth offending service. Partners systematically review and audit the work of the panel. Services have been usefully enhanced by the recent appointment of a domestic violence coordinator, and a multi-agency risk assessment conference system has been developed to be implemented in April 2008.

33. All partner agencies have robust safe recruitment processes and voluntary organisations, for example, are required to detail recruitment checks in their regular monitoring reports to the council. Arrangements within social care are extremely robust and new corporate safer recruitment procedures have recently been implemented within the council to ensure these high standards are consistently applied throughout the organisation.

Looked after children and young people



34. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Very good placement stability.</p> <p>Timeliness of reviews.</p> <p>Excellent fostering service and good adoption performance.</p> <p>Good use of kinship placements and support for them.</p> <p>Work of the Raising the Achievement of Looked After Children's Team.</p> <p>Number of young people in higher education.</p> <p>Good access to psychological and mental health services.</p> <p>Good support from the 16+ and unaccompanied asylum seeking teams.</p>	<p>The rate of looked after young people who offend.</p> <p>The high rate of fixed-term exclusions which contributes to the poor school attendance of looked after young people.</p> <p>No commissioning strategy.</p>

Very good arrangements for young people to offer their views and influence change.	
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35. The looked after children's service is one of the council's priority areas and is strongly championed by the Lead Member. Councillors, including the significant number of new councillors elected in May 2007, have had induction training in key areas relating to children and young people, such as corporate parenting. The Corporate Parenting Panel is strongly driven by the Lead Member. It has good representation from councillors and the advantages of extending this through wider representation have been recognised. The looked after service was awarded Beacon status by the Improvement and Development Agency for local government in March 2008.

36. There is a good range of effective family support. The number of looked after children and young people has steadily reduced, and at approximately 430 this is consistently below that in similar authorities.

37. Most key outcomes for looked after children and young people are good and improving. For example, a very high number, 84%, of those aged 10–16 are placed in foster care or for adoption, and there is a low use of residential placements. Both of these figures are better than comparator and national averages. The number of children moving three or more times in the year is very good and, at 9%, well below both that found in similar authorities and the national average of 12%. Long-term placement stability has continued to improve and is also consistently better than comparators. Kinship care and special guardianship are well promoted by the council. There are 60 kinship carers, representing 16% of placements, which is a good performance. They receive effective support and training which is very similar to that given to foster carers.

38. Looked after children live in safe placements and receive good support from carers and staff. During the inspection, evidence was seen of good practice by social workers. The inspection of the fostering service judged the different aspects as excellent or good in equal measure. During the joint area review, examples were seen of good matches being found for some challenging young people, and their carers are well supported by supervising social workers. Reviews of looked after children are timely, and performance, at 95%, is better than that found in similar authorities and the national average.

39. The council's commitment to meeting the needs of Black and minority ethnic children is well demonstrated by the effective work of the Black Cases Panel for children in need of support and protection, which was observed during the investigation. This routinely monitors cases and advises social workers to ensure that appropriate care and services are provided to those who are looked after.

40. All looked after children have an allocated worker and although not all cases are currently allocated to a qualified social worker, contrary to government guidance, the staff are well supervised and the outcomes for the children are good. The council provided figures during the review which showed a rise in the number of qualified staff from 78% to 83%, much closer to levels in similar authorities, and has committed itself to continuing this improvement.

41. The authority received a good adoption inspection report and the number of children being placed for adoption is higher than in similar authorities. A consortium operates with neighbouring authorities to widen the pool of adopters and assist good placement matches.

42. Value for money in the looked after service is good, with relatively low spend linked to good outcomes. The use of externally commissioned placements is low, and good, flexible contracting arrangements ensure that placements meet individual needs. There is currently no overarching commissioning strategy, although this is currently being developed to further broaden the range of placement choice, enhance collaboration with other agencies and reduce spot purchasing.

43. Partners have worked effectively to improve the timeliness and quality of health assessments by appointing designated health care staff and making positive changes to the assessment arrangements. This has resulted in 81% now being completed on time, which places performance in the very good category and in line with that of similar authorities. Young people have helped to develop useful health promotion information for those who are looked after, which is a good development. All young people are given a personal file to keep all their health information together. Good support is provided by psychological services to foster carers and residential staff to meet the emotional health needs of children and young people, and children have fast-track access to specialist mental health services if needed.

44. Effective work by partners over the past seven years has steadily reduced the offending rate by looked after children and, although it remains slightly higher than in similar authorities, this figure relates to a very small number of young people. The police and the youth offending service are undertaking further work in residential homes and schools to reduce first-time entrants to the youth justice system, and have recently introduced a restorative justice programme in conjunction with residential managers to further reduce the level of offending.

45. The Raising the Attainment of Looked after Children's Team have high aspirations for, and provide good support to, schools, carers and young people who are looked after. Young people met during this review particularly valued the extra help they received from this team. Educational attainment is improving, in a context where outcomes for most young people in the city are well below national averages, and arrangements to ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary education are good. Attainment at Key

Stage 2 is low when compared to most children in Leicester, but in 2007 improved by 13% in English. There has been a significant improvement in the number of young people sitting national curriculum tests at Key Stage 3, and in 2007 they had made good progress from Key Stage 2 so that their attainment was closer to the city average.

46. Good support ensured that a very high proportion, 94%, of looked after young people aged 16 who were eligible to take GCSEs in 2007 sat these exams. Of the 36 young people in the cohort in 2007, 28 had a statement of special educational need, were at School Action Plus, or were unaccompanied asylum seekers with significant difficulties with English. Nevertheless, the proportion, 75%, who were successful in obtaining up to four A*–G grades at GCSE was very good, being well above the level in similar authorities, at 53%, and the national average of 55%. A low number attained five or more A*–C GCSE grades.

47. No looked after children have been permanently excluded from school in the last year. However, the number of looked after children who receive fixed-term exclusions is high and this significantly contributes to a higher number of young people missing over 25 days of schooling than in similar authorities.

48. Strong support is provided to care leavers by the 16+ Team. The team works effectively with other agencies to provide a comprehensive service which results in good outcomes in post-16 education, training and employment, higher education, and the number of young people living in suitable accommodation. All young people reported having Pathway Plans and are involved in their development. Care leavers are prepared effectively to live independently through courses such as 'Managing your own home', for which they receive accreditation, and they are also given a comprehensive manual containing information about services and how to access them. Looked after young people and care leavers are well supported to continue in post-16 education, employment or training, and a very good rate of young people are appropriately engaged in such, in line with the rate in similar authorities and the national average. A multi-agency project targeted at raising the aspirations of 14 year-old looked after young people has been very effective in increasing the number who are subsequently progressing into higher education, from one young person in 2006 to nine in 2007, with a further four or five predicted this year. Care leavers are provided with a good range of housing provision, which includes council and independent providers, including those with support services. The number of those in suitable accommodation, at 97%, is significantly higher than in similar authorities and the national average.

49. The Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Team provides valuable and effective support to unaccompanied minors, which was evidenced in casefile reading and reports from the young people. The young people consulted for this review reported a varied understanding of the services

available to them, and the council responded very positively to a suggestion by the young people to meet regularly for opportunities to discuss issues and share information.

50. A strong feature of the looked after service is the participation of young people and care leavers in improving aspects of their care. The Stand Up Speak Out group has met with the Corporate Director and service directors several times to contribute ideas for service development, has discussed regeneration with the Chief Executive and the Service Director for Regeneration and agreed to monitor progress, and presented the local MP and the Director-General of the Department for Children, Schools and Families with its achievements over the year. These have included changes in review forms to make them more user-friendly, an agreement that social workers make appointments outside school hours, arrangements for foster carers to provide profiles of themselves and their families before placements, and producing a calendar for the council on the themes from Every Child Matters which are discussed by social workers in team meetings. Young people are well supported by the children's rights service and have good access to advocacy.

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



51. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Good multi-agency assessment of young children's needs.</p> <p>Effective early years provision.</p> <p>Effective specialist teaching support.</p> <p>High post-16 success rates.</p>	<p>Underdeveloped strategic planning.</p> <p>Insufficient evaluation of children and young people's progress.</p> <p>Insufficient specialist therapy service provision.</p> <p>Too many young people who are not in education, employment or training.</p>

52. The commitment towards providing services for children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is demonstrated by the significantly higher than average spending on this area of work. Schools comment with optimism and ambition about the improved communication

with the local authority and their ability to contribute to a shared vision about meeting children and young people's needs, and developing a clearer and broader role for special schools.

53. However, strategic planning to develop provision for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is underdeveloped. The intention of bringing together the separate strategy strands for this planning has not yet been achieved. Some action planning is not sufficiently detailed and comprehensive. The authority has collected the relevant data from stakeholders using the recently issued learning difficulties and/or disabilities self-review form and is now refining this to ensure it is more evaluative in order to enable effective improvement planning.

54. Child-centred planning works well for young children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this approach is developing for older young people who have the most complex difficulties and disabilities. Multi-agency work is coordinated well and is effective for these children. Parents feel well supported at this stage in their children's lives. They particularly like the weekly opportunity to meet with other parents at the early year base at New Parks House. This also provides an opportunity to meet with specialist staff to discuss their children's needs.

55. Most statements of special educational need are conducted within the required timescales. Overall, the number of statements is reducing and is now close to the national average; however, the number of new statements is not declining significantly. Some parents report confusion about the decision-making process that leads to children receiving a statement and the level of support their child will receive. The local authority is reviewing the criteria for determining which pupils have statements. It has also recently begun working with special school headteachers to explore more flexible use of their specialist facilities without the need for a statement.

56. Specialist teaching services and the educational psychology service are highly regarded by schools. Similarly, school nursing provision is valued for its contribution in working with children who have particular medical needs and in contributing to personal, social and health education programmes. Specialist therapy services, including speech and language therapy and physiotherapy, are also well regarded but there is insufficient provision to adequately meet the level of need.

57. School inspections demonstrate that children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress. Pupils report that they enjoy school and are pleased with the progress that they make. They feel safe and are confident that if they have concerns their teachers and assistants will listen to them and help. The Raising the Attainment of Looked after Children's Team provides good support to looked after children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This team regularly monitors how well the children and young

people are doing and challenges them to do even better, as do the other teams.

58. Effective action has been taken to tackle the relatively high number of permanent exclusions of children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Similarly, there has been a significant reduction in the number of young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are not in education, employment or training, although the number is still too high compared with the national level. In September 2007, 16.2% of those not in education, employment or training had learning difficulties and/or disabilities, compared with 11.9% nationally.

59. Children and young people participate well in their own annual reviews. They are helped to say what they think, and feel listened to. Furthermore, there is a satisfactory range of opportunities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to contribute to their schools' development, for example through school councils. Opportunities for participation at broader service-development level are more mixed. There has been good involvement in a recent review of provision for those who have autistic spectrum disorders, and within the local authority's Young People's Council.

60. Transition planning is satisfactory overall. Whilst most children and young people have transition plans and the proportion has increased over the last two years, too many still do not have these plans. Young people and their parents find the transition plan meetings helpful to discuss the opportunities available after leaving school. Young people identified the need for improved information as they move from school to college and have been supported in producing a high-quality DVD to help at this time of change.

61. Overall, there is a satisfactory range of opportunities for school leavers to progress into education, employment or training. There has been good partnership with a local further education college to develop and improve this provision, for example work is currently underway to improve the arrangements for those young people who have the most complex learning needs. The NVQ success rate for work-based learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly higher (61.2%) than that found nationally (53.2%). Similarly, the success rate for those on courses at Level 1 and attending further education colleges is higher than the national picture.

62. The range of leisure and recreational activities is good, and where needs are identified services are responsive and flexible. Help is provided to assist young people to join activities within their local community where opportunities arise. However, there has been insufficient coordinated consultation to establish the level of need and the extent to which these needs are being met. Parents report there are too few opportunities for their children to participate and some are not aware of what is available. The authority is aware that limited access to transport restricts some young

people's ability to take part in these activities and has begun a review of this assistance.

63. There is a good range of short-break opportunities for children and young people. Parents value these highly, although some report there is too little available. There has been appropriate consultation to ensure short-break care provision better matches need. The development of the use of direct payments is at an early stage. Some parents and schools report gaps in the provision of adult support services after the young people leave school.

64. There is insufficient monitoring of provision to ensure that services are as effective as they could be and to determine whether children and young people make good progress. Considerable attention is given to gathering and analysing data on the gains in attainment that children and young people make against National Curriculum expectations, but the council does not systematically collect and analyse data on the progress of children working below National Curriculum levels in special schools. There is insufficient monitoring of the progress made by children and young people from different Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The quality of provision is not rigorously analysed to establish whether the high spending on provision is being effective in improving outcomes. Special schools are aware of the need to improve their current evaluation of pupils' progress and are working closely together and with the authority's school improvement support to address this issue. There has been significant improvement in monitoring the placements of children who are placed in special schools outside of the city following a prioritisation of this aspect of work.

Other issues identified for further investigation

The impact of the partners' strategy in reducing teenage pregnancy and improving outcomes for young parents in West Leicester

65. The impact of the partners' strategy in reducing teenage pregnancy and improving outcomes for young parents in West Leicester is inadequate.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Recent prioritisation and strong multi-agency partnership working to reduce teenage pregnancy levels and to improve outcomes.</p> <p>A widening of the range and quality of preventative education in teenage pregnancy hotspot areas.</p>	<p>Rate of reduction of teenage pregnancy in West Leicester is too slow and too variable.</p> <p>Insufficiently accurate and appropriate data and insufficient systematic evaluation to inform planning and service development.</p>

<p>Wide range of support, care and advice for young parents and expectant mothers.</p>	<p>The persistently high teenage pregnancy rates in West Leicester and other parts of the city.</p> <p>Low health outcomes for parents and babies, which are not improving.</p> <p>Limited access to sexual and relationships education for some children and young people.</p> <p>Low proportion teenage mothers in education, employment or training.</p>
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66. This investigation focused on West Leicester, where there are five wards in which the teenage pregnancy rate is particularly high, being more than double the 2005 national average of 41.5 per 1,000. The rate of reduction of teenage pregnancy in West Leicester and the city as a whole is too slow and too variable. Between 1999 and 2005 the Leicester rate fell by 15.9% which, although a steeper decline than in similar areas and the national average of 12%, is insufficient in relation to the exceptionally high pregnancy rate in West Leicester. The current trend means that Leicester is not on target to meet the government target of halving the rate of teenage pregnancy by 2010 based upon the 1998 baseline figure.

67. The partnership is demonstrating greater prioritisation and accountability to improve the significant underperformance of the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Partnership in relation to teenage pregnancy rates and health outcomes for young parents. The council and its partners proactively engaged the help of the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team. Following a visit by this team to the city in autumn 2007, local stakeholder commitment and investment has been strengthened and a Teenage Pregnancy Executive Board, with appropriate senior management representation from relevant partners, has been established to oversee improvements. The appointment of a jointly funded lead for strategic commissioning in May 2007 has been instrumental in driving forward the work of the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Partnership, which now reports to the Executive Board. A revised teenage pregnancy strategy is in place, which is underpinned by a very robust, comprehensive action plan with challenging targets and clear milestones for improvement. However, the data available to the partnership is not sufficiently appropriate, accurate or timely to inform planning, the commissioning of services, targeting of activities, or the evaluation of the impact of activities which underpin the strategy. Funding has been secured to appoint a dedicated data analyst to improve data collection and local intelligence on teenage pregnancy.

68. Good partnership work at an operational level, coordinated through the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Partnership, is widening the range and quality of preventative education in teenage pregnancy hotspots. This is

targeted at young people, teenage parents and the parents and carers of teenagers. For example, Turning Point delivers a sex and relationship peer education programme and trains young parents as peer educators, who deliver sex and relationships education to young people in eight of the city's secondary schools. Support for parents and carers to talk to their children about relationships and sexual health is being established through the Speak Easy pilot project. This is being delivered in two hotspot areas, Braunstone and New Parks and is supported by the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership and Extended Services.

69. A number of teachers and community nurses have successfully gained personal, social and health education accreditation. However, the proportion of accredited teachers from primary schools is small when compared to the national picture. Both primary and secondary schools vary in exercising their responsibility to deliver sex and relationships education, thus some children and young people have limited access to it. Primary schools serving some Black and minority ethnic communities are not including sex and relationships education in their curriculum for fear of offending some minority groups. Secondary schools report that few parents remove their children from non-statutory sex education, but pressures on the curriculum can result in some young people receiving no preventative education at a key time in their teenage years.

70. Arrangements to promote good sexual health, for example through screening for Chlamydia and other sexually transmitted infections, are satisfactory overall. Leicester City mirrors national trends, with an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, predominantly amongst young people. Rates of Chlamydia have risen in line with the national average. There has been an increase in the level of syphilis in the city and HIV cases have risen with the increased numbers of refugees and asylum seekers from sub-Saharan Africa. More sensitive screening techniques, together with education programmes to raise public awareness, have resulted in more young people coming forward for testing. A comprehensive and well-attended sexual health service operates for Genito Urinary Medical (GUM) services through the Acute Trust, and the PCT is increasing the numbers of community-based and primary care-based sexual health services to reduce the pressure on specialist GUM services. Data suggests good performance levels against the 48-hour waiting time targets for GUM services, with 75% being seen within the access target. This is above the national average of 54%.

71. Across the city as a whole, 22 condom distribution and pregnancy and Chlamydia testing sites have been established since April 2007, 10 of which are in teenage pregnancy hotspots. However, after a gap of two years, the emergency contraception scheme has only recently been re-established, with pharmacists across the city giving seven day access. Young people have access to Chlamydia screening, offered in a sensitive and discrete way, at a drop-in centre run by the youth service as part of the integrated services hub

at New College. One hundred young people have been tested in the first three months of the service operating.

72. Health outcomes for parents and babies are poor. While a wide range of support, care and advice is provided for parents and expectant mothers, they are not improving overall health outcomes sufficiently. The proportion of low birth weight babies born between 2001 and 2005 in West Leicester is above the national average, as are stillbirth and perinatal mortality rates. The percentage of expectant mothers of all ages who smoke during pregnancy is reducing and is slightly lower than the national average at 16.8%, but in some wards in the west of the city the percentage of mothers who smoke is as high as 24–40%. The teenage breastfeeding midwife team and the baby-friendly initiative provide appropriate support to young parents. The level of initiation of breastfeeding by all mothers in the west of the city remains below the national and comparator averages. Maternity care assistants are proving to be a useful resource to encourage mothers of all ages to continue with feeding, and consequently the number who continue feeding is above average. Immunisation rates in West Leicester for newborn babies are in line with those in similar areas and the national average, but not all children are receiving the pre-school immunisation booster.

73. The proportion of teenage mothers, who are in education, employment or training, though improving, remains too low. A wide range of support and advice about education, health, housing and benefits is provided to expectant mothers and young parents through the Parenting Information and Pregnancy Support (PIPS) multi-agency service in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations. The Connexions service has recently set up additional provision to reduce the number of teenage mothers who are not in education, employment or training, but it is too early to see the impact of this work. Good partnership work between the health service, Connexions and the youth service, at the Watershed Youth Centre in the west of the city, is supporting young parents to gain qualifications and improve their prospects of continuing in education or employment. The appointment of a teenage pregnancy reintegration officer, who works closely alongside students of compulsory school age and the schools they attend, is resulting in more teenage parents of this age continuing with their education.

The impact of the 13–19 strategy in improving outcomes for young people

74. The impact of the 13–19 strategy in improving outcomes for young people is inadequate.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Clear strategic focus on raising standards and aspirations for all young people.</p> <p>Much good partnership work supports good curriculum development and delivery that promotes retention and progression in education.</p> <p>Good or better progress in post-16 learning.</p> <p>Wide range of targeted support arrangements to help young people succeed.</p>	<p>Low standards and achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4.</p> <p>High level of young people who are not in education, employment or training.</p> <p>Insufficiently robust coordination and evaluation of strategies.</p> <p>Insufficiently challenging target setting.</p> <p>Current arrangements for the analysis and evaluation of the achievement of different groups are not fit for purpose.</p>

75. The relatively new 13–19 strategy, school improvement strategy and Transforming Leicester's Learning strategy are taking the partnership forward in the right direction. However, these have not yet had sufficient impact on raising standards and achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4 and on reducing the number of young people, particularly from vulnerable groups, who are not in education, employment and training (NEET).

76. Standards and achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4 are too low and remain significantly below those found in similar areas and the national average. In 2007, the proportion of pupils who achieved five or more A*–C grades at GCSE or equivalent with English and mathematics included, though improved, is ten percentage points below the national average. The progress young people make between the ages of 14 and 16 has decreased for the last two years. The council recognises that its contextualised value-added score, which places it in the bottom 5% of local authorities, reflects significant underachievement across the city. Among more vulnerable groups, white working class boys form the largest single cohort who underachieve. Young people of Indian origin, who make up nearly a third of the school-age cohort in the city, also underachieve.

77. Young people make good or better progress in post-16 learning. The percentage of young people who obtain Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by age 19 has improved rapidly over the last three years and is above that of similar areas and in line with the national average. Many young people start programmes with very low GCSE standards and achieve higher results than predicted. Colleges successfully target improvements at the low skills in literacy and numeracy, which are a key factor in students' low prior achievement. In contrast, attainment in school sixth forms is well below that found in similar areas and the national average. Work-based learners achieve

well. Trends in apprenticeship framework completion and timely success rates are improving and are now above the national average.

78. Although the national target for NEET reduction has been met the overall level of young people who are NEET remains too high. There have been sustained reductions in the overall figures and indications of higher levels of provision. However, in 50% of wards the proportion of young people in the NEET category is over 10%, and in eight of these wards the NEET proportion is 14% or more, compared to the national average of 6.7%. Vulnerable groups, such as young people from Black and minority ethnic groups, teenage parents and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are over-represented in this group. This is because there is not enough appropriate provision in the right places to meet need; most is city centre based. A new community-based programme in construction is proving successful in recruiting White boys, but was significantly oversubscribed. Work-based learning opportunities are unsuccessful in recruiting young people from Black and minority ethnic groups.

79. The overall 13–19 strategic direction shows a clear focus on raising standards and aspirations for all young people, but the coordination and evaluation of the three main strategies which impact on 13–19 outcomes is insufficiently robust. Strategies are underpinned by development and action plans which are insufficiently detailed and comprehensive, and lack appropriate and challenging targets and milestones to enable robust monitoring of progress and evaluation of their impact. Timescales for the completion of activities are not always clear.

80. School improvement has been strengthened through the recent introduction of an agreed school improvement strategy. The council collects much data about the achievement of young people at an individual school level, but arrangements for its analysis and evaluation are currently not fit for purpose. Current systems make it difficult for partners to easily have an overview of standards and achievement of different groups of young people. While headteachers report that School Improvement Partners (SIP) provide sufficient challenge in terms of young people's achievement, this is not reflected in some SIP reports or in improved outcomes for young people. Until recently, there has been a shortage of staff within the School Improvement Team, which has limited the support that can be given to schools.

81. Targets in many action plans for young people receiving multi-agency support do not provide enough challenge. Short-term, achievable targets towards a long-term target are not systematically set, and while plans are regularly reviewed, they are not always linked clearly to targets.

82. Effective partnership work supports good curriculum development and delivery, and is having a positive impact on keeping young people in learning. The number of young people progressing into post-16 provision has increased, and retention rates overall have improved and are mostly above the national average. Increased provision of Entry Level and Level 1

vocationally related programmes supports young people who are at risk of falling into the NEET category to stay in learning. All schools are involved in collaborative work with post-16 providers to broaden the curriculum at Key Stage 4. Partners across the city contribute effectively to a large, and well-established, increased flexibility programme that provides opportunities for full- or part-vocational qualifications as part of a Key Stage 4 programme. The hardest to help young people have personalised learning opportunities through alternative curriculum programmes and this has reduced exclusions and improved attendance for many.

83. The Post-16 Board has started to look at the balance of provision across the city, but is not yet jointly planning the curriculum. However, there are some examples of good post-16 collaborative work, for example for minority A-Level groups and work with new arrivals. The city is making satisfactory progress to introduce specialised diplomas, but some schools have limited understanding about the implications of applied learning.

84. Targeted pilot work in very disadvantaged areas in the west of the city has had a positive impact in improved attendance rates, reduced exclusions and resulted in a marked improvement in previously exceptionally low attainment in one school. The successful implementation of the attendance strategy has led to significant reductions in absences and improvements in attendance figures, which are now comparable to national averages. The introduction of an integrated service hub forms a good model for community-based multi-agency support for those with complex needs.

85. The quality and consistency of impartial advice and guidance across the city is satisfactory and improving. Vulnerable young people are well supported by Connexions personal advisers when they transfer from school into post-16 education, employment or training. Recent initiatives help prevent vulnerable young people adding to the NEET population. For example, the Big Match of summer 2007 matched 188 (85% of attendees) previously undecided young people to post-16 opportunities and, at the time of this inspection, 86% were still continuing with their choice. An online prospectus provides young people with information about the full range of courses available to 14–19 year olds in the city. However, while some young people told inspectors they had made good use of this facility, others had no awareness of its existence. The quality of careers education and guidance in the school curriculum is variable and not all schools are sufficiently exercising their responsibility in this area.

86. Young people aged 16–19 report that there is not enough affordable out-of-school or college, social and recreational activity for them in the city. The availability of activities is inequitable across the city. Some have good access to high-quality council-run sport facilities; others do not. Some successful, targeted activities for older young people lead to accreditation and progression into youth work. However, participation in youth activities generally falls after age 15 and some young people find their nearest youth centre unwelcoming.

Service management



Capacity to improve



87. The management of services for children and young people is adequate. Capacity to improve further is adequate.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Strong leadership from the Lead Member and senior managers across the partnership.</p> <p>Consultation and needs analysis accurately reflects the diverse needs of children and young people in Leicester.</p> <p>A consistent and effective focus on priorities.</p> <p>Partnership working is strong and adding value.</p> <p>Proactive approach to learning.</p> <p>Strong and effective LSCB.</p>	<p>Value for money is not being maximised.</p> <p>Shortfalls in staffing and a limited joint approach to workforce development.</p> <p>Insufficiently challenging targets in service plans.</p> <p>Performance management across the partnership needs to be improved.</p>

88. The ambition of the local partnership for services to children and young people is good. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) has a clear vision which focuses on the five themes of Every Child Matters. Improving educational attainment is clearly specified in the council's 25-year vision and is well understood by local people. Other challenges facing children and young people in Leicester are less well specified and understood. Objectives in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) are all realistic and those relating to school improvement and inclusion are challenging. The CYPP is aligned with the community strategy and the corporate plans of partner organisations, ensuring that agencies working with children and young people share common goals. The quality of leadership is good. The commitment to

improvement of senior managers across the partnership is providing a powerful focus for change.

89. Consultation with children and young people and needs analysis are informing the partnership's vision, objectives and strategic direction for children's services. Consultation includes the diverse populations of Leicester and ensures that children and young people's views are prioritised. Needs analysis is sufficiently detailed to support the accurate targeting of services, such as health, within neighbourhoods. Engagement of most groups of children and young people in service planning and delivery is good and developing further through the implementation of a participation strategy.

90. The prioritisation of services for children and young people is set out clearly in the CYPP and is good. The priorities accurately reflect the assessment of need and what is important to local people. Staff and partners understand and support the priorities. Partner organisations, including the voluntary and community sector, make a positive contribution to the delivery of CYPP targets and priorities. Strategies, policies and service plans are generally clearly and consistently focused on the delivery of priorities. Resources are being redirected to support priority areas, for example improving educational attainment, and the CYPSP is prioritising services which are important to children and young people. However, the full impact of change is not yet visible as some strategies are new or have yet to be adopted, for example the school improvement and obesity strategies.

91. The partnership is taking positive action to improve equality of access to children's services and to meet the needs of its diverse communities. The council has achieved Level 3 of the equality standard and is seeking to achieve Level 4 by March 2008. Each children's centre has a 'hard to reach' strategy in place which monitors uptake of services by Black and minority ethnic communities, improves awareness through targeted communications and ensures that children benefit from services available. A social inclusion team focuses on access opportunities across all sectors so that children with disabilities can safely access the same resources as non-disabled children, although some gaps remain, for example in access to leisure facilities. All schools receive an Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant but outcomes are not monitored effectively. The council has not yet succeeded in establishing a workforce which represents the diversity of the local population, although significant progress has been made towards achieving this target, for example through workforce auditing. Positive action by partners has resulted in their effective engagement with most children and young people, including some who are vulnerable, but some strategies have not yet proved effective.

92. The capacity of the partnership to deliver services for children and young people is adequate. The Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and her management team are providing strong and visible leadership across the partnership. Staff are motivated and positive about the future of children's services. The lead councillor is knowledgeable, having a

professional social work background, and is energetically championing the children's agenda. Councillors, including the significant number of new councillors elected in May 2007, have had induction training in key areas relating to children and young people such as corporate parenting. Partnership working is strong and achieving sustainable improvements to key areas such as the safeguarding of children and young people. The CYPP provides an effective framework for decision making within which roles and responsibilities are clearly documented and understood. The council and its partners are investing additional resources in order to meet the needs of local children and young people, including the appointment of 11 additional school nurses.

93. Staff capacity to deliver services for children and young people is mixed. Overall staffing levels are comparable with similar partnerships; however, there are shortages in important areas such as educational services and midwifery. Staff sickness in the council is improving as a result of more effective sickness absence management, but remains high at 12 days absence per year. Effective action is being taken to develop staff where there are national difficulties with recruitment, for example through 'grow your own' initiatives for social workers.

94. Extensive training opportunities are available to staff, resulting in comparatively high numbers of qualified staff. However, remaining gaps in staffing are limiting the rate at which some services can improve. The partnership has made a number of joint appointments, such as a joint strategic director of commissioning. Children and their carers are being increasingly engaged in the appointment of staff, for example the headteacher of New College School. The council is building on learning from its experience as a Pathfinder Children's Trust, established in 2003, for example in inter-agency governance. However, despite successfully establishing the Common Assessment Framework in one part of Leicester, the slow implementation of plans to roll it out across the city during 2008 means that the council is unlikely to achieve the government's implementation target. Key partners are unaware of the timescale for its wider dissemination.

95. Value for money is adequate. The partnership is not currently maximising its ability to deliver value for money. Performance with respect to cost and quality across the partnership is mixed. The costs associated with looked after children are comparatively low, with good outcomes, whilst the costs of children and young people with special educational needs are high, with mixed outcomes. Value for money is not integral to the partnership's work, although each partner can separately demonstrate significant efficiency savings. The resource implications of delivering key plans, such as the Transforming Leicester's Learning action plan, have been assessed; however, service plans are not costed and there is no clear link between performance and financial monitoring. Medium-term financial planning is at an early stage but demonstrates alignment between budgets and priorities for children and young people. Joint strategic commissioning and the alignment and pooling of

budgets within the partnership are at an early stage and having limited impact.

96. Performance management is adequate. Effective action is being taken to embed a performance culture within the partnership. Performance reports are transparent and informative and widely shared across the partnership and with councillors, although not consistently with children and young people. Performance monitoring across the partnership is having some impact on service improvement. For example, the Raising the Achievement of Looked After Children's Team has been successful in increasing the percentage of young people leaving care with one GCSE or equivalent to 83%. However, the tackling of underperformance is inconsistent. Action plans lack outcome-related milestones and not all targets are sufficiently challenging. Benchmarking information is not used consistently to evaluate performance improvement. Improvements in data quality in some areas of children's services have not extended throughout the partnership and there is insufficient data sharing between partners. The scrutiny function is developing but is not yet fully embedded or effective. Scrutiny task group work is focusing on issues affecting children and young people, for example a youth service review, but this is at an early stage and impact is limited.

97. Capacity to improve further is adequate. Senior managers are taking robust action to address areas of underperformance. The council and its partners continue to proactively engage with the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team to improve performance in reducing teenage pregnancy. The council is also working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families to improve school standards. This engagement has generated extensive, well-resourced plans, such as the Transforming Leicester's Learning plan, designed to bring about significant improvements in the short-term. However, this is at a relatively early stage and impact on outcomes is not yet demonstrable.

98. The partnership's track record of improvement is mixed. Overall, performance trends demonstrate improvements in a broad range of outcomes for children and young people, such as those related to safeguarding. However, there are significant inconsistencies in performance and progress with achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4, and reductions in teenage pregnancy and health outcomes for young parents and their babies remain inadequate.

99. Workforce planning and development across the partnership is underdeveloped. A joint workforce strategy has yet to be adopted and actions to improve workforce capacity across the partnership are at an early stage. More positively, multi-agency approaches have been particularly effective in supporting the development of children's centres.

Annex A

MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEICESTER CITY

Summary

Leicester City Council continues to deliver services for children and young people at a good level. Leadership of the service is strong and forward thinking. It provides a clear strategic approach, with a sense of clarity and purpose. A good contribution is made by services to improving outcomes and they show sustained improvement in most areas over time. Many solutions are becoming increasingly innovative. Leicester receives a high number of residents from a number of countries around the world. The number of new arrivals, and the associated language and cultural barriers, bring many challenges. Some parts of the city face significant economic and social obstacles and the council shows increasing ambition to challenge these. It has a good understanding of the inequality in outcomes for young people and their families and a clear view of the necessary action to improve services and make a discernible difference. The council is aware of the need to improve health and educational attainment in all phases and thus the life chances of children and young people. To this end, there is an increasing emphasis on prevention and early intervention. The commitment to collaborative working and the quality of forward planning to achieve this is a significant strength.

The full APA can be found at:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=3127&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa_2007_856.pdf

Annex B

CORPORATE ASSESSMENT ACHIEVEMENT – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. The council and its partners have a strong commitment to providing good outcomes for children and young people in Leicester City. Leadership is robust and is driving actions to address areas of underperformance. Outcomes currently vary, with some good examples, including those for looked after children and those in need of safeguarding. Other aspects, such as the rate of teenage pregnancy and educational attainment at Key Stage 4, are poor and significant improvements are needed. Ambitions and priorities are good, owned by the partnership, and supported by the redirection of resources towards areas of poorer performance. Capacity, though adequate, is not sufficient to ensure a good rate of service improvement in some areas. Performance management is adequate and improving, but is not consistently driving improvements across the partnership. Partners are committed to equality and meeting the needs of their very diverse community. Good examples include the involvement of minority communities in strategic planning, the work of the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Team, and the casework monitoring and advice provided to staff by the Black Cases Panel. However, work to establish a representative workforce has yet to show significant impact, and performance management is not robust enough at a strategic level to drive improvements for some vulnerable groups.
2. The combined work of all local services to secure and promote the health of children and young people is adequate. There is good access to specialist CAMHS but out-patient services are currently under-resourced. Schools promote healthy lifestyles well, with the number achieving the Healthy Schools status in line with that of similar authorities. Health improvement is promoted well, and there has been a reduction in smoking among young people. Early support and intervention is good for children with disabilities and/or difficulties. However, there is no coordinated approach to improving health outcomes in areas of deprivation, including West Leicester, and many outcomes are poor. Teenage pregnancy rates are too high, above the national rate, and only slowly reducing. Partners have taken robust action recently to address underperformance but this has yet to have an impact. A jointly funded lead for strategic joint commissioning chairs the Be Healthy theme group, which has wide representation and is driving health performance. The council and its partners recently engaged the help of the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team, and have established an executive board with senior representation, and a comprehensive and challenging action plan.
3. The contribution of services to ensure children are safe is good. The Local Safeguarding Children Board provides a strong lead, and partners work well at a strategic and operational level to deliver good services to support children and families. Agencies undertake the necessary safe recruitment

checks. An effective strategy has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents. Referrals to social care receive a prompt and effective response, and staff are well supervised and trained. All children on the child protection register are allocated to a qualified social worker and their cases are reviewed on time. Most outcomes for looked after children are good and improving. Looked after children live in safe placements, the majority are placed in foster homes or in kinship care, and placement stability is very good.

4. The impact of all local services on improving educational outcomes for children and young people is inadequate. There is a clear strategic focus on raising standards and aspirations, and new strategies are taking the partnership forward in the right direction, but these have not yet impacted sufficiently. Early years provision is good and enables children to make a good start to their education, often from a very low base. Standards and attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 are too low and remain significantly below the national average. Progress by young people between ages 14 and 16 has decreased over the past two years, which places the provision in the bottom 5% of all local authorities. Some vulnerable groups significantly underachieve. Looked after young people receive very good support and partners have high aspirations for them. The number attaining at least one A*–G grade at GCSE is very high. However, fixed-term exclusions are high, which contributes to poor school attendance and the number attaining five or more A*–C grades at GCSE is low.

5. The impact of all local services on enabling young people to make a positive contribution is good, with some outstanding features. The youth offending service and partners have successfully reduced anti-social behaviour and there has been a significant reduction in first-time offending, but the rate of re-offending remains too high. The rate of offending among looked after children is slightly higher than in similar authorities, but the numbers involved are very small. Children and young people are well supported in contributing their views through school councils, the city's Young People's Council and Young People's Forums. They are able to make a key contribution to shaping services. Youth MPs meet the Director of Children's Services on a quarterly basis. Looked after young people offer their views through the impressive Stand Up Speak Out group.

6. The combined work of all local services in securing and promoting economic well-being is good. Young people make good or better progress in post-16 learning. The percentage obtaining Level 2 and 3 qualifications has rapidly improved and is now above that in similar authorities. Targeted work by colleges leads some young people to exceptional progress, and specific post-16 work meets the needs of new arrivals to the country well. The overall number of young people not in education, employment or training remains high. There have been recent reductions, but there are significant variations across the city and vulnerable groups are over-represented. Care leavers receive good support and the number progressing to post-16 education,

employment or training is in line with that of similar authorities. An increasing number of care leavers are attending higher education.

Annex C

SUMMARY OF JOINT AREA REVIEW AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

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 inspectors from Ofsted, the Healthcare Commission 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 these findings, plus aspects of the most recent APA, 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 Leicester City and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Together with the APA of children's services, 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. This review explores these issues by focusing on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children who are looked after, children at risk or requiring safeguarding, and a few additional investigations. It evaluates the collective contribution made by all relevant children's services to outcomes for these children and young people.
4. The review took place in two stages, consisting of an analysis stage (where recorded evidence was scrutinised) and a two-week fieldwork stage (where inspectors met children and young people and those who deliver services for them).