



# Joint area review

London Borough of Greenwich

Children's Services Authority Area

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## Review of services for children and young people

Adult Learning Inspectorate  
Audit Commission  
Commission for Social Care Inspection  
Healthcare Commission  
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate  
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
HM Inspectorate of Court Administration  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
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# 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 (HC), 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 Greenwich area and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well being. Joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and are well prepared to secure economic well-being.
4. The review evaluates the collective contribution made to each outcome for children and young people by relevant services in the area. It also judges the contributions made by the council's services overall and, specifically, its education and children's social care services. Particular attention is given to joint action by local services on behalf of those groups of children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. Two such groups are covered in detail: children and young people who are looked after by the council; and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
5. The review took place in two stages consisting in total of three weeks over a six-week period. The first stage reviewed all existing evidence including:
  - self-assessment undertaken by local public service providers
  - a survey of children and young people
  - performance data
  - planning documents
  - information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day-care provision
  - 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 one neighbourhood, West Greenwich. It also included gathering evidence on nine 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. We also considered evidence gathered during the earlier Youth Offending Team inspection and the findings of the enhanced youth inspection that was conducted concurrently.

## Context

7. Greenwich is an inner London borough situated in the south east of the city. It is influenced by regeneration initiatives such as the Thames Gateway London Partnership. Greenwich is in the Mayor of London's priority area for growth and regeneration. These developments and the 2012 Olympics, for which Greenwich will be an important host site, will provide important commercial, social and cultural opportunities.

8. Greenwich has a fast changing and unpredictable demographic structure. Greenwich Village is a World Heritage Site and like Blackheath is particularly affluent, but other parts of the borough, for example Woolwich and Plumstead, display characteristics of inner-city deprivation. Ranked 41<sup>st</sup> out of 354 districts in terms of deprivation, Greenwich is in the lower quartile of all local authorities in England. 49.6% of its population live in one of the 25% most deprived super output areas in the country, with comparatively high rates of unemployment (5.3 % in Greenwich compared to 3.1% nationally) and income support claimants (9.7% of the population and the 16<sup>th</sup> highest rate in England).

9. In 2005, the borough's population was 230,000. It is expected to grow by 18% to 272,000 by 2016. The 0–19 age range, currently estimated by the Office for National Statistics to be approximately 60,000, is predicted to grow by 9,000 in the same timescale with consequential increases in the school age populations.

10. An increasingly diverse ethnic profile is emerging. Over 30% of the community is a growing and increasingly varied minority ethnic population, with the number of people born outside of the UK rising steadily. The population has swelled relatively recently with new arrivals from Eastern European countries joining the more established communities from Africa and Asia. Pupils from minority ethnic groups comprise 45% of the school population compared to the national average of 17%. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is 25% compared to 11% nationally and 3% are asylum seekers or refugees. Mobility amongst primary age pupils is very high and challenging for services, with 50% of primary schools experiencing rates of between 10 and 20% and two schools experiencing more than 20%. At secondary age the situation is more stable at around 7%. Schools at secondary and primary levels have comparatively high proportions of pupils with special educational needs: 24% and 24.7% respectively compared to all England averages of 16.6% and 18.1%.

11. Greenwich became a Pathfinder Children's Trust in 2003 and the Trust Board has made plans to extend its membership in preparation for evolving into the joint commissioning body for the area. The education service, the youth service, and children's social care services merged in April 2006 to form an integrated Children's Services Directorate. The Local Area Agreement has clear targets for children and young people that need to be delivered by joint working and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is part of the governance and consultative arrangements for the Trust, which is charged with that responsibility.

12. There are four nursery schools, 66 primary schools including two special schools, and 16 secondary schools, of which two are special schools, one a city academy and another a post-16 school. There is also one pupil referral unit.

13. Children's social care services are configured conventionally with new requests for services managed by a dedicated service of duty social care staff, and longer term commitments being sub-divided into a range of children-in-need and looked after children services. Some services are located in specialist teams, for example those for children with disabilities, adoption and fostering. An out-of-hours service is provided by the Emergency Duty Team and child protection core assessment work is undertaken by a dedicated team that works in collaboration with colleagues from other agencies.

14. The 14–19 Strategy is developed through a range of strategic, developmental and consultative partnerships. The key partnership is the 14–19 Partnership Group, which comprises senior representatives from the local authority, the London East Learning and Skills Council, three post-16 providers, three secondary schools, two work-based training providers (Thames Gateway Training and Bexley Training Group), Connexions, the Chamber of Commerce, Greenwich University and representatives from the Government Office for London, the Department for Education and Skills and Building Schools for the Future. Post-16 education and training is provided as a discrete service by one secondary school and the community college, within seven secondary schools and by one training provider. Adult and community learning, including family learning, is provided by the community college.

15. Primary health care for children in Greenwich is provided by the Greenwich Teaching Primary Care Trust. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust is the main provider of acute health services. Children's mental health services are provided by the Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, which also provides services to Bexley and Bromley. The trusts providing health services for the children of Greenwich fall within the London Health Authority.

16. General policing in Greenwich is coordinated and delivered by the Borough Operational Command Unit, one of 33 in London, with access to more specialist Metropolitan Police Units when necessary. Youth offending services are provided by the Greenwich Youth Offending Team. There are no young offender institutions in the area.

## Summary report

### Outcomes for children and young people

17. **Outcomes for children and young people in Greenwich are good, but with some weaknesses.** Children and young people appear safe. Most are healthy, enjoy their education, have good opportunities to develop social skills and their understanding of citizenship, and are adequately prepared for working life. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged and more than 50% of schools in Greenwich exceeded the national standard for healthy schools, an outcome that bears favourable comparison with other councils. Breastfeeding and smoking cessation rates in pregnancy are good, and although there has not been a reduction in the rate of teenage conceptions amongst 15–17 year olds, some pilot initiatives have met with marked success.

18. Most children and young people make at least satisfactory progress from very low starting points during their education in Greenwich schools. Most pupils enjoy school and attend well. Standards are improving at a rapid rate, although some groups of pupils, such as White British boys and specific geographically localised minority ethnic groups, perform below the national average expectations

19. Significant reductions in incidences of antisocial behaviour and youth crime have been achieved to levels below that of comparators. Young people participate in policy development and review and their contributions directly affect the final content. Staying on rates in Greenwich schools are generally satisfactory and pass rates at levels 2 and 3 are improving and are comparable to national averages. The number of young people not in education, employment or training is high but reducing, and the number of young people known not to be in education, employment or training but whose whereabouts is unknown has been significantly reduced as a result of concerted work. Work-based learning opportunities in the borough are insufficient, although a new provider is beginning to expand the provision with early and encouraging evidence of improved take-up and achievement.

### The impact of local services

20. **The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people is good.** The council and its partners have accurately established the needs of Greenwich's children and young people, and they are working increasingly effectively to meet them. They are alert and respond well to the rapidly changing cultural diversity of the area. Services for children and young people are judged to be adequate or better although a number of challenges remain, particularly in relation to educational attainment. Nevertheless, education standards have improved and further robust action, including increased investment, is being taken to improve outcomes across each key stage. Preventative services are good and the most vulnerable groups

of children are protected. The developing Children's Trust and the established Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership have been increasingly effective in identifying ways to improve outcomes. As a result of their work, there have been improvements in inter-agency understanding and in joint working to the benefit of young people. The overall management of children's services is good and leadership is increasingly strong. Management of resources and value for money are good.

## Being healthy

21. **The impact of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** Early intervention, access and support for parents are key themes in the delivery of health promoting services. Children's centres provide a wide range of accessible support for parents and carers. Targeted antenatal provision supports vulnerable groups and good progress is being made in reducing the percentage of mothers smoking during pregnancy. Breastfeeding is promoted well and there has been improvement in initiation rates. There is also improvement in immunisation rates at 24 months.

22. There is a coordinated approach to promoting healthy lifestyles, and Greenwich exceeds the national target for schools achieving the National Healthy School Standard. Despite this, there has been no consistent impact on reducing the number of conceptions amongst 15–17 year olds, although targeted pilot initiatives have been very successful with specific groups of young people. An acceleration strategy, which will include action to roll out these successful initiatives, is in place to meet the national target for 2010.

23. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who are ill or injured, have early access to a range of multidisciplinary assessment services. Emergency care is good and is provided by dedicated staff.

24. The child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) provides a good programme to enable professionals in schools and other settings to promote and support children and young people's mental health. Children with mental health problems have access to a range of integrated and specialist services, which are increasingly being provided in non-stigmatising settings.

25. The large proportion of children looked after by the council have received regular health and dental assessments and care. However systems are not sufficiently robust for ensuring that those placed outside of the borough receive a comparable service.

26. Multi-disciplinary clinical provision for children and young people with learning difficulties is coordinated around the school. The development of CAMHS provision for children with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a recognised need that is being addressed in their schools. Support systems and procedures are in place to ensure a smooth transition from children's to adult services and a dedicated worker ensures that these are implemented well.



## Staying safe

27. **The impact of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** Support to prevent family disruption is a key priority for the area. An increased range of universal, targeted and accessible services available close to the community has led to improved quality and choice of service. The number of children looked after by the council remains high at 517, partly because of the need to care for a significant number of younger children from families in which drug and alcohol misuse is prevalent. However, because of effective intervention, the number of teenage young people entering the care system is falling significantly. The length of time that young people spend in care is also reducing. All looked after children are allocated to a qualified social worker and children with little or no contact with their families have an approved independent person to visit them.

28. Child protection work is effective, with improved assessment and good quality practices contributing to reducing numbers of registrations and re-registrations. Appropriate reductions in the length of time spent on the register have also occurred.

29. Performance management and quality assurance is improving working practices, and accountability for delivering childcare and child protection plans is established. Although improving, compliance with agreed timescales for completing initial assessments of need is inadequate but compliance with statutory requirements for visiting children, reviewing and holding core group meetings is very good.

30. Corporate parenting is developing and councillors are now monitoring a range of outcomes for children and young people. They plan to develop this further. The area is responsive to changing local need and there is excellent understanding of the needs of black and minority ethnic children and families. Links with faith groups and other organisations working with these groups are established and effective.

31. Support for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, with a range of specialist provision made available. A key priority identified by the area is to support independence, and direct payments have been widely used to do so. Despite this, some families report that they do not always find services easy to access and some were frustrated by recently changed arrangements for respite care.

## Enjoying and achieving

32. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is good.** Services have clearly identified issues that affect educational attainment and the quality of support for school improvement is good. Services are responding effectively to the shifting needs of an increasingly diverse and mobile school population. Data analysis is good and is used to target resources

effectively and to provide robust challenge and support to schools in most need. As a result, standards have improved rapidly at Key Stages 2 and 3 and the number of schools causing concern to Ofsted is below the national average and that of similar authorities. Services recognise that improvement at Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and GCSE has not always been rapid, but have engaged partners successfully, including schools and early years settings, in the drive to improve the quality of provision and raise standards. This has brought about above average pupil progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 3 and improved results at the end of the Foundation Stage in 2006.

33. Services have an inclusive approach and appropriate attention is given to diversity issues. There is good support for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Training for teachers and teaching assistants is of good quality. Resource allocation is planned to meet the emerging needs of the changing population, such as the significant increase, to levels approaching double the national average, of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream schools. Support for the education of looked after children is adequate; their attendance at school is good but attainment is lower than average. Strategies to improve attendance have been effective in reducing the number of authorised absences and attendance in primary and secondary schools is now in line with that of similar authorities. However, unauthorised absence has increased in 2006, as the education service has challenged schools to secure reductions in authorised absences. Secondary schools are working effectively with services to reduce the high number of permanent exclusions and reintegrate young people back into mainstream school. The Pupil Placement Panel, Key Stage 3 preventative strategy and managed moves of pupils between schools are beginning to have a positive impact in preventing exclusion and reintegrating permanently excluded pupils into schools. Services have rightly identified further reduction in exclusion as a key priority. Services have identified where there is underperformance by specific groups and have put strategies in place, for example to engage White British boys in their education and provide early intervention.

### **Making a positive contribution**

34. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** There are some good examples of children and young people influencing decision making and service development, for instance the Greenwich Young People's Council, although there are mixed opportunities for participation in schools through school councils. Compared with the national picture, as indicated by the Tellus survey, more children in Greenwich are able to contribute to their communities. This helps them further develop their sense of citizenship and personal responsibility. This is a key factor in them wanting greater opportunity to contribute to the development of wider regeneration initiatives in the borough.

35. There is good work being undertaken by schools and their partners in targeting vulnerable groups. Young carers receive good support and there is extensive involvement in voluntary activities. At the operational level, there is good partnership work to tackle antisocial behaviour and to reduce youth crime amongst children and young people. This has had a particularly strong impact in reducing the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system.

36. The participation of children looked after by the council in decisions about their own lives is adequate, but the complaints policy is inconsistently practised. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are enabled to contribute well to decisions about their own lives, using a variety of media to do so. This is particularly the case for children with hearing impairment.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

37. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** The vocational curriculum in the borough has been and is being expanded well through its 'Gplus' vocational learning network, introduced in 2002 and further developed since that time. Vocational qualifications are an increasingly popular option amongst young people in the area. Support for students with additional learning needs in the vocational centres is good. There is some good engagement with local employers in the area but work-based learning is at an early stage of growth. Historically, work-based learning take-up and achievement rates have been poor but there are encouraging indications that the range of provision and take-up are now increasing to at least adequate rates.

38. Opportunities for work experience for Year 11 children are generally good. There is satisfactory progress in the development of specialist diplomas to be introduced in 2008. The percentage of young people are not in education, employment or training is high at 11%, although the number who are not in education, employment or training but whose current circumstances or general background is not known has reduced significantly.

39. An expanded network of childcare providers and agencies, and targeted support initiatives, have helped increase the take-up of childcare places available for 0–4 year olds. Support for teenage parents is well coordinated, including the provision of childcare, and advice on benefits, training and education.

40. Good individualised information, guidance and support for care leavers (including a wide range of financial support) is provided up to and beyond the age of 18. This personal support is particularly highly valued by the recipients. This degree of support is not available in the same way to the general population of young people.

41. The area has been committed to using regeneration opportunities to enable benefit to be derived by Greenwich residents. This has been particularly evident on the Greenwich Peninsular, where projects to help unemployed people, including young people, to find jobs have been created and funded.

### **Service management**

42. **The management of services for children and young people is good.** There is a good set of shared ambitions and priorities. These are set out in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and are securely based on a good understanding of the context of the borough and on an analysis of need. Plans and targets are informed by the views of children and young people and include preventative actions.

43. The CYPP sets out clear targets to be achieved against the five Every Child Matters outcomes. However, not all targets specify exactly how much progress is to be achieved by 2008, so it will not be easy to measure success against them. The budgets available from each partner organisation have been identified and broken down against the five outcomes, although the costs of achieving individual targets are not specified. It is not fully clear from the CYPP what actions each partner will take. However, there are cross-agency planning and review groups for each of the five outcomes, chaired by senior managers.

44. There is good capacity to ensure that the council and its partners succeed in meeting the targets set out in the CYPP. Partnership working is well established and the Children's Trust is playing an active role in integrating services. A practical workforce strategy identifies recruitment, retention and training issues and the actions needed to ensure that the council and its partners have the right people with the right skills and experience to further improve services for children and young people. The Common Assessment Framework, improvements in information sharing and work in establishing an assigned lead professional for each child or young person who needs support from several agencies are being piloted and used to develop workforce skills. Partnership resources are being used well, with services being delivered by the most appropriate agencies. This results in good quality provision, such as at the children's centres. Effective monitoring of budgets is ensuring good value for money and areas where expenditure is higher than in similar councils are reviewed carefully.

45. Performance management is good overall. All staff within the council's children and young people's services are set targets that feed into overarching partnership, corporate and service aims. Performance is regularly reviewed, although some targets for individual members of staff lack specificity. Partnership endorsement of the CYPP confirms widespread commitment to improving outcomes and there are robust arrangements for ensuring that the targets in the CYPP are met.

46. The council's self-assessment is generally realistic and largely shows good awareness of its strengths and areas for development.

47. The council's capacity to improve further is good.

## Grades

Grades awarded:

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

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

## Recommendations

### For immediate action

- The Director of Children's Services should take the necessary action to ensure that initial assessments are completed within the required timescales.
- The Director of Children's Services should reduce the incidence of permanent and fixed term exclusions and extend preventative strategies in primary schools.

### For action over the next six months

- The designated doctor for children who are looked after should ensure that the systems and practices for assessing and meeting the health needs of looked after children living outside of the borough are sufficiently robust.
- The Director of Children's Services should further reduce and target support for young people who are not in education, employment or training.
- The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership should ensure that targets in individual performance review and development plans are specific and measurable.

### For action in the longer term

- The council and its partners should ensure that children and young people are well informed about services, have good access to advice and guidance and are given good opportunities to contribute their views on the changes that are taking place in Greenwich through regeneration initiatives.

## Main report

### Outcomes for children and young people

48. **Outcomes for children and young people in Greenwich are adequate and some are good.** Children and young people in Greenwich are generally healthy. National targets for children and young people's health are met in most areas; this represents a marked improvement in outcomes. Greenwich is well ahead of its targets for reducing smoking during pregnancy and infant mortality in the borough is on a downward trend. Greenwich has met its breastfeeding initiation target. While comparing favourably with London as a whole, Greenwich has some way to go on achieving immunisation rates comparable to the benchmark group average, although there are early signs

that this is happening for some immunisations at 24 months. Oral health of children is good.

49. A consistent impact has not been made on reducing the number of conceptions amongst 15–17 year olds, although there has been marked success with some groups of young people. An acceleration strategy is in place to achieve the national target for 2010.

50. Greenwich exceeds the national target for schools achieving the National Healthy School Standard. Good progress has been made towards consolidating a comprehensive CAMHS. The percentage of looked after children who have had health and dental checks is very good.

51. A baseline against which to measure changes in health-related outcomes including child obesity is being established and will build upon the early good work in this area.

52. Children and young people appear safe, with those most at risk of significant harm protected by effective inter-agency child protection services. All children who are on the child protection register, or who are looked after by the council, are allocated to a qualified social worker and have plans for their futures reviewed on time. Seventy-one per cent of looked after children and young people attend their review conferences. A significant number of children are placed in foster care, although most are outside of the borough. However, many are in adjoining authority areas, which enables appropriate and continued contact with their families. Placement stability is generally good in the short term but there is some volatility in the placements of children who have been looked after for two years or more. Good support is available to young people who need to remain in a placement in order to develop the necessary skills to make a successful transition to independent living. School attendance by looked after children is good, although their attainment is variable and mostly below that achieved by young people cared for in comparator councils. Health care services are good for looked after children, with timely access to specialist services, and the corporate parenting arrangements of the council are strengthening.

53. Preventative services, many delivered by inter-disciplinary teams, are increasingly successful in reducing the need for care or child protection services. This work is impacting upon the profile of children who become looked after and there has been a significant reduction in the number of teenagers entering the care system, although the numbers of children in need and the incidence of care proceedings remain comparatively high. The area has been effective in identifying and responding to the needs of the most vulnerable and hard to reach groups, and work with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved. In particular, good work is undertaken in special schools in helping children and young people to reach their potential.

54. Children and young people achieve adequately and most enjoy their education and leisure. Achievements of most groups of children and young people have improved. Early education and childcare places meet demand and children are increasingly well prepared for school. Children's attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage improved in 2006 but remains below the national average and is particularly low in language and literacy. Pupils continue to attain below average results at Key Stage 1 but make good progress as they move through primary school. Attainment at Key Stage 2 has improved at a fast pace and performance is now in line with that of statistical neighbours in all core subjects. Attainment at Key Stage 3 has also improved rapidly, with the highest ever results having been achieved in 2006 and performance also in line with that of statistical neighbours. Attainment at GCSE improved between 2000 and 2005 and was in line with the performance of similar authorities. However, results fell in 2006 to levels below those of statistical neighbours due to below expected performance in three secondary schools.

55. There is wide variation in standards and achievement across the borough and between groups of pupils. Children and young people from the most deprived areas generally achieve less well than those in more prosperous areas and some specific groups such as Irish Heritage Travelling children, Caribbean children and White British boys make less progress than other groups. The attainment of pupils from other black and minority ethnic groups is generally at or above the borough performance.

56. Children and young people appear to enjoy school and most attend regularly, although unauthorised absence is high in some areas of the borough. The proportion of pupils who are permanently excluded from school is well above average. It is decreasing in secondary schools with more effective preventative strategies having been put in place. Fixed term exclusions are high in both primary and secondary schools. The attendance of children looked after by the council is good, although their attainment is variable year on year and usually lower than their comparators. Results in 2006 were low, although looked after children in Greenwich schools generally did better than those in out of borough schools. Most pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress at school and a high proportion with statements of special educational need are educated within mainstream schools.

57. Children and young people have a good range of opportunities to make decisions and take personal responsibility and many make a positive contribution to their communities. More children in Greenwich are able to contribute to their communities than is the case nationally. There are both good and excellent examples of children and young people influencing decision-making and service development, in particular through the Greenwich Young People's Council (GYPC). The youth service provides good services in recruiting, training and facilitating the GYPC and the developing area-wide forums, opportunities that result in young people directly influencing a range of policy and practice initiatives. However, opportunities for participation in decision making in schools through school councils is more variable. Efforts to engage



young people in voluntary activities have been successful, with over 2,500 participating in at least one activity.

58. For all children, there are good mentoring opportunities in schools and transitions support between schools. There is also good support for identified groups of vulnerable children such as young carers, White British boys from low income households and unaccompanied asylum seekers. There has been a good reduction in recorded antisocial behaviour and youth crime, although some children and young people have concerns for their safety in Greenwich. Participation of looked after children in making decisions about their lives is adequate with 71% attending their own reviews and the majority of others making contributions to decisions about their lives in other ways. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well to make a positive contribution in the delivery of services that affect their lives. In particular, those with hearing impairments are enabled to make an outstanding contribution; for example mentors help them prepare their contribution to planning meetings and reviews.

59. **Children and young people are adequately prepared to achieve economic well-being and for working life.** Pass rates on most courses at levels 2 and 3 have improved during the past year and are predominantly up to or around national averages. Retention and attendance rates on vocational courses are generally good and improving. Overall, staying on rates in Greenwich schools and vocational centres are satisfactory at 16 and 18, although there are some significant variations between schools, and there has been no overall significant improvement trend during the past year. Around half of young people now achieve a level 2 qualification by age 19, although this is still among the lowest achievement rate in the London East region.

60. Eighty-nine per cent of care leavers at 19 are living in suitable accommodation, and the use of bed and breakfast accommodation is now the exception. A high percentage of this group (64%) are engaged in education, employment or training. The percentage of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are in education, employment or training is also high at 78%. In year nine, 158 pupils have a statement of special educational need and 98%, a very high percentage, are subject to a transition review and subsequent transition plan.

61. The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training is high at 11%, and includes a significant proportion of vulnerable young people, but there has been a slight downward trend in the past few months. The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training but whose current circumstances and general background is unknown has been reduced to 5%, against a borough target of 10%. The identification of and support for discrete not in education, employment or training groupings, such as teenage mothers and care leavers, and focused support and services using specialist advisers, is now much improved.

## 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.** Maternity provision is targeted to support women with additional needs and teenage mothers-to-be. For example the Best Beginnings Team, an enhanced antenatal service, targets vulnerable women in the most deprived areas of the borough and includes a designated midwife for teenage pregnancy. There is specialist multi-agency provision for women with mental health problems and for those with substance misuse.

63. Appropriate attention is being paid to helping children get a good start in life. There is a designated midwife within the Stop Smoking Service and good progress is being made on reducing the percentage of mothers who smoke during pregnancy. Breastfeeding is promoted well and the proportion of mothers initiating breastfeeding is improving over time. Greenwich is seeking to achieve the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation, for example through breastfeeding clubs and advocates and a borough-wide scheme to provide breastfeeding facilities in public buildings. Some 65% of health-based staff who come in to contact with new mothers have received training on UNICEF guidelines.

64. Vulnerable and hard to reach groups derive good benefit from services provided at the children's centres, such as baby clinics, Portage, parenting courses and help with developing communication and language skills. A Teenage Parents Virtual Team provides good multi-agency support to these families.

65. Immunisation rates compare favourably in the main with London as a whole, although progress has still to be made against the benchmark comparator group. There are, however, early signs that this is happening for some immunisations at 24 months. Mobility in some parts of the borough is high at 40%, but the Primary Care Trust is developing systems that will enable it to track the immunisation status of children better.

66. The Healthy Schools Programme is increasingly being used to coordinate Greenwich's approach to promoting healthy lifestyles for children and young people. Greenwich has exceeded the national target of having 50% of schools achieve the National Healthy School Standard and the programme is being rolled out to nursery and special schools, as well as to all primary and secondary schools. The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy is good or better in most cases. Particular impact has been made on the provision of school meals, where significant investment has resulted in the removal of processed ingredients and better training for school cooks. Baseline information is being collected using a validated tool. This will be repeated every two years in order to measure changes in health-related behaviour and inform the development of a Childhood Obesity Strategy, building on obesity preventions and treatments in place currently.

67. There has not been a consistent impact on reducing the number of conceptions amongst 15–17 years olds. However, there has been marked success with some groups of young people, for example those who attend Teen Talk@Kidbrooke, a children and young people's health centre based in a secondary school in a deprived part of the borough. This type of provision is now being rolled out across Greenwich. The strategic commitment to reducing teenage pregnancy has been revitalised and this is now one of the Children and Young People's Plan's ten priorities. An acceleration strategy is in place to achieve the national target by 2010.

68. Universal health screening is provided within a common framework at appropriate ages. Delivery through the baby clinics held at the children's centres is improving access for traditionally hard to reach groups. In addition, there is a specialist health visiting service for homeless and asylum seeking children.

69. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who are ill or injured, have early access to a range of assessment services provided by the community paediatric service. They also have good access to speech and language therapy for which there is no waiting list. Emergency care provided by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is good.

70. The CAMHS provides a good programme of training, consultation and supervision. Liaison with professionals in schools and other settings enables the CAMHS team to promote and support children and young people's mental health. There are also a number of other provisions in the borough including Place2Be, Youth Reach, and an adolescent counselling service. Greenwich has just agreed a Mental Health Promotion Strategy, 'How I Think and Feel Matters', which was developed in consultation with young people.

71. Children and young people with mental health problems and their families have access to a good range of integrated assessment, treatment and support services, increasingly being provided in non-stigmatising settings. CAMHS participation in multi-agency working is good and specialist provision includes an adolescent team and a forensic service. Young people are seen up to the age of 18 and there is good progress towards achieving comprehensive CAMHS provision. The length of wait for CAMHS does not exceed 13 weeks, which is the national standard maximum wait time. Progress is being made on new cases being seen within four weeks.

72. Systems to ensure that the health needs of looked after children who live outside the borough are met are underdeveloped. However, a concerted effort has produced a marked increase in the percentage of looked after children having an annual health and dental assessment. Children and young people have access to a range of targeted provision. In addition to the designated doctor and nurse, there are a number of provisions in place to ensure that the health needs of looked after children and care leavers living in Greenwich are addressed. There are targeted immunisation clinics, specialist provision for

unaccompanied minors, CAMHS provision, a teenage pregnancy nurse and a drugs worker. Services are well signposted and in-house foster carers and residential staff receive training to enable them to support young people in taking up relevant services.

73. Good multi-disciplinary clinical provision for individual children and young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in the main coordinated around their school. There is an Early Bird Programme and an Expert Patient Programme developed for the parents of children with a long term health condition. Improved CAMHS provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a recognised need. A joint behaviour clinic set up with community paediatricians in the Meridian locality is being piloted, and work is underway with the Child Development Centre to create a joint post. There is a coordinated and multi-agency protocol supporting children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are in transition from children's to adult services. This process is supported by a dedicated transition worker.

### **Staying safe**

74. **The work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** The effective implementation of the CYPP and the work of the Greenwich Children Safeguarding Board has meant a shift from dependence on a high cost service, focusing on looked after children and child protection, to a service that promotes effective early intervention and prevention. More training, and improved and expanded partnership working, have resulted in all partners having an understanding of the area's priorities and the part that different individuals and organisations have to play.

75. The area's regeneration strategies focus appropriately upon safeguarding and the high profile given to it has significantly increased awareness and levels of response across all agencies. There is active planning for emergencies, and the Children's Services Directorate has effectively prioritized activities to support children in such an event. Health and safety standards and monitoring arrangements are well embedded across children's services and extend to externally commissioned services. Domestic violence rates are comparatively high in Greenwich and the Safer Greenwich Partnership and the Children's Services Commissioning Plan have appropriately prioritized services to respond to this with early signs of success. The prevention of bullying is taken seriously. A revised anti-bullying strategy was recently extended to include all forms of harassment and given a high profile launch. Although young people remain concerned about bullying and perceptions of risk posed by groups of young people, some of whom thought to be in gangs, children's sense of safety in their neighbourhoods is in line with national averages and children reported that incidents are dealt with robustly once identified.

76. The range of safety information, advice and support available to parents and children is good. Effective home and road safety programmes focusing upon young people's understanding of personal and road safety has contributed to significant reductions, in excess of targets, of accidental deaths and serious injuries to children and young people.

77. There is a closing of the gap with comparator authorities in performance across a range of indicators relating to the safety and well-being of children. Better management, a more focused response to referrals and more effective initial assessments are all leading to improved decision making. However the organisational structure in the initial response and assessment service militates against better compliance with statutory timescales for initial assessments, which remain at levels below national and local comparators. Although remaining comparatively high, trends in the incidence of children facing significant harm and those being re-registered on the child protection register are reducing. There is increasingly effective and better managed inter-agency work, and improved understanding of those characteristics that increase the risk of abuse or neglect.

78. Child protection arrangements are good. There are established arrangements for multi-agency response in accordance with the London-wide Child Protection Procedures. There are timely initial, and review, child protection conferences and increased participation by children and their parents or carers. Quality assurance is established and all agencies accept that they are accountable for their responsibilities in protecting children. Within the social care and other services, cases are independently scrutinized. The independent chairs of conferences extend this quality and performance management role further. Protection plans for children are comprehensive, although not consistently constructed in ways that allow progress to be easily measured. There are a range of additional and effective safeguarding functions in place. For example there is an established policy and process for transferring cases between local authorities, tracking children who are out of school or not on a school roll, and for establishing the whereabouts of missing children.

79. Universal and targeted services combine adequately to implement the area's prevention strategy. A range of resources such as children's centres, extended schools and other family support services, are located in the heart of their communities. They respond well to local need and increasingly coordinate efforts to avoid unnecessary duplication and lessen the risk of avoidable family breakdown. Despite this, the numbers of children in need and care proceedings have remained stubbornly above those of comparators and a significantly high proportion are in the younger age groups and live in families in which drug and alcohol misuse is prevalent. However, effectively targeted and responsive preventative work has led to a significant drop in the number of teenage children being admitted to care. Good and increased use of kinship care and residence orders is enabling children who can not live in their homes to remain living within their wider families.

80. Looked after children are generally well safeguarded with good monitoring and support systems. The majority of looked after children are placed outside the borough with independent fostering agencies due to a local shortage of foster carers. Most foster carers are well trained and appropriately supported. Changes of placements are managed effectively and minimised as far as possible. Although long-term placement stability has improved, it remains below that of comparators. A corporate parenting forum is in place which monitors complex cases, listens to the views of children and young people, and acts on those views as appropriate.

81. Care leavers are effectively supported and are prepared well for independent living. The numbers who are in education, training or employment are significantly above the national average. Young people are well supported by councillors and staff to remain living in foster care until they are sufficiently mature to make a successful transition to independent living.

82. Inter-agency planning for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective. The multi-agency complex case panel works well to agree appropriate resources. The number of families who are in receipt of direct payments is significantly above the national average. However, the remodelling of the service that provides respite care has not met with widespread approval among families. Protocols to facilitate transition planning between children's and adult services are in place. The multi-disciplinary team identifies and assesses the young people concerned and agrees the necessary plan that is taken forward throughout the process. There is appropriate priority and consideration given to support young people who return to Greenwich from out-of-borough placements. The communication needs of children with disabilities are met well through use of a range of media.

## Enjoying and achieving

83. **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 good support in helping their children to enjoy and achieve. The children's information service provides high quality advice. Work is well planned to support families in the most disadvantaged areas and those facing particular challenges. Partnerships are used well to reach different community groups, for example through Home Start initiatives developed with faith and community leaders, Sure Start programmes and the 10 children's centres. Parents and carers are able to develop skills to help their children achieve well through good quality parenting and family learning courses. They receive clear guidance on school admission arrangements and most get their first choice of secondary school place.

84. Early years provision adequately promotes children's development and well being and helps them to meet early learning goals. The quality of provision in maintained private and voluntary settings has improved in the last two years due to an effective investment strategy and monitoring, intervention and

support from the Early Years Team. This has brought about improved results at the end of the Foundation Stage in 2006 but achievement of early learning goals remains below the national average. Early intervention strategies are increasingly effective in identifying children who are likely to underachieve. The improvements at Foundation Stage are being consolidated by some well-targeted support through programmes such as Bookstart and the Forest Schools Initiative.

85. Services provide good support to improve standards and achievement and to ensure that educational provision for five to 16 year olds is of good quality. Very effective monitoring and analysis of achievement enables services to provide sharply targeted and effective intervention. Variation in the performance of schools is closely monitored and services have responded rapidly and effectively to challenge and support underperforming schools. For example, targeted link inspector and consultant support has resulted in improved results in schools receiving intensive support and a reduction in the number of schools below floor targets and in categories of concern. There are, however, weaknesses still to be addressed, such as underachievement at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 4. The local authority has an extremely well informed understanding of the causes of underperformance, the changing demography and needs of the school population, and good strategies are in place to meet complex and emerging challenges. Headteachers have a high level of confidence in the capacity of the education service to support them in securing necessary improvements.

86. The council's strategies for improving attendance have effectively reduced authorised absence and brought attendance in line with that of similar authorities. Targeted interventions such as early communication with parents, parenting programmes and Fast Track to Prosecution schemes have helped to improve attendance in primary and secondary schools. While unauthorised absence remains high in some schools, services are addressing this issue through well targeted support to parents to reduce the incidence of extended holidays and reduce truancy in four secondary schools, and they are working closely with the DfES.

87. There is a wide range of provision for pupils educated other than at school and provision within the various centres is well matched to the needs of the children and young people attending. There is a high commitment and good success rate in enabling pupils who are permanently excluded from school to achieve well at GCSE. Multi-agency support for families and young people who are educated at home is adequate. Good efforts are being made to avoid exclusion through the recently established Key Stage 3 support centre and permanent exclusions from secondary schools are decreasing. However, exclusion rates are above the national average in both primary and secondary schools and permanent exclusions increased in 2006 in primary schools. Re-integration rates are improving with effective support from the Pupil Placement Panel and through managing the placement of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

88. There is a good and varied range of recreational activities across the borough, particularly for sport, which includes good provision for children and young people who are disabled, and for the performing arts. Extended school provision is well developed and schools collaborate effectively to extend the offer. The youth and play service promotes an extensive range of programmes and activities based on evaluation of local need, and there is some good targeted provision for children and young people in disadvantaged groups and areas. However, some parents and young people say there are insufficient leisure activities during school holidays and they do not always find it easy to know what is available. There are good opportunities for gifted and talented children and young people to extend their learning and skills. Services make good use of local facilities, for instance providing creative writing and history courses through the Maritime Museum and astronomy GCSE in partnership with Greenwich Observatory.

89. Children who are looked after receive adequate support to help them enjoy and achieve. Designated teachers and governors receive good quality training and support in monitoring the welfare of looked after children, and there is a high commitment to helping them to enjoy their education. The council actively encourages and supports looked after children to participate in extracurricular and holiday activities. Elected members are positively engaged in a corporate parenting role through the work of the scrutiny panel and the achievement awards ceremony. There are plans in place to improve educational outcomes for looked after children but provision has not impacted consistently on attainment.

90. The support for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and they achieve well in schools. Special schools provide good quality education for a range of need and there are good levels of outreach work in mainstream schools. Provision within mainstream schools is good in some schools and requires improvement in others, but monitoring procedures are robust and support to improve provision is good. The authority is responding well to the changing needs of the school population in planning and revising provision to meet the needs of the increasing population of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders within mainstream schools and to provide support for children and young people with English as an additional language. There are good procedures in place to assess the learning needs of children newly arrived in the borough and monitor their progress.

### **Making a positive contribution**

91. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** The approach to children's participation is good, being one of the priorities of the Greenwich CYPP. Good consultation with children and young people has helped to identify key areas for development. There has been a good audit of existing practice, and the Hear by Right standards are being used effectively to monitor progress. There are good examples of children and young people influencing decision making and service



development, including the GYPC, which consults and campaigns on behalf of children and young people; the Y Factor conferences, which question senior officers and contributes to the CYPP priorities; and the involvement of young people in the Scrutiny Committee. More children in Greenwich, compared to the national figure, report that they feel able to contribute to their communities. However they also report that they want more engagement, for instance in the improvements to the borough through regeneration and the opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympics.

92. The involvement of children and young people in school councils is adequate. Schools councils exist in the majority of schools, although participation opportunities are not of a consistent quality. There are different approaches to budgets, elections to the councils, and training for the participants. This results in an inconsistency of impact, although there are some good examples of involvement in the appointment of staff and in designing buildings for schools.

93. There is good work being done by schools and their partners to target vulnerable groups and improve their inclusion. Examples include the focused work being carried out with White British boys from low income families and unaccompanied asylum seekers; good support for children and young people transferring between schools; and targeted work for children at risk of exclusion. There is excellent parenting support available, notably that available through the Kinara Family Centre. There is good mentoring in schools, including the use of playground buddies and Friends Stop. Young carers also receive good support with over 350 children and young people provided with a service. There is an excellent take-up of voluntary activities with over 2,500 children and young people involved in Volunteer Greenwich.

94. There is good partnership work investing in diversionary activity and tackling antisocial behaviour amongst children and young people. This has led to a 29% reduction in such behaviour recently. Good work is done by the local community safety teams to improve the safety and perceptions of safety across the borough, a finding confirmed by the Tellus survey. Good youth service activities include a programme for young people which produced resources for youth workers and young people to use, for example a DVD on gun and knife crime. Despite this, some children and young people report concerns for their safety in Greenwich, ranging from fear of teenagers hanging about, intimidation, and thefts of mobile telephones, to serious concerns about gangs with guns and knives. There is a good new borough-wide anti-bullying strategy, developed in part as a response to a number of children and young people who have reported being subject to bullying, and building on the individual policies and mentoring schemes already in existence in schools.

95. The area has focused appropriately on reducing the level of youth re-offending, the number of young people who are victims of crime, and a reduction in the fear of crime by young people. However, the involvement of strategic partners in the Youth Offending Team is not meeting national

requirements and is impacting on the availability and effectiveness of services for young offenders, in particular access to education. Despite these shortcomings, there has been a good reduction in youth crime of 25% over the last five years.

96. The participation of looked after children in making decisions about their own lives and in service development is adequate. Using the Hear by Right framework, the council assessed the effectiveness of participation of looked after children and found that more needs to be done. It has developed a new Participation Strategy and is moving towards a more inclusive and consultative approach that will be taken forward by the participation officer once the post is filled. The involvement of looked after children in their own reviews is adequate, with 71% having attended in the last year, although others participated through other means. The complaints service is improving, and further improvements are planned to ensure that all complaints are identified and responded to appropriately. There is advocacy available for those identified as needing additional support, although this is not universally available for all looked after children. The Rightstuff group, comprising a small group of looked after children, makes an excellent contribution to service development. The group has met with members and social services managers, and recently identified the characteristics of a good social worker, which has resulted in improvements to council training for these staff.

97. Most children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are involved in their annual reviews, with some good examples of their contribution. Good additional support is available from independent visitors and a commissioned advocacy service. There are transition reviews for all 14+ pupils with special needs, and information provided for those children and their parents is excellent. There is good support for children with hearing impairment who are prepared for transition to secondary schools, with the extensive involvement of parents and carers. There is an excellent book of poetry produced by local young people with hearing impairment, *Life and Deaf*, which reflects the overall excellent work done to enable them to participate as citizens in Greenwich.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

98. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** Comprehensive information, including a range of useful fact sheets, is available on the range and affordability of childcare in the borough. An expanded network of childcare providers and agencies and targeted support initiatives have helped increase the take-up of places. Places are available for all three and four year olds and there is new provision for 0–3 year olds in deprived areas. The council distributes a booklet in 14 languages to all parents via schools each year detailing the range of benefits for children at school. There is a strong focus on ensuring services reach different black and minority ethnic groups and refugee communities. There is good partnership working across agencies advising

families about tax credits and benefits, and an effective welfare rights and debt counselling service. Projects to maximise support for parents and families in children's centres have been developed in partnership with early years and employment services. The provision and support available for teenage parents is well coordinated. A teenage parents' 'Virtual Group' provides good support, including social reintegration, provision of childcare, benefits, training and education advice.

99. The vocational curriculum in the borough has been and is being expanded well through the 'Gplus' vocational learning network which now offers young people a good range of courses from entry level to level 3. Take-up of vocational qualifications is rising year on year and their popularity is such that in one centre demand for places on courses is around 50% greater than supply, although funding restrictions are constraining an expansion of provision. Two popular young apprenticeship programmes (sports and performing arts) for young people at Key Stage 4 are running successfully in the borough. Participation in the vocational curriculum by 16–18 year olds has risen significantly over the past three years and numbers of 16–19 students choosing to study in Greenwich have risen by 88% in the same period. Retention rates on vocational courses are generally good, except in one centre where they are adequate. Attendance rates are good and show progressive improvement in one centre. Support for students with additional learning needs in the vocational centres is good.

100. Information, advice and guidance is generally good in schools, at least satisfactory in vocational centres but underdeveloped in respect of its reach to people of all ages within the borough. There are insufficient links between information, advice and guidance services and outreach and family and community learning initiatives in the wider communities. These hinder the development understanding by all parents of their own and their children's learning and employment opportunities. Thamesmead is poorly served in terms of outreach and community education and training opportunities.

101. Greenwich has made good progress during 2006 in further developing its increasingly effective strategic and operational arrangements for 14–19 year olds. In particular the 14–19 forum includes wide representation from a range of relevant organisations and is a key consultative and advisory grouping. However, cooperative working between all schools and post-16 providers towards a borough-wide common aim and ethos still lacks coherence and uniformity. Arrangements for collaborative working between agencies are increasingly mature and productive. There is some good engagement with local employers in the area, particularly in relation to the major developments on the Greenwich Peninsular, but engagement with employers in developing work-based learning further is at an early stage. However, opportunities for work experience for Year 11 children are generally good. The authority is making satisfactory progress in the development of specialist diplomas to be introduced in 2008.

102. Community regeneration initiatives are beginning to address the needs of children and young people successfully. A wide range of external funding streams has been sought and secured to develop specific initiatives, although the outcomes are sometimes tailored more to meeting funding stream priorities than directly tied to borough strategies. However, there has been particularly good use of corporate funding derived from economic regeneration and development activity on the Greenwich Peninsular, notably around funding and supporting projects to get local people into employment, and associated training projects. The views of a wide range of stakeholders have been taken into consideration in developing the Building Schools for the Future strategy through widespread consultation and communications activity.

103. The borough is on track to upgrade the majority of its housing stock by 2010, or by 2008 in neighbourhood renewal areas. Around 2,000 units of affordable housing have been built in recent years, a high proportion on the Greenwich Peninsular funded through planning gain. A further 4,000 are in development. The proportion of children living in households dependent on benefits is 35.7% amongst 0–4 year olds and 37.5% for 5–14 year olds, significantly above statistical neighbours and national averages. Greenwich has one of the lowest pools of temporary accommodation in London. However, as of March 2005, the council acquired 100 private properties for homeless households. The borough now provides self-contained semi-independent and independent housing for teenage parents and specific housing for black and minority communities via housing associations. Ten neighbourhood-housing offices provide satisfactory rent, debt and homelessness improvement services and specific support to 16–17 year olds. Multi-agency working is adequate. The administration of housing and council tax benefit is sometimes unsatisfactory.

104. Looked after children aged over 15 have appropriate care and pathway plans in place and these are reviewed within required timescales. Good, individualised guidance and support, including a wide range of financial support, is provided up to and beyond age 18. The personal support is particularly highly valued by the recipients. At age 16, prospective care leavers are placed on the housing register waiting list to ensure that places are available at age 18 or above. This process ensures that they are not placed in unsuitable accommodation, which could potentially compromise their safety and security.

105. The percentage of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are in education, employment or training is high, at 78%. A good proportion of 16–18 year olds in this group enrol in mainstream education, for example, around 11% of all students at the Shooters Hill vocational campus. There are good and particularly inclusive arrangements for supporting and developing young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at Shooters Hill and at Greenwich Community College.

## Service management

106. **The management of services for children and young people is good, as is the capacity to improve further.** There is a clear Greenwich vision that 'children must be placed at the heart of everything we do'. The council and its partners have used the five Every Child Matters outcomes as the foundation of a good set of agreed ambitions. These are clearly stated in the CYPP. The ambitions are challenging and are securely based on a good understanding of the demographic and socio-economic context and an analysis of needs. They were refined through detailed consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, for example through an inter-agency conference and the Y Factor conference for young people. Targets for delivery of the ambitions effectively address the main issues for children and young people in Greenwich, including those from minority ethnic and vulnerable groups. Gaps or areas for improvement in service provision have been identified, for example the need to strengthen safeguarding arrangements for those at risk of sexual exploitation, with disabilities and from a refugee background. There is acknowledgement that data is not consistently robust and that a more systematic approach is needed to identify service gaps or areas for improvement. A group made up of representatives of different services is tackling these issues.

107. Prioritisation is good. Ten clear priorities were identified through needs analysis and consultation. These form the basis of the action plans in the CYPP. Careful alignment with the Local Area Agreement, council strategies and partners' strategies means that these priorities have dovetailed into the plans of a range of service providers. All statutory partners and some partners from the voluntary sector are signed up to their delivery. There is appropriate focus on achieving value for money, on preventative actions, on diversity issues and on meeting the needs of vulnerable groups.

108. The CYPP sets clear targets to be achieved by 2008. Budgetary commitments for each organisation against the outcome area(s) towards which they are contributing have been identified, although the costs of achieving individual targets are not specified. The actions each partner organisation will take towards achieving the targets are not set out explicitly. This is being addressed by cross-agency planning and review groups that are chaired by senior managers. These groups ensure that expectations and accountability are clear and that the plans are being delivered.

109. Appropriate, accessible and timely support is provided to Greenwich children and young people and their parents and carers. Preventative action, for example increased accessibility of CAMHS, is prioritised. Agencies work together effectively in planning and reviewing provision for individuals, for example all child protection conferences are held within the required timescale. Services take account of equality and diversity issues appropriately, such as through culturally sensitive sex education and well targeted support for children and young people with hearing impairment. The growing network of children's centres is taking services into the heart of communities where demand and

need is highest, and to traditionally hard to reach groups. This enables problems to be identified and dealt with at an early stage and support services to be targeted to greatest effect.

110. The council and its partners have good capacity to deliver effective services to children and young people. The Director of Children's Services and Lead Member are clear about their roles and provide effective leadership and direction. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is well-established, with a range of partners including all those identified in the Children Act. A Pathfinder Children's Trust was set up in 2003, with representatives from the council and the Primary Care Trust on its board, and with plans for board membership to be further extended. A common assessment framework, improvements in information sharing and work towards establishing an assigned lead professional for each child or young person who needs support from several agencies, are being piloted and used to develop workforce skills.

111. A workforce strategy has been developed as a Children's Trust project through a multi-agency team, and is practical and clearly identifies recruitment and retention challenges and skill gaps. It notes that the workforce is largely female, aging and under-representative of ethnic minorities. It is difficult to recruit and retain social workers and teachers in some subject areas. A retention payment scheme is in place for social workers, as is a programme for overseas teachers to gain qualified teacher status and a programme supporting work-life balance and well-being in schools. The council has been successful in reducing sickness absence. A coordinated training programme across the partner organisations is helping staff to develop the skills that they need to deliver improved services and achieve the desired outcomes.

112. A flexible approach is taken to service provision, with resources from a variety of agencies being secured and services commissioned according to local needs. Children's centres have been established using funding from Sure Start, Neighbourhood Renewal and/or the Single Regeneration Budget. Quality assurance measures are in place, including thorough service level agreements, and voluntary sector providers use the council's performance management systems. This helps ensure that available resources are deployed effectively and that good quality services are provided by the agencies best placed to achieve positive outcomes and good value for money.

113. There is effective monitoring of budgets. School balances are high, but agreement has been reached that these will be reduced. To ensure this happens, learning and achievement advisers are challenging schools and governing bodies on how they are using their resources. Budgets have been pooled between education and children's social care, and partners' financial resources for delivery of the CYPP plans have been identified. Within the directorate, benchmarking against other councils has been carried out and the aim is to reduce expenditure to the London median. Any areas of comparatively high expenditure have been identified and are being examined to ensure that

value for money is achieved. These are mainly where investment has been made to improve performance, for example in supporting improvements to behaviour in schools. Savings are redeployed effectively to improve services overall. For example, savings against the budget for looked after children in residential or foster care outside the borough have been channelled into increased support for families and for the development of local fostering. This represents good value for money with better outcomes for children and young people who can remain living within their families or within the borough. Good overall use of resources and value for money is being achieved in the directorate.

114. There is appropriate involvement of children and young people in identifying their needs and designing services, together with their parents and carers and service providers. Personal education plans include input from pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are involved in reviewing their care and education plans. Pupils in secondary schools have contributed ideas for interior design and curriculum development as part of the Building Schools for the Future strategy. A single assessment and recording system is being developed, and the council and Connexions have developed a single personalised transition document that helps young people in their transfer from school into work. Involving individuals in designing services around their needs helps ensure that plans focus on the outcomes that are important to them.

115. Performance management is good overall. Corporate, partnership and service aims cascade down into individual performance targets, against which performance is regularly reviewed. However some of these targets lack specificity, for example regarding the degree of improvement required. This makes it difficult to determine how well the desired outcomes are being achieved.

116. All partners have expressed their commitment to improving performance through their endorsement of the CYPP. Performance is monitored and action is taken when potential underachievement is detected or occurs. Robust action followed underperformance at GCSE level in 2006, for example, with three schools being required to implement rigorous and carefully monitored action plans to secure improvements.

117. There are robust arrangements for ensuring the delivery of the CYPP targets. Each of the five outcome areas is monitored by a planning and review group. Four of these groups are led by an assistant director and the fifth by a senior PCT officer. All are accountable to the Director of Children's Services for delivery. The first six-monthly review of performance against the CYPP identifies progress against the individual targets. Commentaries explain any under-performance. There is evidence of some action being taken to address shortfalls, for example to address teenage pregnancy levels and unauthorised absences from school. There is recognition that some of the targets are

insufficiently specific to enable measurement of success against them, and action is planned to address this.

118. Children and young people are able to contribute effectively to performance management, service development and review, with their views being taken into account. Young people have contributed to the review of youth service provision and to evaluation of progress against the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Members of the Young Life Forum of children and young people aged six to 13 years have appraised projects and made recommendations to Greenwich Children's Fund Steering Group that have been accepted.

119. The capacity of the council and its partners to further improve outcomes is good. Strong leadership is provided by the Director, his management team and by the Lead Member, and the children's agenda is fully accepted as a corporate council priority. There is a good level of awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of services to children and young people. Robust and timely action is taken to address weakness within the context of a good level of understanding of need, at the same time as delivering the comprehensive and well-targeted CYPP and achieving good value for money. The findings of this inspection are largely consistent with the findings of the council and its partners in the self-assessment.



## **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 Greenwich and good leadership from the senior managers and the lead member makes a significant contribution to this. Ten priorities have been identified for children's services as a result of consultation with partners and stakeholders, which produced an extensive body of information. This included a range of data and intelligence about the diverse and changing demography of the borough; characteristics that needed to be understood if priorities were to be targeted correctly to meet needs.

2. Partnership working is increasingly well established and performing well and the developing Children's Trust and the recently integrated Children's Services Directorate that brought together education, social care and the youth service are central to this process. Extensions to the Trust Board membership will extend these improvements. Performance management across children's services is increasingly effective and rigorous. It has led to better quality performance management information upon which service developments have been built. For example the increased take-up of direct payments to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities occurred as a result of action planned and implemented following an analysis of a range of relevant data.

3. Most children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy their education, have the opportunity to make decisions and take personal responsibility, and are at least adequately prepared for working life. Inter-agency work is frequently identified as being necessary to meet the needs of children and young people and the focus on delivering services to children in their communities has meant that local professionals have worked together more effectively. Local health services work well in this way and are delivering a range of preventative services targeted at identified need.

4. Children and young people who are most at risk are generally protected well and the numbers of children who are on the child protection register or who have been re-registered have fallen. Although the numbers of children who are looked after by the council remain higher than comparators, good preventative work is reducing the numbers of teenagers entering the care system. However, despite targeting services, the number of younger children from families in which drug and alcohol use is prevalent and who enter the care system remains high. Corporate parenting is improving, with members increasingly providing leadership.

5. Most children make at least satisfactory progress from low starting points during their education. Services are responding effectively to the needs of an increasingly diverse and mobile school population and are providing robust challenge and support to schools in most need. As a result standards have

improved most rapidly at Key Stages 2 and 3 and are now in line with similar authorities and the proportion of schools placed in a category of concern by Ofsted is below that of similar authorities. Results at the end of the Foundation Stage improved in 2006 but remain below average, as do standards at Key Stage 1 and GCSE. Services are engaging partners successfully, including schools and early years settings, in the drive to improve the quality of provision and raise standards in these areas. Looked after children generally attend well at school but their achievement is below that of comparators. There is good support for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

6. The council and its partners promote children and young people's development through their involvement in decision making and consultation forums such as the Greenwich Young People's Council and school councils, some of which impact directly by improving the delivery of services. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities contribute well and have good access to support services that enable them to do so. Young people are also active volunteers, with over 2,500 involved in some form of activity. The youth service has been successful in working well with many young people and has exceeded the national target figure in doing so.

7. An expanded network of childcare and targeted support initiatives has helped to increase the take-up of childcare places to support parents in education, work or training. The expansion of the vocational curriculum in Greenwich has resulted in increased participation. Support in vocational centres to young people with additional needs is good. Work-based learning is at an early stage of expansion. However, there has been particularly good use of corporate funding derived from economic regeneration and development activity on the Greenwich Peninsular, notably around funding and supporting projects to get local people into employment and associated training projects. Care leavers have highly valued receiving good, individualised guidance and support to assist them in preparing for work.