

# Joint area review

**Cornwall Children's Services Authority Area**

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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  
Ofsted

**Age group:** All

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## Introduction

1. The most recent Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for Cornwall County Council judged both the effectiveness of its children's services and their capacity to improve as adequate.
2. This report assesses the contribution of the range of agencies which form the local strategic partnership for children's 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 improving post-16 attainment, particularly for vulnerable groups
  - the impact of the partners' strategy in addressing substance and alcohol misuse.

## Context

4. Cornwall is a sparsely populated shire county where many of the main centres of population are coastal towns. This, and the topography of the county more generally, means that relatively few people have ready access to urban centres. Service provision must accordingly strike a balance between the efficiency that concentrating services in a few centres can bring and the need to ensure reasonably equitable access for all. Inevitably, the need to spread the delivery of some services involves additional costs.

5. Total population is just over 500,000, with a somewhat lower proportion in the 0–15 age range than the national average and a significantly higher proportion of pensionable age. The great majority of the population is White British, a much higher proportion than the national average. White European is much the largest minority ethnic group. Levels of deprivation are in the middle range for English counties, but there are significant pockets of very high needs.

6. Early years education and/or day-care provision is offered by nearly 900 different providers, the great majority of which are in the private and voluntary sector. More than half are childminders. Pre-16 education provision in schools is made in two nursery schools, 237 primary schools, 31 secondary schools, four special schools and six pupil referral units (PRU). There are 34 children's centres and 162 schools providing full core extended school services (59% of all schools).

7. Post-16 education and training provision is made by Cornwall College and Truro College, both of which have a number of sites; 15 school sixth forms; about 10 independent training providers; and a range of other organisations which deliver some training within the county. Entry to Employment provision is commissioned by the integrated youth support service and comprises about 450 places annually. Adult and community learning, including family learning, is provided by the Cornwall Adult Education Service.

8. Primary care is provided by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Primary Care Trust (PCT). Acute hospital services are provided by the Royal Cornwall Hospitals and Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trusts. Mental health services are provided by the Cornwall Partnership NHS and Plymouth Hospitals Trust.

9. Children's social care services are provided through six area offices and by 346 foster carers, 17 residential care homes and a family assessment unit.

10. There are no secure units or young offender institutions in the area. Services to children and young people who are at risk of offending or have offended are provided through the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Youth Offending Team.

11. Cornwall will become a unitary authority in April 2009. There are currently six district councils.

## Main Findings

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

- Safeguarding provision is adequate. Children and young people live in a reasonably safe environment and are well informed about risks. Serious concerns about their welfare are mainly responded to satisfactorily. Support for those experiencing domestic violence and arrangements to identify the whereabouts of children and young people who have gone missing from home are very good. However, support for mental health problems is poor. Casework recording and some middle management within the local authority's social care service is unsatisfactory. Day-care and other provision for families with young children is good. Provision for young carers is inadequate.
- Provision for looked after children is adequate. Care placements change relatively often and this remains a weakness. However, foster carers are now much better trained and placement stability generally is improving. Levels of adoption and special guardianship are comparatively very good. Educational provision is good, as is support overall for care leavers. Young people are increasingly able to have a say in decisions about their care.
- Provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate. Educational provision is good and a significantly higher proportion of young people are in mainstream schools than the

national average. Therapy provision is thin on the ground and for some young people it is poor. Support for some families, including respite care provision, is inadequate.

- Young people are given adequate support for their education, employment or training activities post-16. Provision for the great majority of young people is adequate or better and in some cases outstanding. However, some young people do not receive full and impartial information and guidance and the quality of provision is too dependent on where they attend. Transport is a significant barrier for many young people in accessing educational provision and employment. There is a lack of collective responsibility amongst schools, further education colleges and other providers for planning 14–19 education and training provision for the county as a whole.
- Provision to dissuade young people from substance and alcohol misuse and to support those with problems is adequate. Young people are well educated about the dangers involved but this fails to convince many. Services are better at helping with established and serious misuse than intervening early. Information and training for key hospital staff, GPs and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) workers is inadequate.
- Services for children and young people are adequately managed and have a satisfactory capacity to improve. Leadership at senior level is very good and there are effective working relationships between the main public services. Measures taken to assess local needs are good. However, action planning often lacks precision, including clear outcome measures and action milestones against which progress can be assessed. Insufficient attention is given to securing value for money. Access to some services is inequitable between local areas.

## Grades

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

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

## 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
- improve CAMHS provision
- take steps to identify all the young carers locally and ensure that provision is made to meet their needs
- ensure that information and training is provided for key hospital staff, GPs and CAMHS workers on substance and alcohol misuse and the available support services, including training in the use of the Substance Use Screening Tool (SUST).

The local authority should:

- improve casework recording within its social care service
- improve the monitoring and evaluation of casework by middle managers within its social care service.

### For action over the next six months

The local authority should:

- secure further improvements in placement stability for its looked after children
- improve respite care provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly young people with challenging behaviour.

The PCT should:

- improve speech and language therapy provision, particularly for older age groups.

The local partnership should:

- ensure that impartial information, advice and guidance is provided to all young people to guide post-16 choices
- improve provision for young people with problems of alcohol and substance misuse

- give greater attention to ensuring that the delivery of children's services provides good value for money.

### **For action in the longer term**

The local partnership should:

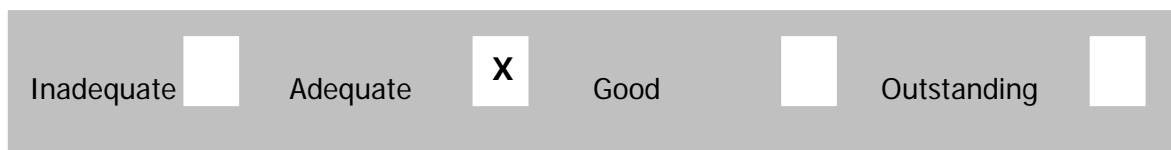
- extend key worker/lead professional support to a wider range of families with children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and, in particular, clarify the role of the local authority's social care service in such respects
- develop a better sense of collective responsibility amongst schools, further education colleges and other providers for the need to plan 14–19 education and training provision for the county as a whole, with the best interests of learners at the heart of the planning process
- develop a coherent, strategic approach to tackling the transport problems which are restricting the access of many young people to education, employment and training and opportunities
- give greater attention to ensuring that access to services is reasonably equitable across the county.

### **Equality and diversity**

13. The local strategic partnership for children and young people actively promotes equality of opportunity and the celebration of diversity. There is a clear, shared commitment to this work, with delivery backed up by specialist support teams. Whilst there is a clear focus on the needs of minority ethnic groups, there remains a perception amongst some of these groups that equalities and diversity issues do not have a sufficiently high priority at the most senior level. Partners have a clear understanding of the needs of minority and disadvantaged groups. Equality impact statements have been completed by the major partners for each of their services, and these help direct developments. There is an extensive programme to 'train the trainers' in schools to support the development of local equality schemes. Other activities include motivational workshops, training courses for middle managers, and one-to-one training for senior managers. A number of initiatives raise awareness of and tackle racism and other prejudice. Racist incidents in schools show a generally falling trend over the past four years. There is a relatively low incidence of hate crime in the county compared to statistical neighbours. A significantly higher proportion of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is educated in mainstream schools than the national average. The partnership recently organised a conference to address sexual orientation issues and has established a multi-agency team to progress this work.



## Safeguarding



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

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Very good support for families with young children, particularly for those in deprived areas, including early years education and day-care and children's centre provision.</p> <p>Very good multi-agency provision to address domestic violence and to support its victims.</p> <p>A high quality template for schools to help them evaluate their contribution to safeguarding provision.</p> <p>Very good multi-agency arrangements to identify the whereabouts of children and young people who have gone missing from home.</p> <p>Good quality provision for children and young people who need to be educated other than in school.</p>	<p>Inadequate casework recording within the local authority's social care service.</p> <p>Inadequate management by some middle managers within the local authority's social care service, including the conduct of case audits.</p> <p>Inadequate CAMHS provision.</p> <p>Inadequate provision for young carers.</p>

15. Services are collaborating well to build a range of provision to identify family problems early and to provide support to stop them getting worse. However, current provision is the product of a development programme which, whilst well-conceived and effectively pursued, started later and from a weaker starting point than elsewhere. The development of extended school provision, for example, has exceeded the September 2008 interim target for schools making the core offer and is on track to meet government requirements for 2010. However, it did not start from a strong base in terms of established multi-agency working in many schools and its current stage of development reflects this.

16. There is an extensive network of children's centre provision and this is a strength. The centres operate both as the location for a good range of service provision and an effective communication hub for a wider network of services. Working relationships are good, family needs are viewed holistically, and provision

is well targeted and coordinated. Very good steps are taken to ensure that early years education and day-care provision more generally provide a good match to family needs. Individual parents and carers also get good information and support to help them access suitable provision. The quality of provision is comparatively good and, notably, helps to ensure that, at the end of the foundation stage, those from the most deprived areas achieve significantly better, relative to the average, than in most other local authorities.

17. The implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process is accelerating but it has not yet been consistently established across the county. Its use is currently patchy, with significant numbers of staff across agencies lacking awareness of and/or confidence in the process. Also, in an attempt to tackle an over-dependence on the local authority's social work service to meet lower level needs, front line social workers have been deliberately distanced from CAF developments. Key opportunities to develop mutual understanding and trust have been missed as a consequence and the CAF has yet to be fully embedded in a clear and well-understood hierarchy of referral, assessment and planning processes. Many social workers are unclear about what can reasonably be expected of other agencies in providing family support. These uncertainties cut both ways and result in a failure to make the best use of available resources.

18. Child protection procedures are well-designed and the associated training for staff is good. Good information is made widely available to the public, in easy to understand ways, on how to raise child protection concerns. The procedures operate satisfactorily overall, with the police making a particularly positive contribution. Multi-agency provision to address domestic violence and to support its victims is comprehensive and well-coordinated at both strategic and operational levels. This includes robust procedures to deal with the high incidence of domestic violence in service families. There is good collaborative working in this respect between the naval police, the civilian police and the naval welfare service.

19. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that local authority employees and contractors are suitable to work with children and young people. The work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in monitoring practice more widely is developing well. Adequate arrangements are in place for the management of allegations against staff. An excellent template has been provided to schools to help them evaluate their contribution to safeguarding provision. Multi-agency public protection arrangements are good.

20. Good progress has been made over the last year in developing the work of LSCB. This is now well managed and benefits from a very good level of staffing support paid for by partner agencies. The independent chair provides robust oversight and direction and has developed effective working relationships with senior managers in partner agencies and elected members of the local authority. As with other related work, however, the recent improvement was from a low base. This was particularly demonstrated by the unsatisfactory way in which serious case reviews were conducted. Although some lessons were learned from these reviews they were not systematically disseminated and follow-up action was not rigorously

monitored. New review and monitoring procedures, backed up by an extensive training programme, have now been agreed and these are well designed to address the weaknesses.

21. The local authority's children's social work service has improved significantly since early 2007, but from a very low base. Major weaknesses were identified through inspection and annual performance assessment in early 2005 and late 2006. In between those dates there was limited improvement only and this was not sustained. Given this major 'false start', it is to the credit of the current senior management team that practice at the front line has improved significantly and is now adequate overall, as is the management of casework by social workers' immediate line managers. The morale of front-line staff is now good. Responses to the great majority of referrals are in line with required timescales and the quality of assessments is adequate. Whilst social care support for families in crisis is adequate overall, access is inequitable across the county and sometimes inadequate.

22. The thresholds for social care service involvement are appropriate, although not well understood by all those who might make referrals. All child protection cases are allocated to qualified workers and are transferred appropriately between teams to ensure effective longer term management. Cases are reviewed in a timely way. Children and young people and parents and carers are given good support in participating in child protection processes. Children who are the subject of child protection plans appear safe. Key performance indicators are moving in the right direction. For example, re-registrations of children with a previous child protection plan have reduced from 22% to 16%. No indicator is at a level which gives serious cause for concern.

23. The quality of recording of social care casework is very variable and often poor. In many cases it falls significantly short of capturing the quality of both the work done by social workers and the input of their immediate line managers. Also, the action planned is frequently not accompanied by clear and measurable objectives. This provides a poor platform for evaluating the success of the action subsequently and deciding whether a change of course is needed. As a consequence a significant minority of cases are allowed to 'drift', with intervention continuing to follow established but ineffective lines. Some more senior middle managers within the social care service have failed to identify and put right these various weaknesses. They also fail to monitor and evaluate sufficiently regularly and rigorously the quality of casework and line management, including professional supervision, within their teams. They do not make adequate use of the considerable performance management data currently available to them.

24. Good quality information and guidance is provided to children and young people and parents about safety generally, both at home and elsewhere. The promotion of healthy lifestyles is adequate overall, but with resources often thinly spread and patchy in terms of both accessibility and impact. Measures aimed at reducing teenage conception and the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases are adequate. Teenage pregnancy rates are below the national average, as they have been for several years, and in line with those in similar areas. Targeted action has

had some success in tackling high rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases in particular localities. However, teenage pregnancy rates increased in other areas at the same time and have remained little changed overall. The county is not currently on track to meet the government's target for reduction by 2010. Work to address substance misuse has similar characteristics (see more detailed coverage of this topic in the section on substance and alcohol misuse below). Services are successful generally in ensuring that children and young people are well informed about risky behaviours. However, they are much less successful in affecting their actual behaviour. Services are much better at providing support for individuals after problems have become serious than in identifying and providing support for emerging problems at an earlier stage.

25. This last point also applies to the provision of CAMHS. These are inadequate overall, both poorly integrated and patchy. There are also difficulties in securing adequate mental health services for adults who are parents. A recent reorganisation of specialist CAMHS provision, whilst soundly based, has also had a temporary, disruptive effect on service delivery. Most children and young people, unless they are in crisis, wait far too long to access provision. A particular deficiency, recognised now in development plans and backed up with some additional resourcing, has been in training a wider range of non-specialist staff to recognise and provide help with mental health needs at an early stage. A further need, similarly recognised by providers, and with additional resourcing agreed, is to establish better coordination of the different levels of CAMHS provision.

26. Children and young people feel significantly more safe around their local area and in travelling on public transport than the average for the rest of the country. They also feel a little safer than the average when at school and when going to and from school. All schools have clear policies and procedures to reduce bullying and harassment, to record and report incidents, and to support victims. Peer mediation provision is being successfully developed. Education about cyber bullying, internet safety and the dangers posed by strangers is good. Adequate steps are taken to ensure that cases of children and young people who are missing from education are properly followed up and to check that appropriate provision is made by parents who choose to educate their children at home. Where children and young people need to be educated other than in school, the amount of provision meets statutory requirements and is of good quality.

27. Multi-agency arrangements to identify the whereabouts of children and young people who have gone missing from home are very good. A proactive and effective approach has also been taken to raising awareness of the importance of identifying cases of private fostering and notifying them to the local authority. However, the local authority recognises the need to respond more speedily and efficiently to notifications. Training has included very useful coverage of the international aspects of private fostering and child trafficking.

28. Multi-agency work to reduce offending and other anti-social behaviour by children and young people is adequate. Referral and planning processes for early intervention are clear and well understood. However, referral criteria are unhelpful in ensuring that the highest priority cases are identified and referred. This puts too much onus on multi-agency panel discussions to ensure consistency. Intervention subsequently is adequate overall. There are good links between the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the other key agencies involved and this ensures appropriate focus on both the local areas and groups at highest risk. The YOT provides adequate supervision and support to young offenders overall, with some particularly effective practice such as the "White Gold" assertive outreach scheme. Key component parts of associated provision, such as CAMHS provision for young offenders up to age 16, and education and training support, are also adequate. However, screening for substance misuse and emotional and mental health needs is not routine and services for young offenders generally are not well coordinated. This includes provision for young people released from custody.

29. Provision for young carers is inadequate. Services have a poor grasp of how many young people are involved and what support services, if any, each receives. Such little specialist provision as exists is heavily overloaded.

30. The lack of suitable, affordable and adequate quality housing is a major problem for many families. However, the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and single young people who are homeless is now very low and there has been a substantial reduction in the number of families in temporary accommodation.

## Looked after children and young people



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

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>High levels of adoption and special guardianship.</p> <p>Good training and support for foster carers.</p> <p>Good educational support.</p>	<p>Insufficient care placement choice and poor placement stability.</p> <p>Inadequate CAMHS provision.</p>

<p>Good provision for care leavers including support for the transition to education, employment and training post-16 and the provision of suitable, safe and affordable accommodation for care leavers.</p>	
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32. The proportion of children and young people looked after in Cornwall is continuing to decrease from a high level and is now broadly in line with that in similar areas. This is the result of more effective preventative work, including the use of family group conferences, improved intervention in family crises, and more use of placements within wider family networks. Whilst family support services are variable across the county, the improvements made to date represent considerable progress over a relatively short period of time from a poor starting point.

33. The percentage of children and young people in foster placements or placed for adoption is comparable with similar councils. The average stability of care placements overall in Cornwall is still comparatively poor at about 18% for 2007–08, compared to 11% in 2006–07 for similar councils. However, this figure represents a significant improvement over the year from the county's wholly inadequate starting point in 2006–07. The lack of sufficient, suitable care placements was a key factor contributing to poor stability. Some placements were straightforwardly unsuitable. In other cases children and young people were placed so far from home and school that their longer term interests were poorly served. Robust and comprehensive action has been taken to improve matters, in particular to secure access to a wider range of good quality placements which are better able to meet individual needs. The council is now part of a regional consortium for commissioning provision in the independent sector and better training has been provided for both foster carers and residential staff in the local authority's own children's homes. Care placement planning and review arrangements have also been strengthened. Foster carers now have access to a good range of training opportunities and receive appropriate recognition in financial terms of improved skills. Incidents of challenging behaviour by young people in residential homes have reduced by 50% over two years as a result of better training for staff on managing behaviour. The quality of most of the local authority's children's homes is good and there is regular monitoring of this provision by local authority officers and elected members. Both foster placements and those in independent children's homes, which are relatively few, are also monitored regularly.

34. Arrangements for the adoption of children and young people are good. The percentage of children adopted, or who leave care after the granting of a special guardianship order, is better than the average for similar councils and the speed with which placements are made has improved significantly to the point where it is in line with the average elsewhere. All adoption staff have received good quality training on equality and diversity issues and an increasing number of same sex couples and single adults have been recruited as adopters.

35. Almost all looked after children are allocated to a qualified social worker. The support they provide is adequate overall and in some cases good. However, the recording of both planning and action taken within social care case files shares the weaknesses outlined earlier for other safeguarding work. There is likewise a lack of rigorous management input in a significant minority of cases, including intervention to avoid planning 'drift'. Legal advice for social workers is good. A protocol has recently been agreed which clarifies and strengthens inter-agency arrangements to support children and young people through key transitions in their lives. There is also very effective multi-agency working to reduce the numbers of young people missing from care.

36. The number of health assessments for looked after children increased from 80% to 87% of the possible maximum total in 2007–08 and is now similar to the national average. There is also a good take-up of voluntary screening for substance misuse. Dental checks are carried out regularly but there is a lack of consistently good access to dental treatment across the county. Access to CAMHS provision is not consistently equitable or timely, although good support is provided by the looked after children psychology service and a part-time psychiatrist. There is designated doctor and nurse provision but this is currently unable to offer a service to young people leaving care. Increased resourcing has recently been agreed to cover this gap and is in the process of being deployed. Health care audits have been used effectively to improve practice, for example in the recording of health assessments. However, lack of resources has resulted in no audit this year.

37. Educational support for looked after children is good. This is reflected in young people's achievements in tests and exams which compare well with those in most other local authorities. For example, in 2007 almost 20% of looked after children achieved five or more higher level GCSE passes, which is well above the national average. Schools are monitored and challenged effectively to improve their provision for looked after children and all have designated teachers. Good support is provided when looked after children are at risk of exclusion and school attendance levels are much higher than in similar local authorities. The council also goes to great lengths to maintain stability of school placement when care placements change. Provision for looked after children with special educational needs (SEN) in out-of-county placements is monitored annually, although education and social care monitoring visits tend to take place separately, which is unhelpful. The majority of looked after children have good access to a reasonable range of leisure and recreational activities.

38. Young people are increasingly contributing to reviews of their care, although participation is still low in comparison with similar councils. An audit of cases established that reviews were insufficiently child-friendly and that children and young people were not given sufficient encouragement and support to participate. Effective action is being taken to address these weaknesses. Also, independent reviewing managers are providing effective challenge and support for the processes involved and are contributing helpfully to their further improvement. A small number of young people are now chairing their own reviews. The participation of children and young people in service planning and review more generally is

increasing and has already had a positive impact on service development. The local authority fulfils its corporate parenting responsibilities adequately and there is an increasing acceptance of collective responsibility across all of the council's services. This applies similarly to the local authority's key partner agencies. Children and young people have made a significant contribution in particular to the draft parenting strategy, which recognises that they still need to be involved more systematically in service development. Young people know how to make complaints and have adequate access to advocacy support, through a recently re-commissioned service.

39. There has been a reduction in the number of looked after children issued with a final warning/reprimand for offending behaviour and the latest figures are below the 2006–07 national average.

40. The majority of care leavers benefit from good personal support for their transition to independence, although support to develop specific independent living skills is not consistent and some do not feel sufficiently prepared. All care leavers have personal advisers and most eligible care leavers have pathway plans. These plans are comprehensive and include a good analysis of risk. The proportion of care leavers in education, employment and training post-16 is very high and continues to increase. Young people receive good support from Connexions workers in particular. The number of care leavers going to university is small, as elsewhere, but increasing. Apprenticeship opportunities for looked after children within the council are being trialled later this year.

41. There is good partnership work with district councils in terms of securing suitable, safe and affordable accommodation for care leavers and good provision is now made for all new care leavers. Clear standards have recently been adopted to ensure that the quality of supported lodgings is improved and there has been little use of temporary bed and breakfast provision during the last year.

## Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outstanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
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42. **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 assessment of need and delivery of provision for young children with complex and/or severe needs.</p> <p>Very good provision in both special schools and area resource bases for special educational needs in mainstream secondary schools.</p> <p>Good residential respite care provision in health service premises for children and young people with severe and/or complex physical disabilities.</p> <p>Good educational provision and associated personal support for most young people post-16.</p>	<p>Inadequate speech and language therapy provision.</p> <p>Inadequate specialist CAMHS provision.</p> <p>The lack of key worker/lead professional support for many families.</p> <p>Inadequate respite care provision for some young people with very challenging behaviour.</p> <p>Very limited consultation with young people on service quality and planning beyond that specifically relating to them as individuals.</p>

43. Where children's needs are complex and/or severe agencies work well together to assess in a timely way what their response should be. Provision for young children is good both individually and collectively. Child development centres across the county provide good multi-disciplinary support and there is very effective specialist nursery provision. Pre-school educational provision more generally is very good, providing both stimulating activities for children and good support for families, including the development of parenting skills. Special educational needs coordinators give good support to all early years settings.

44. Educational provision in both special schools and area resource bases (ARBs) for SEN in mainstream secondary schools is very good. ARBs make a significant contribution to keeping the proportion of Cornwall's pupil population educated in special schools significantly lower than the national average. They are also very successful in ensuring full inclusion in all aspects of school activity. However, there is no area resource base in the Penwith area, meaning long journeys to suitable provision for the young people concerned. In mainstream schools more generally, provision for learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly better than the statistical neighbour and national averages in secondary schools but worse in primaries. Monitoring, challenge and support for schools to improve their provision is adequate overall. Transitions between the different phases of educational provision are well managed.

45. Planning and review of educational provision for individual children and young people is good. Full assessments of SEN are now completed in a timely way. The quality of SEN statements is satisfactory and improving, partly as a result of the better involvement of young people themselves. Children and young people are

more effectively involved in all such processes than hitherto, as a result of encouragement and skilled support from staff. Targets in both statements and individual education plans are clear and reasonably precise and progress is regularly reviewed. The great majority of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities feel safe at school, know what to do if they have concerns, and are confident that any concerns will be responded to effectively. Staff in all the key agencies have a good understanding of the particular safeguarding needs associated with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

46. Therapy services across the county are inadequate overall. Provision is inequitable between local areas and this includes some significant local shortages. Speech and language therapy (SALT) provision in particular does not meet need, particularly at secondary level. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy resources are also limited. Recruitment and retention of suitably qualified SALT staff is an additional key problem. Therapists generally work well with school staff to train them in delivering the programmes they have devised and this helps to make best use of specialist expertise. Significant improvements have been made in the provision of wheelchairs and specialist equipment for use at home and this is now adequate. CAMHS provision for most children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is poor and referring agencies are unclear about the qualifying criteria. Most provision is made in response to crises, particularly in managing very challenging behaviour. Provision when made is good. The recent appointment of a learning difficulties psychiatrist is a significant step forward in strengthening the service.

47. A considerable range of information is published for parents and carers about the services available. However, this information is failing to reach much of its target audience. Few families have a key worker or lead professional to help them in finding relevant information or to support them in accessing services. As a consequence, many parents/carers, particularly those with older children with very challenging behaviour, feel isolated and unsupported. Many do not meet the criteria for support from the specialist teams within the local authority's social care service. There is also confusion about what can reasonably be expected from other teams within that service. This, allied to high staff turnover within some of the social care teams for children with disabilities, means that the social care service contributes relatively little to the provision for most families. Better support is provided by multi-agency teams in settings like children's centres and schools, including extended schools. However, the use of the CAF to secure holistic and well-coordinated provision is currently limited and other arrangements are ad hoc and inconsistently effective. Good quality residential respite care is provided for some families, for example in health service provision for children and young people with severe and/or complex disabilities. However, there is insufficient respite care provision for other families, including some with young people with very challenging behaviour. This is particularly so for family-based, foster care provision.

48. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are involved effectively in mainstream, open access youth service projects and extended school activities as well as in more targeted provision. The NCH play scheme: SPACE and

the Aspire programme for 13–18 year olds are particularly valued by users. However, making use of mainstream leisure provision almost always requires parents/carers to be present, and often actively involved in supporting their child, for the entire session. This presents a significant barrier to access for some, as does cost of entry. Transport to provision is a problem for many.

49. Whilst many young people and parents/carers are involved effectively in planning and reviewing their individual provision, wider consultation to date on service quality and development planning has been largely inadequate. Where consultation has taken place there has usually been little feedback on the impact of the views expressed. However, the Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) forum is now making good progress in meeting the requirements of the EDCM charter and clear strategies are in place to improve the participation of children and young people in planning and evaluating services. The parent partnership service is also developing as an important focus for the collation and expression to providers of parents' views. The service also provides good practical and emotional support to parents at key points in the SEN assessment, planning and review processes. However, its two part-time workers are very stretched in covering the whole county.

50. Connexions personal advisers provide good support for young people for the transition to post-school education and training provision and/or employment. Local colleges and other providers offer good, and in some cases excellent, curricular provision and personal support for most young people post-16. Truro College in particular is effective in meeting a wide range of individual needs. Participation in education and training provision, including work-based learning, is high by comparison with similar areas. However, there is insufficient specialist provision in the county for some young people aged 18 and over with one or more of severe learning difficulties, severe autistic spectrum disorders, and significant challenging behaviour.

51. A well-designed protocol for managing the transition from children's to adult social care services was recently agreed between relevant agencies and recently appointed transition workers are helping to improve the transition process. However, care provision for the 18–25 age group does not meet the needs of many families and there are still unacceptable delays in securing appropriate provision for some young people at the point of transfer.

52. Housing provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate. Support to secure necessary adaptations to family homes is improving from a poor base and is now satisfactory, albeit still patchy across local areas. Planning to meet the future supported accommodation needs of young people who wish to live independently is good and providers have shown themselves willing to incur considerable expenditure to meet individual needs and wishes. A Changing Housing Opportunities In Cornwall for Everyone (CHOICE) worker is now in post and is providing valuable support to social workers and housing officers to secure a range of suitable housing in each local area.

## Other issues identified for further investigation

### The impact of the partners' strategy in improving post-16 attainment, particularly for vulnerable groups

53. The impact of the partners' strategy in improving post-16 attainment, particularly for vulnerable groups, is adequate.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Good educational provision and associated support for vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Effective re-engagement of young people who have become disaffected with education or who have dropped out of training or employment post-16.</p> <p>Success rates in most post-16 provision in further education colleges.</p> <p>Consistently high rates of participation in education and training post-16 and low rates of young people not in education, employment or training post-16.</p>	<p>Inequitable access to education and training options for young people across the county.</p> <p>A lack of comprehensive and impartial information, advice and guidance for young people in some secondary schools to guide post-16 choices.</p> <p>The lack of acceptance by schools, further education colleges and other providers of collective responsibility for planning 14–19 education and training provision.</p> <p>The lack of a coherent, strategic approach to tackling the transport problems which are restricting the access of many young people to education, training and employment opportunities.</p>

54. Whilst Level 2 attainment in secondary schools up to the age of 16 is improving, the recent rate of improvement has not matched the national trend. There is evidence, in particular, of plateauing of performance at GCSE five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. This remains below the average for statistical neighbours. The range of vocational education provision at Key Stage 4 has increased. All but two of the county's 31 secondary schools have links with the further education colleges to provide vocational provision for 14–16 year olds.

55. In contrast to the picture on Level 2 attainment at age 16, the proportion of young people achieving at least one GCSE pass at A\* to G has steadily improved and is above average. This is testimony in particular to the effective support provided to vulnerable groups. For example, good preventative work has helped reduce the number of young people excluded from school and improve school attendance. For those needing education other than at school the quality of alternative education in PRUs is also good. Most pupils leaving PRUs at the end of Year 11 move on to further education, employment or training. Alternative

education programmes under the "Freestyle" banner are also effective in working with disaffected young people aged 14-16. Schools, further education colleges and other providers work closely with Connexions to re-engage such young people through a range of provision, including vocational taster courses. Many young people progress from this provision into further education or training post-16, mainly to vocational courses.

56. The provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG) for young people on post-16 choices is inconsistent. Although all young people have access to good and impartial IAG through the Connexions service, the impartiality and comprehensiveness of the guidance provided by schools is more variable. This is particularly so in schools with sixth forms. Whilst the great majority of Year 11 students leaving 11–16 schools choose to transfer to a college of further education rather than a school sixth form, most in 11–18 schools choose to stay in their school. This difference between the two groups is much greater than can reasonably be explained by a simple wish for some within the latter group to 'stay with what's familiar'. The electronic county-wide prospectus of provision is not yet extensively used by young people and its impact has been limited.

57. Overall Level 2 attainment by age 19 in the county has improved significantly over the last three years and now compares well with most of its statistical neighbours. Level 3 attainment by age 19 has improved since 2003/04, but remains 9<sup>th</sup> of 11 within the county's statistical neighbour group, with no closing of the gap between the county's figure and the statistical neighbour average.

58. About a quarter of young people in the 16–19 age group in Cornwall who participate in education and training provision attend school sixth forms. Collectively there is little sixth form provision at Level 2 and many schools offer only a limited range of courses, focusing mainly on A-levels. The great majority of this provision is adequate or better. Value added overall is satisfactory. However, about a third of school A-level classes have five or fewer students and about another third have 10 or fewer students. This restricts young people's learning experiences and is an inefficient use of resources. The local authority is well aware of these issues and a member of the central 14-19 team is tasked with providing targeted support and challenge for school sixth forms.

59. The main opportunities for 16–19 year olds to achieve Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications are through provision available at the two further education colleges. Truro College was judged to be outstanding at its last inspection. Cornwall College was satisfactory but has since improved. Success rates at all three levels at Truro College have steadily improved and are above the national average, particularly at Level 3. At Cornwall College they are improving but remain below the national average at Levels 2 and 3. At Level 1, however, they have improved rapidly in recent years and are now above the national average, having been significantly below hitherto. Most of the work-based learning provision in the county is offered through the two colleges and there are few other providers in the county. Opportunities in certain key occupational areas such as construction and engineering are limited, with demand for places from young people currently

exceeding supply. However, successful completion of work-based learning courses is above the national average. In 2006/07 positive progression from Entry to Employment provision was 68%, well above the national figure of 48%.

60. Support for most vulnerable young people post-16 is good. This includes, in particular, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, teenage parents, and care leavers. Activity and learning agreements have both been used successfully in engaging young people from vulnerable groups in education and training provision. Cornwall has for several years had high levels of engagement in education and training post-16 compared to both the average for similar areas and nationally. The Connexions service provides good support for young people overall, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups and on reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Youth workers also engage effectively with young people who are NEET, through a good range of projects and styles of working, including mentoring in schools and colleges to encourage course completion. NEET figures have been well below the national level for some time. However, approximately 20% of 16–18 year olds experience at least one period of being NEET, and many experience a number of such periods.

61. This last point reflects, in part at least, the limited availability of well-paid and high-skill employment opportunities locally and the prevalence of seasonal work in some areas. It also reflects the fact that transport is a major issue for many young people, particularly in the far north and west of the county. The limited availability of public transport restricts some young people's options, including access to a full choice of education and training courses, to work-based learning opportunities, and to employment. If it doesn't make accessing such opportunities impossible, it does make taking them up and sticking with them very much more difficult. Some good links are being developed with local employers to improve opportunities for young people, particularly in the areas of information technology and marine-based occupations. However, the obvious links between the strategy to improve post-16 attainment in the county and the strategic plans for regeneration and transport are not explored in detail in any of these documents.

62. Collaboration between institutions to plan and deliver post-16 provision is comparatively limited. The local authority is supporting the development of collaborative working, both between schools and between schools and colleges, and local delivery partnerships between schools and colleges have been established with varying degrees of success. However, the focus to date has mainly been on developing the new diploma provision. There is little sense that schools and further education colleges accept collective responsibility for the need to develop post-16 provision for the county as a whole, with the best interests of learners at the heart of the planning process.

63. The current 14–19 strategy lacks a detailed implementation plan with clear targets and milestones. It focuses too narrowly on the development of diploma provision, rather than extending the curriculum offer more generally and securing better value for money.

## The impact of the partners' strategy in addressing substance and alcohol misuse

64. The impact of the partners' strategy in addressing substance and alcohol misuse is adequate.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Very good information and advice for children and young people about the dangers of using illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco.</p> <p>Effective support for young people with established and severe problems of substance and alcohol misuse.</p> <p>Good quality training for a wide range of staff on using the SUST for assessment and early intervention.</p>	<p>Very limited capacity for specialist services to work with young people with other than severe problems of alcohol and substance misuse.</p> <p>Inadequate information and training for key hospital staff, GPs and CAMHS workers on substance and alcohol misuse and the available support services, including training in the use of the SUST tool.</p> <p>The lack of coordination between specialist services for substance and alcohol abuse and CAMHS.</p>

65. The local strategic partnership, through its Drug and Alcohol Action Team, has recently agreed a substance and alcohol misuse action plan for 2008–09 which brings together for the first time its activities to address both substance and alcohol misuse by young people. The plan is comprehensive in coverage and is based on a good quality assessment of need which makes use of a wide range of intelligence. This includes the views of children and young people themselves and surveys of their lifestyles. The action plan is also appropriately linked to the overall strategic objective to improve the health and well-being of children, young people and families and to reduce inequalities. Prior to the production of the action plan there was an alcohol strategy document, a PCT strategic plan focusing on reducing smoking within the population as a whole, and a section within the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) identifying a key priority to encourage children and young people to "choose not to take illegal drugs". There was a lack of clear links between these plans and it was not clear how strategic objectives were driving action planning. It was not clear either that the links between the key themes, for example tobacco and cannabis use, had been properly thought through and that action was being planned in a coordinated way. To a degree, albeit much less so, this lack of clear links remains, particularly in terms of the relationship between work on substance/alcohol and tobacco use. Another weakness was that there were no clear links to strategies to address similar problems within the adult population, despite the fact that there are major factors in common, both within families and local communities. This has now been recognised in the new action plan.

66. The commissioning plan for 2008–09, which is linked to the new action plan, focuses appropriately on the main service gaps emerging from the needs assessment. For example, action is planned to address the current lack of any provision to deal with 'hidden harm' for young people in families which include adult alcohol or substance misusers. Alcohol misuse is clearly identified in planning documents as a serious and growing problem. There is a comparatively high level of hospital admissions of young people in the county for alcohol-related conditions and harm, particularly in hot spot areas. Both front-line staff and young people themselves also identify alcohol abuse as at least as serious a problem as substance misuse. In terms of the numbers involved and the collective adverse effects for individuals and society it is, in fact, the most serious local problem. The commissioning plan reflects an acceptance that addressing this problem must be a key priority.

67. Children and young people are well informed and advised about the dangers of using illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Most schools deliver specific substance and alcohol misuse education through their personal, social and health education programmes and all are also engaged to some degree in the Healthy Schools programme. The number achieving full healthy school status is good compared to the national average. A PCT health promotion worker provides good support to schools and colleges in encouraging the use of best practice in dealing with drug, alcohol and tobacco use. A "substance misuse toolkit", aimed at improving whole school awareness and changing attitudes to substance misuse, is currently being piloted. Young people themselves rate both schools and Connexions workers as good sources of information and advice. They believe that they get good information on risks to their health generally and on substance and alcohol misuse in particular.

68. As with some other key aspects of health education work, however, good information and advice is not enough to change the behaviour of many. Services are more effective in identifying and addressing developing and established problems for individual young people and vulnerable groups. A three-day training programme in the use of SUST, an initial screening tool to help staff identify young people who may have problems, has been delivered to over 700 staff across a wide range of services. This has increased the identification of substance misuse problems, improved the initial assessment of support needs, led to earlier and better initial intervention with those needs, and resulted in more and better quality referrals to specialist services. However, the lack of substance misuse training, including the use of SUST, for health staff in CAMHS, GP practices and hospitals is an acknowledged gap. The last of these is a significant weakness, particularly as an assessment tool for adults arriving at accident and emergency departments is already in use. Hospital staff also have poor knowledge of the available support services for young people with alcohol and substance misuse problems and how to make referrals to them.

69. The main specialist substance and alcohol misuse service, covering the whole of the county, is YZ-UP. This is a multi-agency service providing support for young people with illegal drug and alcohol misuse problems up to and including the most



severe. The service achieves very good outcomes for many of its clients, who receive intensive and long-term support. There has been good support in particular for looked after children, who highly value the service. Most stay in treatment longer than average with support extending beyond their leaving care. YZ-UP has good links with the Cornwall Partnership Trust's 'early intervention in psychosis' service. However, there are inadequate links with CAMHS more generally and this undermines well coordinated service delivery, for example to substance abusers who self-harm. The substance misuse service for young offenders is adequate.

70. The number of referrals to YZ-UP, including self-referrals, is increasing and this is a positive sign in terms of problems being identified and referred. However, the service is already unable to meet all the demands on it and is having to prioritise amongst its referrals. Whilst, quite appropriately, it is choosing to focus on those with the highest levels of risk, as demonstrated for example by chaotic behaviour, this approach obviously means that many opportunities are not being taken to intervene earlier when less damage has been done and there is arguably a better chance of success. Aspects of its provision are also patchy in terms of county-wide coverage. For example, the family support worker only operates within a 30-mile radius of Truro. Other posts are dependent on short-term grant funding and hence not wholly secure. The proportion of young people in treatment for substance misuse as a proportion of all those in treatment is comparatively low. The partners are on track to achieve the government's original target in such respects but not its more challenging target set this year.

71. Other services make a significant contribution to addressing the causes and/or consequences of illegal drug and alcohol misuse. Trelya, a youth project in West Cornwall, provides an outstanding service to vulnerable young people living in a deprived area, incorporating both education about alcohol and illegal drug use and support for individuals with established or developing problems. Recent work has focused in particular, and to good effect, on the growing problem of alcohol-related harm. Youth intervention police officers have also had a positive impact, both in terms of supporting education in schools and providing targeted intervention for groups of pupils exhibiting disruptive behaviour related to alcohol and illegal drug use. Joint working by police and trading standards officers has focused on the rigorous enforcement of licensing laws through test purchasing exercises and the promotion of best operating practice. Police also target 'hotspots', seizing and disposing of alcohol from young people drinking outdoors. This has resulted in a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour in the areas concerned.

72. There has been adequate progress in the implementation of the plan to reduce smoking by young people, and targets for the general population have been achieved. The number of young people engaged with the smoking reduction service over the past four years has increased, with the "quit rate at 4 weeks" success indicator improving from 26% to 38%. A well-designed peer smoking education programme is soon to be implemented across all schools.

## Service Management



## Capacity to improve



**73. Both the management of services for children and young people and the capacity to improve further are adequate.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Good quality needs assessment based on a wide range of intelligence sources.</p> <p>Very good leadership at senior level.</p> <p>Consistently constructive and effective working relationships between partner agencies with a strong commitment to common goals.</p> <p>Effective prioritisation.</p>	<p>Lack of precision and rigour within action planning, including the establishment of a firm platform for subsequent performance management.</p> <p>Insufficient action to ensure the delivery of value for money.</p> <p>Inequitable access to some services between local areas.</p>

74. There is a clear and compelling vision for the development of children's services in Cornwall in the CYPP for 2008–11. The plan also demonstrates a high level of ownership by partner agencies of the key ambitions for children's services. There are clear links with other key plans produced by the local authority and its partners. High level targets within the plan are challenging but realistic. Whilst due regard has been given in setting these targets to the resources available, there is limited reference to these in the plan itself.

75. The choice of key objectives has been informed by a wide-ranging needs assessment that draws on partners' good understanding of community needs. This is the first time that all such intelligence has been drawn together for the county as a whole. The needs assessment draws fully from a major programme of consultation with children and young people, including a wide range of vulnerable groups. The plan contains an explicit statement of the standards to underpin a common approach amongst partners to service commissioning in the future. The plan is testimony to the very effective leadership at senior level within partner agencies. This includes high profile championing of the needs of children and young

people and their families within the overall county-wide planning processes. Working relationships at senior level are consistently constructive and effective.

76. Effective prioritisation directs the resources available towards delivering the key priorities in the CYPP. The priorities set give adequate attention to equality and diversity issues. Equality impact assessments have recently been completed and plans are in place to ensure full compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. In more general terms, however, inequitable access to services remains a key issue, with significant local variations in provision. The priorities for children's services are compatible with, and closely linked to, those for the county more generally. For example, developments to put in place the new unitary local authority organisation from April 2009 are planned to deliver significant financial savings and these have been earmarked to contribute in a major way to improving children's services. There is a good link between development planning for children's services and the local authority's medium-term financial plan. Risk management processes are also integral to service planning.

77. The CYPP appropriately identifies the development of preventative and early intervention services as a key objective. This is particularly so in sections dealing with health and anti-poverty objectives. Major changes are being made in the deployment of resources, in favour of the proportion devoted to preventative work. The major recent investments in opening children's centres and in developing extended school provision are good evidence of this.

78. Action plans to deliver strategic objectives are a weakness. Many lack precise and measurable outcome measures and targets and most do not identify clearly the resources required. Many are also specific to individual services and cover their contribution to a range of objectives. As a consequence, they do not show how individual service contributions are intended to combine to deliver each main objective or emphasise the inter-dependency of action. Also, they do not provide a sound platform for joint progress monitoring and review subsequently.

79. The local authority and its partners have effective governance arrangements both individually and collectively. These ensure that decision-making processes are transparent and sharply focused on delivering improvement. The responsibilities placed on the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services are discharged effectively. Relations between officers, elected members and other community representatives are positive.

80. Progress towards establishing formal children's trust arrangements has been relatively limited to date but is on target for delivery by 2011. However, voluntary sector organisations feel they are in danger of being marginalised within this development and that their potential as providers of children's services is not being exploited to best effect. Partner agencies have made limited use of budget pooling, preferring to concentrate instead on working together to deploy resources in their existing forms. Joint commissioning is otherwise limited, albeit developing. There have been some joint appointments by the local authority and the PCT which are helping to improve joint working. There has been little investment thus far in

encouraging the development of private and voluntary sector services to improve the range and quality of provision available for public agencies to purchase.

81. Adequate progress has been made in developing structures and processes for collaborative working, such as the CAF, where progress over the last year or so has been markedly better than hitherto. A late start from a relatively low base is characteristic of this and other developments, particularly in the area of social care provision.

82. Whilst each partner agency has its own workforce development strategy, there is very limited joint workforce planning at present. This is a weakness, although the pressing need to address major workforce issues in the move to unitary local authority status provides some mitigation. Middle management capability is patchy but adequate overall. Investment is being made in middle management training and development but in many cases this is at an early stage. The take-up of training for councillors is variable but has had some good impact in terms of improved understanding of key issues such as corporate parenting responsibilities.

83. Work to ensure that the partnership delivers good value for money is at an early stage and under-developed generally, although the local authority has committed itself to delivering £15m efficiency savings by 2011. Limited use is currently made of unit cost comparisons and of external benchmarking data more generally. There is little evidence to date of the impact of this work. Most self-evaluation of local authority services to date shows comparatively high costs relative to performance. Basic financial control is, however, good.

84. The local authority has a comprehensive performance management system, focusing on key performance indicators, both local and national. Seventy-five per cent of children's performance indicators improved in 2006–07. Senior officers and elected members supplement this information with intelligence from a good range of other sources, not least their regular and productive meetings with key stakeholder groups, including children and young people. The local authority's Children's Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee is still developing the range of its activities, for example in the area of services to improve health outcomes. Its impact thus far on service improvement has been very limited. The local authority and its partners are developing rigorous and effective joint performance management across the range of partnership services based on regular and reliable information about service performance. Again, there has been relatively rapid recent progress from a late and limited starting point. However, access to some services remains inequitable between local areas. Arrangements are in place to seek the views of children, young people, parents and carers about the quality of services, both at individual service and partnership level. However, there is a recognised need for more effective engagement with vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities.

85. Front-line performance management of staff is adequate overall but very variable. It has until recently been particularly weak within the local authority's social care service. Service plans, supported by linked team plans, are in place but are of variable quality and often weak in terms of precise and measurable outcome measures or action milestones. Many provide a poor platform for rigorous monitoring and evaluation. The partnership does not make sufficient use as yet of learning from experience. It does learn, for example from serious case reviews, but the dissemination of learning is insufficiently systematic and widespread. This includes publicising the good practice developed in particular local areas and/or services. However, good use is made of external research and evaluation and of inspection findings.

86. The partnership's capacity to improve further is adequate. There is a good track record of addressing some particular service weaknesses and in improving outcomes for particular vulnerable groups. What is more, some of these improvements have been achieved concurrently with major structural change, for example creating the local authority's combined children's services department. There are also a number of well-designed initiatives about to be launched or at an early stage of development. However, children's services in Cornwall face a huge agenda for change, including addressing some significant remaining weaknesses in individual services, developing fully integrated multi-agency working, creating a new unitary local authority and developing more formal children's trust arrangements. There is insufficient evidence as yet of the ability to deliver sustained improvement across such a wide range of activity to judge the capacity to improve as good. Major strengths are the wide ranging and systematic assessment of need, the quality of leadership at senior level, the strength of working relationships between partner agencies, and the commitment to common goals. Relative weaknesses are in the quality of some middle management, the precision and rigour of action planning and some aspects of performance management, the poor focus on delivering value for money, and the limited progress made in joint workforce planning.

## Annex A

### **MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CORNWALL**

#### **Summary**

The authority consistently delivers services at an adequate level. Some of its services make a good contribution towards improving outcomes for children and young people, particularly in improving their achievement, health and economic well-being. The performance of school sixth forms continues to be an area for improvement. Following a period when the authority's contribution to ensuring children and young people stay safe was inadequate, it has reorganised the management of services in this aspect. Adequate performance has been established only recently and the full impact of changes in delivering services to keep children and young people safe has yet to be achieved.

The full annual performance assessment can be found at:

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=3155&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa\\_2007\\_908.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=3155&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa_2007_908.pdf)

## Annex B: Summary of the Enhanced Youth Inspection Report

### Main findings

1. The quality of youth work provision in Cornwall is adequate. The local authority sufficiently secures youth work. There is a strong commitment from the local authority to increase youth work provision in the county but it does not communicate clearly a vision and plan for the future. Following recent changes in management there is adequate leadership of the service and morale is showing signs of improving. The standard of young people's achievement is adequate and they make satisfactory progress in their personal and social development. Young people gain useful skills in particular in decision making and music. The quality of youth work is adequate overall with effective work on confidence building and young people recognising the implications of risk taking behaviour. Some good support is provided to encourage young people to participate in education and training post-16. However, there are too many sessions which are solely recreational in nature, lack challenge and provide insufficient opportunities for young people to gain new skills and progress. Workers form strong and supportive relationships with young people and use a good range of methods and styles of youth work to match young people's needs. These include open youth work, mentoring, counselling, and detached and project work. There is some creative work with young people with learning difficulties, young people who are looked after and young people with mental health problems. Accommodation is adequate overall but there is insufficient access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT). There are many examples of effective partnership working with the voluntary sector to extend youth work provision. Youth workers are very well trained for their roles. Quality assurance systems are not rigorous and do not focus sufficiently on young people's achievement and progress. Young people are not sufficiently involved in planning, delivering and evaluating provision.

### Key aspect inspection grades

	Key Aspect	Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	2
	Quality of youth work practice	2
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	2
3	Leadership and management	2

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale  
4: excellent / outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate/satisfactory; 1: inadequate*

## **Strengths**

- Young people engage well in programmes and respond with enthusiasm.
- A good range of methods is used to deliver youth work.
- Some well used centres provide a highly responsive and attractive programme.
- Partnership working is strong.
- A very high proportion of youth workers are well trained.

## **Areas for development**

- Bring greater clarity and detail to strategic and operational planning.
- Increase the opportunities for young people to plan, deliver and evaluate the provision.
- Ensure that youth work practice is more consistent and better focused on improving outcomes for young people.
- Improve quality assurance systems and practice.
- Extend access to ICT for staff and young people.



## 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 Annual Performance Assessment 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 Cornwall and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Together with the Annual Performance Assessment 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 focussing on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children who are looked after and 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).