

## REPORT TO AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW PANEL

Title: **CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2008 IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Member Reporting: Cllr Mrs Quick

Contact Officer(s): Cliff Turner, Head of Services for Children and Young People

Wards affected: All wards

In accordance with section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman has agreed to consider this item as an urgent item at this meeting.

### 1. SUMMARY

1.1.1 The Annual Performance Assessment (APA) is the yearly inspection by Ofsted of the performance of the Children's Services within local authorities arising from the Children Act 2004 and the Every Child Matters programme. As part of the APA, local authorities are required to submit a self-assessment and a related Outcome Improvement Plan.

1.1.2 This report summarises for the Audit and Review Panel the self-assessment and Outcome Improvement Plan submitted as part of the 2008 APA. Ofsted's final report will be published 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008. The report also comments on specific areas of risk such as those identified in August.

1.1.3 This will be the last APA that the Royal Borough will be required to undertake as APAs are due to be replaced from April 2009 with a new inspection framework for Children's Services as part of the introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

**That the findings of this report are noted.**

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?

Performance monitoring drives continuous service improvement and ensures the delivery of positive outcomes for the local community. The appendices to this report provide an overview of the effectiveness of the Council's Children's Services and set out what the Council and its partners need to address to improve outcomes for all children and young people and their families in the Royal Borough.

### 3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The APA monitors how services within the Council and the partner agencies on the Children's Trust are working together to improve outcomes for children locally. It focuses on the extent to which children and young people are achieving the five Every Child Matters Outcomes *be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being*. Particular focus is also given to contribution of local authority services in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people and the capacity to improve services for children and young people.
- 3.1.2 The APA required the Royal Borough to submit a self-assessment in June 2008 to demonstrate its progress in meeting its priorities for children and young people against a number of key judgements. The self-assessment was drawn up in partnership with all members of the Children's Trust. The Royal Borough was also required to submit self-evaluated grades for each of the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for children and young people as well as the effectiveness of the Council's Children's Services overall and the Council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people.
- 3.1.3 Views of children and young people also informed the APA through Ofsted's 'Tellus3' survey, which involves pupils from years 6, 8 and 10 in a cross section of our schools completing a confidential online survey asking their perceptions about what it is like to live in the Royal Borough in relation to the five ECM outcomes. The Tellus 3 results were considered by Ofsted, alongside other data, as part of their analysis for the APA.
- 3.1.4 Following the analysis of the Royal Borough's written documentation and dataset, an onsite visit from the APA Inspectors took place on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2008, which involved a number of interviews with the staff and partners to address the inspectors' emerging lines of enquiry.

#### 3.1.5 Self Assessment

The self-assessment is shown in appendix 1. Grades are on a four point scale where 4 is outstanding, 3 is good, 2 is adequate and 1 is inadequate:

- Overall Effectiveness of Children's Services – Grade 3
- Be Healthy – Grade 3
- Stay Safe – Grade 3
- Enjoy and Achieve – Grade 3
- Making a Positive Contribution – Grade 3
- Achieve Economic Well Being – Grade 3
- Capacity to improve, including management of services for children and young people - Grade 3

### 3.1.6 **Outcome improvement plan**

- 3.1.7 The Outcome Improvement Plan arising from our self-assessment is given in appendix 2. Members will note that each outcome has an associated risk. A key target for the Royal Borough has been the need to improve the delivery of comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), paediatric physiotherapy and occupational therapy. These services contribute to the “Be healthy” outcome. There is also an ongoing need to improve the integration of services for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The Children’s Trust continues to strive for significant improvements in these areas.
- 3.1.8 When the APA findings are published on 17<sup>th</sup> December a further action plan will be produced focusing on any specific recommendations. The APA findings will be reported to Cabinet in February 2009. The commissioning activities needed to address the APA recommendations will be driven forward by the Children’s Trust Commissioning Group through the Joint Commissioning Strategy and its underpinning work plan.
- 3.1.9 As part of the statutory annual review of the Children and Young People Plan (CYPP), the Outcome Groups of the Children’s Trust will outline in detail the activities to be undertaken in 09-10 to address recommendations from the APA. The Children’s Trust has a robust framework in place to monitor progress against the CYPP action plan - a full progress update takes place on a six monthly basis, an overview of progress and delays is reported every three months and Outcome Leads flag any key areas of concern on a monthly basis at the Children’s Trust Executive Board meetings.
- 3.1.10 **The Youth Service**
- 3.1.11 A major review of the Youth Service was undertaken in the summer and early autumn. This was reported to Cabinet in November. It was agreed to produce a new youth strategy for the Royal Borough and to re-structure the Service to move more resources to the front line by March 2009. The Head of Services for Children and Young People is leading this work.
- 3.1.12 **Recruitment and retention issues**
- 3.1.13 Many of the outcomes for children and young people depend on services delivered by and through schools. There continue to be risks to delivery associated with difficulties in recruiting and retaining headteachers. To mitigate this risk a “succession planning group” has been established to ensure that future school leaders are identified, trained and supported. A new pan-Berkshire development programme has been established to complement national initiatives.
- 3.1.14 There remains an ongoing risk associated with difficulties in recruiting school improvement advisers. There are currently four vacancies for key members of staff. To mitigate this risk, two experienced headteachers from a neighbouring authority have been contracted to undertake fixed term work as school improvement partners and a former Royal Borough headteacher has taken on additional duties. Officers are currently inviting part-time secondment opportunities to currently serving successful headteachers within the Royal Borough pending the outcome of another attempt to

recruit advisory staff nationally in January and February.

### 3.1.15 **Safeguarding**

3.1.16 In the light of recent national media attention, Members will want assurances that the risks around child protection are being effectively managed (see LC8 of Appendix D to the Council’s Key Risks Update Report).

3.1.17 As Members will be aware, our Local Safeguarding Children’s Board already has a highly experienced and rigorous independent chair. An immediate review of *all* cases of “children in need” and “children in need of a child protection plan” has been ordered by the Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services in order to check that plans are in place. Currently there are no unallocated cases.

3.1.18 No one can be complacent about child protection. The Chief Executive reviews performance against safeguarding targets on a monthly basis. He recently proposed a new model of in-service training. This will be swiftly explored in order to ensure best practice on the front-line.

3.1.19 Prior to the recent publicity, the Deputy Leader of the Council asked the Head of Services for Children and Young People to commission an external review of Specialist and Safeguarding Services. A suitably qualified and experienced consultant is being sought.

## 4. **OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

### 4.1 **Options**

	<b>Option</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Financial Implications</b>
1.	To note the content of the self assessment and outcome improvement plan.	The Royal Borough has a duty to comply with the inspection processes set by central government and to act on its recommendations.	Any financial implications of addressing the Outcome Improvement Plan will be considered by the Children’s Trust and taken forward through the Joint Commissioning Strategy.
2.	Do nothing	The Royal Borough has a duty to comply with the inspection processes from central government. Therefore to do nothing would not be in line with this duty.	

## **5. Risk assessment**

- 5.1 The risk of not effectively implementing the actions associated with the Outcome Improvement Plan and Self Assessment could jeopardise children's life chances. Corporately, it would have potentially negative implications for the next Children's Services inspection within the CAA. If the Royal Borough were deemed not have adequate Children's Services this would in turn have a detrimental effect on the Royal Borough's overall CAA grade.

## **6. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT**

- 6.1 The annual review of Children and Young People Plan and its action plan will be subject to consultation with all relevant staff and partners on the Children's Trust.

### Background Papers

Guidance on the Comprehensive Area Assessment,  
RBWM Children's Trust Joint Commissioning Strategy and work plan

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2008**  
**ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD**  
**SELF-ASSESSMENT**

**PART A – BACKGROUND**

Name of Local Authority:	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Name of APA Link Officer:	Anna Crispin Head of Children’s Commissioning
Contact details for APA Link officer:	<a href="mailto:anna.crispin@rbwm.gov.uk">anna.crispin@rbwm.gov.uk</a> 01628 685662
Date submitted:	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2008
Agreed on behalf of the children’s services authority by:	Jim Gould Director of Learning & Care
Involvement of Partners:	This self-assessment was prepared jointly with RBWM Children’s Trust and has been approved by the Children’s Trust Executive Board.

**PART B - CONTEXT**

(Please see attached Children and Young People Plan 2008-11)

**PART C – ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME**

**BE HEALTHY**

<p><b>Key Judgement 1.2: Healthy lifestyles are promoted for children and young people</b></p> <p>RBWM breastfeeding rates for 2006 were 66.5% at 2 weeks and 41.5% at 6 weeks, which compares favourably with the national figures (52% and 42% respectively) and is the highest in East Berkshire. However, since these figures do not show any improvement on the previous year, an action plan has been drawn up to improve rates further, focusing particularly on the time between 2 and 6 weeks post-natally when rates rapidly decrease.</p> <p>The under 18-conception rate continues to decline, with a rate of 20.2 conceptions per 1000 girls in 2006. However, the need to increase the rate of this decline is acknowledged if the 2010 target of 15 per 1000 is to be achieved. Consultation work with hundreds of young people across the borough is taking place through schools and other agencies, as part of the teenage pregnancy strategy, regarding the needs of young people and their preferred locations and times for sexual health services.</p> <p>In April 2008, 67% of RBWM state schools have achieved National Healthy Schools Status (NHSS) and there is a 38% uptake of school meals in primary schools. The borough has ambitious targets for 97% of schools to attain NHSS by 2010. Young people from secondary and middle schools across the borough were consulted at a ‘Speakeasy’ event in November 2007 on the actions necessary for a school to be a ‘healthy school’. The young people presented their recommendations to a group of professionals representing children’s services, the teenage</p>
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pregnancy strategy, school sport partnership and school meal contracts. Key points included the importance of information on healthy diets, access to healthy and affordable food, and increased variety of physical activity. This information has informed the new Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and has been fed back to schools to support them in developing a whole school healthy ethos.

Partnership with school nurses promotes healthy lifestyles through their contribution to the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, with a focus on sexual health, obesity and smoking cessation. The dietetic team has delivered three of six planned childhood obesity sessions to school nurses, health visitors and nursery nurses in East Berkshire, with the aim of increasing their knowledge and confidence to support individualised weight management advice.

After taking part in healthy eating initiatives during Food Awareness Week 2007, 91% of children knew they should eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. 90% of primary schools will be involved in Food Awareness Week in June this year. Six schools will also be involved in The School Food Trust's Let's Get Cooking programme from September 2008, encouraging young people and parents to join together to create healthy meals. Cookery clubs have been introduced at the Borough Pupil Referral Unit. Schools provide a wide range of physical activities for pupils and in Windsor 93% of pupils are taking part in 2 hours of high quality curriculum time sport and PE (one of the highest rates nationally). Teenage parents are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle for themselves and their children at targeted support groups, and parents of teenagers are targeted with specific health-related sessions.

Young people access substance misuse / drugs education services in their schools, at pupil referral units and through specialist services provided by T2, HYPE and CASCADE. A total of 102 young people received treatment for substance misuse in 2007/8. 100% of Youth Offending Team (YOT) clients are screened for substance misuse. 100% of those identified as needing further input are screened within 5 days and 100% access treatment within 10 days. Feedback from 138 Year 8 pupils who experienced HYPE peer-led drugs education lessons shows the programme has been very well received, with 90% of pupils reporting that they enjoyed the lesson and 71% feeling that they had learnt a lot from the experience.

#### **Key Judgement 1.4: Action is taken to promote children and young people's mental health**

Developing services for emotional well being and mental health has been a high priority this year. The following areas have been the key focus of activity and, while mapping evaluation suggests that change has not yet become formalised at the level of the proxy indicators, significant improvements are noted in all areas and there are high levels of confidence now in the capacity for improvement:

**Developing joint commissioning and working more closely with the Tier 3 provider to support change. Improving and developing Tier 3 processes and protocols:**

- A joint commissioning group was established between the Primary Care Trust (PCT), Berkshire Mental Health Trust and the three unitary authorities. The group defined an agreed Tier 3 service specification and commissioned a needs analysis. Notice of intention to decommission was served on the current provider, and market testing was conducted by inviting providers to respond to the needs analysis with a presentation. Following the presentations, it was agreed to implement the tendering process.

- In the interim, significant improvements have also been set in process at Tier 3. A new structure has been implemented, led by new interim manager with team leaders in place in each unitary authority, and this has improved accountability and local accessibility. Clear protocols have been produced defining priorities for specialist CAMHS assessment and intervention and, in RBWM, specific contact names for potential referrers have been defined. Data is available on activity levels and missed appointments (DNAs), as well as information on staffing and skills.

- Quality Improvement Network for Multi-agency CAMHS (QINMAC) recommendations have

been used to implement the following specific developments at Tier 3:

- Specialist CAMHS have named link professionals for advice and consultation in assessment and referral, and are available for discussion of potential referrals, telephone advice and/or attendance at meetings. CAMHS professionals also invite referrers to team meetings. Specialists are available by phone to respond to queries from children and young people and their parents/carers.
- A protocol for referral criteria has been drafted and disseminated to the partnership and to headteachers.
- Response to referrals is now prompt and includes signposting in the case of inappropriate referrals. Referrers and the family are informed of the response to the referral. There are no waiting lists for assessment: urgent referrals are seen within 24 hours, 'non-urgent' within 7 days and 'routine' usually within 2-4 weeks.
- Specialist CAMHS provide information leaflets for families and referrers.
- Written correspondence regarding assessment is addressed to young people and their parents/carers as appropriate (with consent).

**Identifying lead RBWM officers, resources and structures. Developing increased stakeholder knowledge, understanding and engagement and defining the implementation plan:**

Following a workshop with key partners to establish views and parameters in comprehensive CAMHS, a new partnership with revised terms of reference and extended membership has been set up. Led by the Principal of Psychology and Inclusion, the Healthy Minds Partnership was re-named through consultation with children and young people at the high profile 'Speakeasy' consultation event for young people from mainstream and special schools. Attendance levels in the new partnership are very good: monthly meetings are held and a representative range of officers attends, including third sector providers and headteachers. Young people's involvement is being supported through further consultation on materials and service developments with an embryonic advisory group. The partnership has analysed the 'What makes me happy?' entries to the CYP Artwork Competition for 3-11 year-olds in order to capture the views of younger children.

**Improving and developing the interface between Tiers 2 and 3 and between comprehensive CAMHS and other strategic developments in emotional well being and behaviour. Establishing the new service delivery model:**

The services within the Royal Borough that work with children and young people at Tiers 1 and 2, in promoting and addressing children and young people's emotional health and well-being needs, have been mapped and their access criteria identified. A hub model has been identified by the Healthy Minds Partnership and the partnership is continuing to work on associated protocols and procedures with specialist CAMHS. The staffing needs for this hub model (new primary mental health workers and a specialist co-ordinator) and necessary resources have been identified to implement the model.

In addition, key projects that support the comprehensive CAMHS agenda in working with specific vulnerable groups of children and young people have been set up by the local authority:

- Access to specialist consultation for social care staff has been identified and funded.
- Holyport Manor special school has been commissioned to develop and evaluate specialist therapies for pupils with identified mental health needs.
- Additional funding from GOSE is being used to support prevention in the area of infant mental health. An innovative project with partners in Health and a neighbouring borough (Slough) will provide a specialist intervention for mothers and their babies who are at high risk of attachment difficulties (Watch, Wait and Wonder). We will report nationally on this project.

**Key Judgement 1.5: Looked after children's health needs are assessed**

All children in care have health assessments with agreed health plans and regular reviews. A multi-agency integrated care pathway is in place and has produced excellent performance in relation to the identification and promotion of health issues. The care pathway includes clear

procedures on notification to the dedicated health team of a child becoming looked after, changing placements or being de-accommodated.

Health assessments are holistic and focus on physical health including immunisations, dental checks, growth, plus emotional health and sexual health. **Emotional health** screening (using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) has been implemented for children in care, with briefings planned for social workers and foster carers about the uses of this tool. The CAMHS social worker provides lead professionals with advice about appropriate interventions and a child psychotherapist provides a consultation and training service to professionals working with children in care, foster carers and adopters. **Substance misuse** issues are identified through the Drug Usage Screening tool. **Health promotion**, including healthy eating, exercise and hobbies are also included in the health assessments.

Independent Reviewing Officers meet monthly with the designated nurse to address health issues that arise from statutory reviews. East Berkshire Health meetings, and the local and regional Healthy Care Networks ensure that good practice is shared and services are monitored and developed appropriately.

**Key Judgement 1.6: The health needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are addressed**

Close partnership working with Health ensures that the health needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified and addressed appropriately. The **Child Development Centre (CDC)** provides services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who require multi-agency, multi-professional assessment. Co-location with the RBWM Disabled Children's Team facilitates joint working. Pre-school children receive a social care assessment at presentation so that social issues and respite needs can be addressed as early as possible.

**Speech and language therapists** work collaboratively with school staff, and parents/carers to enable them to support children's communication skills. In order to focus on early intervention, a new model of service for children up to Key Stage 1 has been implemented, and assessment is now accessed via drop-in clinics in children's centres. Families are given immediate advice and linked into the appropriate speech, language and communication support for their needs. As a result, the waiting lists for speech and language therapy services in Early Years have been dramatically reduced.

However, the new model of service for Early Years has resulted in a large increase in waiting lists for pupils needing assessment and support in the school years. This is because the mainstream school service has focused mainly on pupils who have statements of special educational needs. To address this, the local authority is working with the Speech and Language Therapy Department to develop a new model of service for mainstream schools, to ensure collaborative working in schools at universal, targeted and individualised level according to needs. The aim is to benefit all pupils (whether or not they have a statement of special educational needs) by enhancing the skills of school staff in early identification, enabling them to implement support within the school environment, and providing groups and individualised help for pupils with the most severe needs.

All children referred to paediatric **Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy** services are assessed and receive advice and treatment in accordance with their needs. However, currently there are long waiting times to access these services (40 weeks wait for physiotherapy assessments and 52 weeks wait for occupational therapy assessments). Berkshire East PCT has recently invested £70K into physiotherapy services to improve access to the service. Discussions are underway to develop joint commissioning of occupational therapy services between the local authority and the PCT.

## STAY SAFE

### Key Judgement 2.2: Children and young people are provided with a safe environment

There is evidence of positive impact of the RBWM Domestic Abuse Strategy and associated awareness raising activities. Domestic abuse reporting has increased by 3.3% on the previous year, to 1,507 reports for 2007/8. A Thames Valley wide approach to domestic abuse with schools is currently being developed within the Thames Valley Partnership 'No Joke' Group. The perpetrator programme 'Changing Ways' is embedded within local delivery mechanisms, as is the Freedom programme. Partnership with the voluntary sector is delivering a support programme for children who are affected by domestic abuse, and child specific literature is being developed. Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors support high-risk victims through court processes, and specialist Domestic Violence Court accreditation was granted by the Home Office in March 2008. Domestic abuse training is comprehensive, with 71 practitioners being trained in 2007/08. A draft Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy for RBWM is currently being developed.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is now fully operational, with the Thames Valley Partnership reviewing arrangements in May 2008. East Berkshire has a rate of repeat victimisation of 27.6% (RBWM is 24.2%) which is below the average police force rate, and is also the smallest increase in the repeat rate compared to national rates in the previous reporting period.

Action to combat **bullying**, racism and other forms of discrimination is effective. 1,400 young people completed an anti-bullying survey in November 2007 (an increase on numbers in the previous reporting period). 6% of young people report they are bullied frequently. Overall, name-calling is the most commonly reported form of bullying (48%), with being teased about how you look (21%) or being left out (20%) the other significant findings. 24% of bullying occurs in the classroom, with 45% of young people discussing the issues with a parent or carer. Following these findings, a Parent Support Telephone Line will be launched in September 2008, and officers from the Children's Information Service will receive specialist training regarding bullying. Sentinel software has been commissioned that can be used to record and manage school incidents and deliver future anti-bullying surveys. Following a successful pilot, Lottery funding has been secured to deliver anti-bullying drama workshops in targeted schools over the next three years.

Planning for the **health and safety** of young people is excellent. Childcare is provided by suitable people and very few settings are issued with actions on initial registration. Promotion of pupils' welfare and health and safety are a strength in schools, as demonstrated in Ofsted inspections. Recent audits have been completed for all schools on fire safety, asbestos and safety glass, and Legionella procedures are in place. Road safety is a priority for the local area and there has been continuous improvement, with a reduction in numbers of children suffering an accident on local roads. Positive developments regarding improved safety measures in local parks for children are planned, and link directly to feedback from young people on the importance of outdoor play.

### Key Judgement 2.3: The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised

Identification of children in need and at risk is a priority for the local area. Thresholds are agreed and understood across the partnership, with referral rates into social care maintained at a similar level to the previous reporting period. A high proportion of referrals lead to assessment and child's Integrated Children's System (ICS) plan. Audit demonstrates that inter-agency policies are consistently implemented, and that core group are effective in delivering child protection plans. Child protection audit reports demonstrate consistent review arrangements. Audit of parental vulnerabilities of children subject of a child protection plan completed in January 2008 has led to a "Building Bridges" project jointly commissioned by children's services and adult social care, with an implementation date set for autumn 2008.

The extended schools and children's centres agenda is the primary vehicle for delivering early

**intervention.** 100% schools are engaged with the extended school programme, exceeding government targets. This has resulted in improved multi-agency co-operation within schools and increased provision of activities such as Pyramid clubs (which target children with low self-esteem). Schools report positive impacts in attendance, behaviour and parental involvement. Excellent progress is being made in developing the newly opened children's centres. Services focus on local prevention needs, and resources are utilised to maximise alignment with extended schools and Early Years provision. The youth service delivers a range of activities aimed at increasing the resilience of young people at risk of social exclusion, whilst effective and accessible early intervention and parenting support for families is commissioned through Family Friends (a local voluntary organisation).

The **Integrated Working** training programme is fully embedded throughout the partnership. The programme covers the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), lead professional role, information sharing, and ContactPoint. These elements are brought together by a local process to be used by frontline practitioners across the children's workforce, supporting early identification and targeted response to need.

**Private Fostering** arrangements were inspected by Ofsted in September 2007. The overall quality of the service is considered good. RBWM has undertaken a variety of work to ensure that awareness is promoted (including letters, leaflets, posters, promotional events, and training). Safeguarding and Specialist Services responds effectively to notifications, and services ensure that the welfare of privately fostered children is promoted. Monitoring arrangements are sound and reported on an annual basis to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Multi-Agency Public Protection Agenda (MAPPA) arrangements are fully embedded. Meetings are held on a regular basis, and multi-agency attendance and action is consistent. Issues arising out of MAPPA are a standard agenda item for LSCB meetings. **Safe recruitment** practice for staff and volunteers is monitored through the LSCB Employment sub-group. Agency audit of recruitment practice has been completed, and Safer Working Practice Guidance adopted as a result. Agency Named Senior Officer, and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff and volunteers are in place. Allegations are monitored by the LADO and reporting arrangements agreed by the LSCB. A database has been developed for this purpose.

**Key Judgement 2.4: Agencies collaborate to safeguard children according to the requirements of current government guidance**

A range of multi-media safeguarding information is targeted to raise awareness among children, young people, carers and the local community (for example, the LSCB website). A RBWM safe parenting handbook is currently in the process of being commissioned by the LSCB.

In accordance with Joint Area Review recommendations, the LSCB has introduced systems for monitoring the overall effectiveness of the safeguarding system. The LSCB has extended the culture of safeguarding across partner agencies, including those of the voluntary sector. A recent example is the completion of a Safeguarding Policy and Procedure in collaboration with Maidenhead Mosque, which offers an opportunity to roll out to all faith organisations in the local area. The clear remit of agencies' responsibilities to comply with a culture of safeguarding is fully understood, with requirements enshrined in the Pan-Berkshire Child Protection Procedures 2006 (which are in accord with the 'Working Together' updated national guidance). The LSCB sub-committee structure facilitates effective working, with the LSCB Business Manager and administrative support in place.

Safeguarding training is commissioned and delivered on an East Berkshire basis, which has been a major success of RBWM LSCB driving forward the integrated training agenda. All agency workers are identified and linked to the training plan, following the completion of a local area training needs analysis. All settings and services provided for children and young people have designated members of staff, as evidenced by Ofsted inspections of social care, Early Years, and schools.

Children's Services Threshold and Priority Criteria is widely understood within the local area. This is evidenced by the high percentage of referrals into social care that led to an assessment (75% compared to a family median of 53.6%) and the low incidence of repeat referrals. Children who are the subject of a child protection plan conferencing processes are timely and robust, and regular case file audits are routinely reported. Child Protection Coordinator quarterly reports demonstrate that involvement of parents, children and extended family is actively encouraged and valued within the safeguarding context. Family attendance in both case conference and core group arenas is high.

Although no Serious Case Reviews have taken place within RBWM, developmental and learning opportunities from out-of-area Serious Case Reviews are currently being established.

**Key Judgement 2.5: Services are effective in establishing the identity and whereabouts of all children and young people aged 0-16**

RBWM employs an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for missing children, who logs and tracks children without a school placement. A protocol is in place and agreed across LSCB agencies regarding children missing from care and home and information is routinely shared regarding missing children. Incidents of children in care who go missing are low.

Schools routinely upload exclusions information. Where schools exclude young people (fixed term or permanently), the local authority monitors, offers procedural advice and administers the process, and reports data to DCSF. The In Year Fair Access Panel facilitates suitable full time education placements. This meets regularly and makes recommendations on appropriate placement, with an action plan for reintegration and resources to ensure that there is minimum disruption for the young person. For those young people at imminent risk of permanent exclusion, Windsor and Maidenhead Area Team Managers coordinate a regular multi-agency panel to assist schools in diverting from the need to exclude through the use of a range of support and interventions.

Services for young carers were reviewed during 07/08. Awareness raising and training events are planned for 08/09 and targets for improved identification and support have been included in the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

**Key Judgement 2.6: Action is taken to avoid children and young people having to be looked after**

A multi-agency resource panel meets on a regular basis to consider actions required for young people identified to be on 'the edge' of care. The panel promotes integrated working to enable young people to remain within their birth family as long as this is consistent with promoting and safeguarding their welfare. Numbers of children in care have been appropriately reduced from 93 to 84 in 2007/08 and the APA 2007/08 target of children in care per 10,000 exceeded.

Expectations have been exceeded regarding successfully placing children in local placements within 20 miles. This in turn will promote placement stability, family contact and reunification where appropriate. In the longer term, the redevelopment of Holyport Manor special school will provide local education and respite care resources, which will reduce the need for disabled children to enter the long term looked after population.

**Key Judgement 2.7: Looked after children live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation**

RBWM has become a member of the Pan-London Consortium that approves the quality, cost and contractual arrangements with private providers of independent fostering placements and children's residential care. This membership has further developed quality assurance processes, and improved the cost effectiveness of out-of-borough placement provision. The Out-of-Borough Placement Policy and Procedure has been reviewed and approved by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Fostering Services were inspected by Ofsted in September 2007. The overall quality of local provision is outstanding. Joint working arrangements have improved further, with an increased number of joint visits, planning meetings and supervision. A project promoting education for young people in foster care has been a positive development. The support provided to foster carers has been developed through the establishment of a mentoring scheme and the development of online training. Recruitment, assessment and placement matching processes are robust, and safeguarding training is comprehensive. A 15% increase in carer numbers has significantly increased placement choice, and placement stability is above the local authority family median. This achievement is the result of an ambitious recruitment strategy and has led to 13% of initial placements now being within 20 miles of the young person's originating address, which brings RBWM much closer to the family median. There has been some improvement in the numbers of children placed with family / friends foster care. However, further developments are currently being devised through the review of the placements strategy for 2008/9. A longer-term reduction in the numbers of children placed in residential care will be delivered by the re-design of Holyport Manor special school.

Achieving robust statutory reviewing processes is a strength of RBWM. Excellent multi-agency integrated working achieves good quality individual health assessments, Personal Education Plans (PEPs), and statutory placement review performance in the local area. Independent Reviewing Officers provide a quality assurance overview report on children in care every quarter to senior social care managers, and provide annual overview on outcomes for children in care to the Corporate Parenting Forum and Local Safeguarding Children Board.

RBWM Adoption Services were inspected by Ofsted in September 2007. The overall quality of local provision is good, and performance in adoption outcomes and timescales are excellent. Identification of children requiring adoption, and the management of matching and placing children is well coordinated through effective multi-agency operational systems. Preparation, assessment and approval of adopters is comprehensive. Preparation training is tailored to meet the varying needs of adopters, and adopters' feedback on training is positive. Children's wishes and feelings regarding adoption are taken into account, and life story work is of good quality. The adoption panel is commissioned and managed across East Berkshire, with clearly written policies and procedures, which meet statutory requirements. Staff recruitment systems are thorough and demonstrate that workers and managers appointed are suitable to undertake their responsibilities. Recording systems are in place enabling staff to record and act upon safeguarding issues effectively.

**Key Judgement 2.8: Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation**

The LSCB Prevention sub-group is progressing recommendations from an audit of features of an effective safeguarding system for disabled children. All residential and respite care placements for disabled children meet statutory regulations and are robustly reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer. A respite care recruitment campaign was implemented in 2007/08, with a 17% increase in carers as a result. Continuity and stability of placements for disabled children is very good.

Transitional processes are firmly embedded in the local area. Transitions policy/procedures between children's social care and adult social care are strong, and all young people who move across services have an appropriate placement to meet their identified needs. The Learning Skills Council and Connexions service are active members in transitional activities. There is improved identification of young people with the support of the Primary Care Trust (PCT). 92.7% of disabled children aged 14 have a transition plan agreed across agencies as a result of this embedded integrated working.

## ENJOY & ACHIEVE

### **Key Judgement 3.2: Early years provision promotes children's development and well-being and helps them meet early learning goals**

Outcomes from Ofsted inspections regarding the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage are positive. Between March 2007 and March 2008, 80% of schools inspected were deemed outstanding or good regarding the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage, and there are no schools deemed inadequate in this area. Of the four nursery schools in RBWM, Ofsted have reported that two are outstanding and two are at least good.

Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) data from 2007 shows that there was an increase in the number of children achieving at least 78 points including level 6+ in Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSE) and Communication Language and Literacy (CLL). This has been most significant in the private and voluntary (PV) sector where in 2006 the percentage was 27.8% compared to 29.6% in 2007. The PV sector also showed a significant increase in the number of children achieving at least 78 points across the FSP, rising to 70.4% in 2007 from 64.9% in 2006. The data also reveals that RBWM has been more successful than the national average in closing the gap for the lowest 20% of pupils both in the maintained and non-maintained sectors. Ofsted inspections from April 2007 - March 2008 for both funded education and quality of childcare are in the upper quartile and demonstrate an overall improvement.

Improving outcomes for children in PSE and CLL has been a priority. Training programmes have been developed to raise attainment in CLL particularly in 'Linking Sounds and Letters'. These have been targeted at specific groups using knowledge of data and socio-economic status. Emphasis has been on practitioners from the maintained and non-maintained sector working together to ensure alignment and improve transition. Over 100 practitioners have received training in CLL as part of the Communication Language and Literacy Development Programme or received targeted training from the speech and language therapy service. We anticipate that evidence of improvement and impact will be evident in the FSP data 2008. Parental involvement in children's learning will be promoted in the coming year through the commissioning of locally delivered Parents Early Years and Learning (PEAL) training for Early Years practitioners.

### **Key Judgement 3.3: Action is taken to ensure that educational provision for 5-16 year olds is of good quality**

RBWM continues to be a high performing authority with attainment above the national average and in line with statistical neighbours for nearly all measures. Our School Improvement service has identified areas in which we need to improve, as well as working with schools to drive further high attainment for all.

Priority has been given to narrowing the attainment gap, as agreed in existing Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. This includes targeted provision for secondary aged pupils of Pakistani heritage. 46 pupils of Pakistani heritage from four secondary schools attended additional Saturday classes targeted at pupils underachieving in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers and assistants reported that pupils valued the intervention and made measurable progress. 94% of Key Stage 4 pupils and 85% of Key Stage 3 pupils said that they would recommend them to friends. Comments on pupil evaluation sheets included "Classes were very good they helped me to understand" and "Please hold these again." Very positive comments have also been received from headteachers of the schools that the pupils attend, and parents of the pupils and community leaders have praised the intervention.

Literacy consultants and Advanced Skills Teachers have provided focused support for key middle schools aimed at driving up the standard of boys' writing at Key Stage 2. The local authority has piloted an assessment network project spanning all of the primary years and involving groups of teachers from targeted schools piloting Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) materials

for the assessment of reading, writing and speaking and listening. These groups have strengthened teacher assessment significantly. As part of the work towards improving outcomes for boys at level 6+ in English, nine out of thirteen secondary English departments have received training related to the development of higher order reading and writing skills. This has improved teachers' understanding and expertise in analysis, particularly in the middle schools.

Visits have been made by consultants to all nine secondary schools to update staff on the materials to support intervention at Key Stage 4. The planned launch, later this term, of Study+, (aimed at pupils on the C/D borderline) will assist schools in developing their provision in this area, leading to improvements in outcomes at 5 A\*-C later this year.

Fourteen schools have been inspected since September 2007. Overall, four schools were judged to be outstanding, six good and four satisfactory. Of these fourteen, three were secondaries: one was judged to be outstanding, one good and the other satisfactory. The inspection of two schools resulted in the Notice To Improve being lifted. We are expecting formal notification of the removal of a third Notice to Improve shortly, which would leave us with no remaining schools under Notice To Improve. Schools in Ofsted categories have received a high level of strategic support and challenge, including the secondment of experienced senior staff from very good schools, co-opting experienced governors, working together with key partners such as the Diocese, and seconding senior advisers to work alongside the senior leadership team and governors. Regular review and self-evaluation is beginning to show significant improvements in key areas, such as the development of assessment and pupil tracking systems. In one school an Interim Executive Board (IEB) has been established as a result of a review commissioned by the local authority.

All middle schools have received support to develop their pupil tracking systems. In an Ofsted monitoring visit to one middle school in March 2008, the Additional Inspector commented on the 'robust and effective system for target setting and tracking the progress pupils are making.' Although judged to have been only satisfactory when visited by Ofsted the previous year, the school was regarded as 'making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievement.'

The local authority has worked closely with Connexions to reduce the risk of pupils leaving school with no qualifications. An analysis of the attainment history and background of pupils who have ended Key Stage 4 with no qualification in the past has illustrated how difficult it is to identify precisely those most at risk of failing to attain at least 1 A\*-G. For example in 2007:

- A quarter of these (30) pupils had attained at level 5 or above at Key Stage 3
- Nearly three quarters had attained at level 4 or above
- Fewer than a quarter of the pupils had statements of special educational needs
- Over a third had no identified special need
- One was in care
- Two had been permanently excluded and 11 others had received at least one fixed term exclusion
- Six were known to the Youth Offending Team (YOT) prior to leaving school

However, the majority of these pupils had not been entered for many exams so it is clear that the schools were aware of the risk well before the end of Year 11. We recognise that the key to identifying pupils early is to work closely with schools throughout Key Stage 4, especially in Year 10. Connexions are supporting us in this task and are also supporting those who left with no qualifications last year to ensure that they are able to find appropriate training.

**Key Judgement 3.4: Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and achieve highly**

Pupils clearly enjoy going to school. Recent inspections judgements in this area are exceptional. Ten of the fourteen schools inspected since September 2007 were judged as outstanding for

enjoyment, with the other four judged as good. In ten schools, pupils' behaviour was judged to be outstanding, three were judged to be good and one satisfactory. For attendance, one school was judged outstanding, eight were judged good and five satisfactory.

Targeted action in this area continues to be strongly underpinned by core preventative work through Healthy Schools and Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). 95% of primary schools and 40% of secondary schools are using SEAL. Targeted consultancy support is based on rigorous auditing and a structured but tailored approach to each secondary school. Secondary school consultancy intervention has included support and advice on school systems, staff training and coaching, and the robust use of data to inform school improvement. The development of Area Children's Teams has enabled services to provide more coordinated and focused interventions for specific schools. The impact of such support has been significant:

- Secondary schools previously designated (2003/04) as having inadequate behaviour (one school) or as being targeted for low attendance (four schools) have been removed from this status.
- Windsor and Maidenhead secondary schools have all achieved satisfactory or better judgements for personal development and well-being in their Ofsted inspections including one school achieving outstanding and eight achieving good.
- Attendance above the national average and our statistical neighbours has been maintained.

### **Key Judgement 3.5: Educational provision is made for children who do not attend school**

A database is maintained of all young people notified as home educated. Schools liaise closely when parents state the intention to home educate and home visits are undertaken to explain the rights and responsibilities of the parents. Currently there are 35 children known to us and in each case there is a process of logging these, requesting information and offering home visits to support and monitor the process. The current Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for RBWM was home educated.

The Royal Borough supports students who are unable to attend mainstream school because of vulnerability or sickness through its Pupil Referral Units at Brocket and St Edmund's House. Brocket caters for Key Stage 1 and 2 permanently excluded pupils, including pupils with statements of emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). Every effort is made to return the pupil to an appropriate school and support for reintegration takes place to ensure the transition goes smoothly. So far in 2007-2008, six pupils have been reintegrated into mainstream schools and five into special schools. St Edmund's House offers a broad and balanced curriculum at both Key Stages 3 and 4. At Key Stage 4 there are opportunities for extended work experience and college courses. All students are given access to at least 5 GCSE courses and are given a personalised curriculum. In 2007, all 11 students achieved GCSE English and 10 out of 11 achieved GCSE mathematics.

### **Key Judgement 3.7: Children and young people who are looked after are helped to enjoy and achieve**

The joint work of the Safeguarding & Specialist Services and Area Team staff prioritises the needs of children in care to enable them to enjoy and achieve in their educational settings. Alongside specialist social workers, 0.3 FTE Senior Educational Welfare Officer and 0.3 FTE Senior Educational Psychologist time is dedicated to vulnerable children. Regular training has been provided by the Educational Psychology service in specific areas (such as attachment) to a range of services and to foster carers (e.g. in supporting pupils' learning). Older children in care have priority access to Connexions Intensive Personal Advisors to support their moves into post-16 provision.

Careful consideration and attention is given to any placement moves needed and our Admissions Policy prioritises children in care alongside children with special educational needs. Schools are aware that they must minimise the use of exclusion except in the most extreme circumstances and carers are encouraged to seek an independent appeal against any permanent exclusion. All

school age children in care have Personal Education Plans (PEPs) that are integral to their care plans and these are reviewed every six months. Training for designated teachers is provided at least annually and a database of designated teachers is maintained.

All foster families and the children they look after have free access to borough leisure centres and the library service has also provided additional support for reading. When necessary additional tutoring has been provided. Last year, the small number of children in care in Year 11 did well, with 4 of the 8 achieving 5+ A\*-G grades. Of these, the three pupils placed in RBWM mainstream schools all achieved 5+ A\*-C grades (three others were in specialist schools out of borough and two were asylum seekers and will be taking GCSEs this summer).

### **Key Judgement 3.8: Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to enjoy and achieve**

To support early intervention in the use of delegated funds in schools and to reduce reliance on statements, there have been two core strands of work that are improving provision for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools:

#### ➤ **Intensive programme of support in Provision Mapping and Management**

The local authority commissioned a programme of group and individually tailored support for schools (delivered by Senjit). This has enabled us to meet our ambitious target of 50% of schools with functioning provision maps. Feedback from schools receiving training states that the sessions have enabled them to 'embed provision maps' and the provision maps produced evidence a clearer focus on pupil needs and on the outcomes of interventions on pupil progress. An audit of schools by School Improvement Partners in 2007-08 confirmed effective resource management in schools through the use of provision maps.

#### ➤ **Guidance for schools on good practice in special educational provision at School Action and School Action Plus**

Feedback from schools has been extremely positive and confirms that the guidance is supporting effective joint planning and review of pupil progress. A formal review of the delegated funding scheme has confirmed headteacher support for the scheme and its positive impact on their delivery of provision (while highlighting concerns related to medical needs).

There is continuing good progress of pupils in RBWM at School Action and School Action Plus, good outcomes in the SEN/non-SEN gap, and a continuing downward trend in the number of statements issued and appeals to SENDIST. The latter is indicative of improving levels of parental confidence and satisfaction, and increasing involvement of parents in policy development. Advice is of good quality and officers pay close attention to the importance of statements in providing practical help to schools. Mainstream support for the inclusion of children with SEN in the Early Years is good, Early Support and key worker developments are progressing well and there is a downward trend in issuing statements for under fives. A particularly wide range of preventative projects has been implemented in emotional and social areas of need.

Plans for the new building and relocation of the special school and residential unit are a key component in our longer-term plans for reducing out-borough special placements. The appointment of a Coordinator for pupils with exceptional learning needs in mainstream schools is aimed at improving support for children and young people with complex and exceptional learning needs. Support for meeting the needs of pupils with complex difficulties is also being developed through training in 'P' levels. 22 schools are already submitting data on P scales to Durham University, a sharp increase from 9 the year before, enabling them to compare the progress of their pupils with similar pupils nationally. The data shows that pupils in RBWM generally make good progress when compared with national data compiled by Durham.

To enable schools to produce accessibility plans before admission, training for schools in making 'reasonable adjustments' has been delivered, focusing on secondary and middle schools. With the long term aim of removing all barriers to learning, recent consultation with schools on the Primary Strategy for Change revealed a high level of satisfaction in schools on the accessibility of

the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties (77% of those responding) but a lower level of satisfaction (57%) on physical accessibility. Home-to-school transport is adjusted to allow pupils with statements to remain late after school to attend clubs. Annual and interim reviews of statements are conducted regularly and all phase transfers of pupils were completed by the SEN department by the due date in February.

## MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

### Key Judgement 4.3: Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision making and in supporting the community

Significant progress has been made this year in providing further opportunities for children and young people to influence the work of the council and its partners. A high profile 'Speakeasy' event in November 2007 brought young people and professionals together to discuss in more detail the priorities identified by children and young people during the PSHE Consultation Lesson on the **Children and Young People Plan (CYPP)** earlier in the year. The event was attended by 52 young people from 13 schools (aged 12 to 18) and 30 professionals, and enabled young people to talk directly to service managers and to influence strategic and service planning around the themes of Staying Safe, Healthy Minds, Bullying and Healthy Schools.

**Student voice** continues to be exceptionally strong in RBWM schools. Pupils are confident that they are listened to when decisions are made. 58% of Tellus2 respondents replied that their views were listened to a 'great deal/fair amount' in the running of their school (significantly higher than the 52% England average). Following on from a very successful event last year, student councillors from Maidenhead secondary schools (including the special school) held a second Student Voice event to share ideas and work on further developing student voice policies in their schools. Each school council reported on the implementation of last year's action plan and went away with proposals for their school leadership teams. Pupils report that they are routinely involved in headteacher recruitment.

As a direct result of suggestions at last year's Student Voice event, the council this year piloted an online Virtual Suggestions Box for young people. Young people were able to send in their comments and ideas for the local area directly to the relevant council departments, with a response posted online. The pilot generated 64 postings from young people around themes such as transport, waste disposal, town centre development and youth provision, and provided a unique opportunity for the council's corporate services to hear the views of younger residents. The pilot is now being reviewed with the intention of establishing this as a permanent online mechanism.

In addition to active school councils, most schools also have other mechanisms for listening and responding to the views of pupils. Some secondary schools have appointed **Student Learning Consultants** to feedback good practice in relation to teaching and learning, and many schools carry out student satisfaction surveys to inform teaching practice and school leadership. 67% of schools have been awarded the new National Healthy School Status (see Be Healthy).

The borough has continued to develop the **Participation Champions network** as a way of embedding children and young people's participation in decision-making across services in the council and the Children's Trust. The network was expanded this year and there are now six Participation Champions within the council's Corporate and Community services, providing further opportunities for children and young people to influence the wider work of the council. Participation Champions are supported with training, materials and best practice examples. Evidence from the network demonstrates that children and young people are routinely involved in decisions about the services they receive. Across the Children's Trust, children and young people contribute to the continual improvement of services through diverse mechanisms such as

user groups, workshops and events, questionnaires, and participation in recruitment processes. The development of newly refurbished youth and community provision, for example, included young people's involvement in decisions about design and layout.

Local services use innovative methods to engage **younger children** and involve them in service planning through events such as the Woodlands Park Family Fun Day (where children made pictures of the toys and resources they would like at their local children's centre). Younger children's views were included in the development of the Children and Young People Plan 2008-11 through an artwork competition for 3 to 11 year-olds, around the themes of what makes children feel happy and safe. Groups such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Healthy Minds Partnership have also analysed these pictures to inform service planning. The number of childcare and nursery education settings judged by Ofsted to be outstanding or good for Making a Positive Contribution is significantly higher than the England average.

A record 3125 votes were cast in elections for the Member of Youth Parliament in March 2008, a 4.2% increase in voting turnout compared to 2007. A cross section of groups took part in the voting, including young people with learning difficulties, young carers and young offenders. A total of 194 **young people** were involved in submitting bids to the Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF), and it is estimated that 9,178 young people benefited from YOF projects in 2007/08 (compared to a total 13-19 population of approximately 13,000). Recipients included the Pakistani Youth Project, voluntary sector projects and disabled young people. Six young assessors distributed the grants and designed the YOF publicity and communications materials.

Consultation with 260 young people in February 2008 kick-started the council's project to develop a 'Website for Young People by Young People': there are now 14 young people working on the design of the website and they will be eligible to receive the Berkshire Accreditation Award through this project. The Member of Youth Parliament will have a dedicated page on the website to keep young people informed on her manifesto progress and diary of events. Four young people have been trained as youth service Quality Assurance Assessors, inspecting local youth provision in order to provide a young person's view on how youth services can be improved. Recommendations from the Assessors have led to changes in décor, better provision of information, and greater involvement of young people in decision-making about their local club.

The council has succeeded in engaging traditionally **hard-to-reach** children and young people. For example, the Youth Offending Team (YOT) hosted 11 Million Takeover Day, when young people receiving services through the YOT and the Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) worked alongside professionals looking at youth offending case studies and discussing how their local communities could be improved. The young people who participated were supported to make bids to the Youth Opportunity Fund to put their ideas into action. Young people on a detached youth project received intensive training and support to produce a leaflet on drugs, alcohol and sexual health, after feedback that the current information did not meet their needs.

In the recently released National Youth Agency audit 2006/7, RBWM Youth Service is ranked second highest in the country in terms of the percentage of young people receiving a regular service, and it also has contact with a proportionally higher number of young people than regional and statistical neighbours. The 'Hear by Right' matrix is utilised by the youth service to inform service development and to ensure that standards of participation are constantly rising.

Young people are supported to contribute to community cohesion through projects such as the intergenerational Silver Surfers project (a multi-agency project in which young people teach older residents ICT skills), while targeted work with Traveller young people has resulted in a 50% increase in attendance at youth club and a greater understanding of Traveller lifestyles and culture through a video project. Throughout 2007/8 young people have made more positive contributions to their local community than ever before, with the numbers of 16-25 year olds

signing up to the Millennium Volunteers scheme multiplying by four fold and nearly 20,000 hours of volunteering taking place. Following high numbers (up to 100) of young people congregating in Ascot High Street, the 'Kotch' club was set up: involvement in planning, negotiation and presentation skills have earned young people respect from community elders and contribution towards accreditation.

**Key Judgement 4.5: Action is taken to prevent offending and to reduce re-offending by children and young people**

Past weaknesses in the performance of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) against key performance indicators have been systematically addressed. The YOT has performed at a high level throughout 2007-8: performance against national standards has been consistently at Level 5, making it one of the highest ranked YOTs in the country. There has been a reduction in overall offending over the past five years, with a low level of repeat offending. Recidivism has dropped from 45.5% (2003 cohort) to 13.7% (2005 cohort) and is now well below statistical neighbours (31.3%). There has been a 2% reduction in first time entrants to the justice system between 05/06 and 07/08, with only a small minority of young people transferring from the prevention services into the offending cohort.

Targeted and effective prevention services are delivered through Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP), which involves a broad range of agencies. The support the YISP offers is continuing to develop and broaden, ranging from one-to-one support, prison diversion days, positive activities such as boxing and fishing, and parenting support. Young people can also access specialist one-to-one support from a Senior Educational Psychologist. The YISP is inventive in actively targeting the 8-13 age range, using arts, music, and sport to engage young people. The youth service has this year provided three First Aid courses and four Motorwise courses to a range of 13-19 year olds who have offended or are at risk of offending.

Joint funding from the council's Anti-Social Behaviour service and Thames Valley Police has enabled an additional parenting support service to be set up specifically for parents whose children are at risk of becoming involved with anti-social behaviour. Detached youth workers provide opportunities for young people to take part in diversionary activities, and the 13-19 activities programme targets its diversionary services in trouble spots at times when they will be most effective. For example, Pinkneys Green Neighbourhood Action Group has reported a local reduction in youth crime as a result of greater participation in youth club activities. Co-operation with the Fire Service also promotes citizenship and positive engagement with vulnerable young people.

Young people accessing Youth Offending Team (YOT) services are screened for mental health issues and are referred either to specialist mental health services or to counselling services as appropriate. Every young person who is found to be receiving an insufficient number of hours of education, training or employment (whether in custody or on a community penalty) is referred to the specialist education, training and employment (ETE) worker for intervention. Additional resources have been deployed to fund extra hours for the ETE worker to work specifically with the most vulnerable young people at the YOT.

The Youth Offending Team has a dedicated Participation Champion and every opportunity is taken to ensure that young people's views are heard. In addition to ongoing feedback during intervention sessions and panel meetings, every young person participating in a community sentence completes a "Viewpoint" feedback questionnaire and the YOT have recently installed a "What do you think?" blackboard to gain insight into offending behaviour and to get feedback on the services provided. Feedback from the "Viewpoint" questionnaire indicates that young people have their needs met and identify real benefits from the YOT services they receive. The YISP works in close partnership with the borough's Youth Participation Co-ordinator to ensure that positive activities projects (such as the 'My life in focus' photography project) are driven by the young people themselves and that young people are involved in every aspect of planning,

delivering and evaluating the project.

**Key Judgement 4.6: Children and young people who are looked after are helped to make a positive contribution**

Children in care are encouraged to participate in all meetings regarding their care planning, or to have their views heard in an appropriate way. All children in care have contributed to their reviews in 07/08, including those with disabilities. Independent advocacy has been commissioned for children in care, and a Children's Rights Officer has been appointed to provide an in-house service, which will be developed in 08/09. Children and carers are routinely informed of how they can complain and complaints resolution in stage 1 is high. Children in care have contributed to disruption meetings and their views have been incorporated into service development. Independent Reviewing Officers record representations made by children and young people and their concerns are addressed and tracked by the Safeguarding and Specialist Services management team.

A series of one-to-one interviews and group consultation events was held this year with looked after children and care leavers to identify what is important to them in relation to the care and services they receive. The feedback from these events is currently being collated and will be incorporated into a Pledge for children in care. The children and young people who participated in the consultation are being supported to form a Children in Care Council: a DVD was produced outlining how young people were involved. A dedicated Participation Officer has been appointed, who will work closely with the Children's Rights Officer to support the Children in Care Council.

Roles and responsibilities in terms of Corporate Parenting are understood and a Corporate Parenting Strategy is being prepared to make these explicit across the council and Children's Trust. Care leavers are members of the Corporate Parenting Forum and there is an active foster carer representative. Through this forum, care leavers are contributing to the development of a 'Money Matters' game that aims to help care leavers learn to manage their finances. Foster carers are being encouraged to contribute to the parents' and carers' sounding board within the Children's Trust governance arrangements.

The cultural, religious and linguistic needs of children in care are considered in making short-term placements and are included in matching criteria when permanent placements are being explored. All children in care have a contact plan to maintain contact with their families, and families are practically, emotionally and financially supported to fulfil the arrangements. Transitions are planned and involve all members of the team around the child, as well as the young person themselves. Children in care are provided with a written profile of the foster family before placement and planned introductions are made wherever possible. Disruption meetings are held, with children and young people invited to attend and advocates offered. A protocol is in place with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) to provide early intervention for young people in care who are at risk of offending.

**Key Judgement 4.7: Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution**

Progress has been made in ensuring that children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are involved fully in issues that affect them and that their views inform the design and delivery of services. Children with learning difficulties attended the Speakeasy consultation and were supported to give their views. An audit of annual reviews for pupils with statements of special educational needs indicates that the number of pupils contributing to their reviews has risen by 4% in the past year (up to 56% from 52%), and the number of pupils attending their reviews is also up 4% (up to 20% from 16%).

Children with additional needs attending the Flying High play scheme are routinely consulted on procedures and provision and their views taken into account. Through a Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) grant, young people at Flying High were supported to go on trips and excursions and to purchase resources for the summer scheme. Children communicate their views via a range of

communication tools, including written, signs, symbols, photographs and objects. Disabled children attending the Saturday Club have also been supported to complete a simple questionnaire to plan the activities on offer through the club and identify any barriers to enjoyment. Children accessing the Educational Psychology service are encouraged to complete a child-friendly evaluation form and, where appropriate, a child-friendly report is produced after a consultation with the psychologist. An increasing number of young carers with mild physical or learning needs are participating in the young carers' forum.

Children with complex needs who have limited or no verbal communication and who are receiving services from more than one placement (including respite care) have their views taken into account through Essential Lifestyle Plans. The plans draw on detailed knowledge of each child by their parents, carers, siblings, teachers and keyworkers, with the aim of ensuring that the care provided is the care that the child would request if able, and to ensure continuity and reassurance to the child.

Children referred to the Disabled Children's Team directly contribute to their assessment, care planning and review, via spoken word or simple sign language. Each child also receives two symbol cards (one representing 'happy about services' and one representing 'unhappy about services'). The child is supported to return these and any 'sad' cards are followed up. Disabled children who are looked after are helped to express their views at each review via a form (there are two types of form depending on cognitive levels) and by drawing pictures or taking photos.

Parents/carers of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities influence strategic and service developments through the Parents in Partnership (PiP) Forum. Four drop-in sessions, attended by approximately 40 parents, were held in autumn 2007 for parents of children with special educational needs to put forward their ideas of issues that need to be taken forward to ensure the appropriate development of services for this group of children.

## **ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

### **Key Judgement 5.2: Young people aged 11-19 are helped to prepare for working life**

Since the last APA, the 14-19 Strategic Partnership has analysed a range of data on participation, achievement and labour market intelligence, including draft work from KPMG on area profiles of learning and skills to meet community and employer needs. This analysis has been used to develop a draft 14-19 Education Plan. Ensuring that curriculum planning is based on local skills needs and demand from young people is clearly identified as a strategic priority in that plan. Given the size of the Borough and the extent of cross-border movement for learning and employment, the Berkshire Directors of Children's Services have agreed to develop a Berkshire Strategic Plan that matches the aggregate supply of young people and skills to employer demands. A joint one-day workshop in June 2008 will focus on issues of under- and over-provision of skills and how to address these gaps.

The on-line Berkshire Opportunities Prospectus (BOPS) provides links to all 14-19 providers and courses. This facility indicates both demand and supply in any given academic year. In 2007 there was an overall reduction in the school leavers cohort and a larger number of these young people went into employment. There was a small rise in numbers of young people going into training but a decrease in numbers staying on in education.

Connexions undertakes a needs analysis for each year group at least twice a year to ensure the prioritisation of Personal Adviser (PA) support. The aim is to identify, at an even earlier stage, those young people who are facing particular challenges or displaying signs of disaffection or underperformance so that they get the support they need when they need it. This is always

undertaken in partnership with key personnel within education settings. However, recent research shows that some young people do not raise concern at school even though their grade predictions are weak. By tracking them, we have discovered that this group is the one most at risk of dropping out of Further Education. Connexions is therefore working with schools and the local authority to improve identification of this cohort in order to provide extra tracking and ensure that they do progress to further education, employment or training.

The Connexions Berkshire Careers Education Development team (CEDT) provides a range of training in careers education for school and college staff. The team promotes the take-up of the 'Investors in Careers' award across schools and colleges, which results in improved quality of careers education that meets the Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance quality standards. Two schools in the borough have achieved this award so far. Connexions services meet and in many cases exceed the Requirements and Guidance for the Connexions service and the Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance quality standards.

A highly successful project piloted an improved curriculum offer for pupils in Year 11 with the aim of reducing exclusion and widening participation for pupils who are disengaged. The programme, Alternative Curriculum Package (ACE), enabled 8 pupils to follow a learning programme in an institution other than school and supported work-based learning and developed collaborative working between employers and education providers. In its external evaluation (April 2008), this programme was rated as 'highly effective (Grade 1) in meeting its key aim to re-engage students in the learning process and to prepare them for future economic well-being.' Of the eight pupils, five now have definite plans for further study or employment.

**Key Judgement 5.3: Action is taken to ensure that 14-19 education and training is planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way, and to ensure that education and training for 16-19 year olds is of good quality**

Data from the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) shows that there are year on year increases in young people participating in Further Education (FE) and school sixth forms in the area. During 2006/07, there was also an increase in participation in work-based learning. During this period, there was an increase in the proportion of FE enrolments in skills for life courses and courses at Levels 2 and 3. LSC data also confirms an improvement in success rates on Level 2 courses, long courses and work-based learning, the latter mirroring national improvements over the last three years. Connexions data shows that the proportion of young people who completed Year 11 last year who continued in education was 91.7%, well above the national figure of 87.2%.

There is an established 14-19 Strategic Partnership representing key stakeholders. Development for 14-19 planning is undertaken by an Implementation/Operational Group, which manages issues such as timetabling and quality assurance. Each diploma line also has its own Subject Advisory Group to bring specialist staff together and engage with employers. Planning in this way makes effective use of specialist provision and recognises the significant number of learners who travel across the borough's boundaries. There is close partnership working with Slough Borough Council, with Gateway 2 submissions from both authorities demonstrating the advantages of developing consortium across the local authority boundaries. Both unitary authorities share a large general FE provider (East Berkshire College) with a campus in both authorities. The 14-19 Advisors and Chairs of both the RBWM and Slough 14-19 Strategic Partnerships meet regularly to consider joint issues. Similar complementary working is being developed with Bracknell Forest.

'Construction and the Built Environment' is an example of a diploma line successfully submitted by the Royal Borough in Gateway 2, matched with Slough and utilising three specialised delivery partners across Windsor, Maidenhead and Slough. The strategic lead for this diploma line will come from East Berkshire College (Slough) with delivery from a school skills centre on an industrial premise in Windsor and BCA College in Maidenhead. This provides opportunities for schools throughout the area to access the diploma as well as some imaginative approaches to delivery. RBWM and its partners successfully applied to deliver the 'Society, health and

development' diploma from Sept 09 and further work is underway to develop this programme.

The number of school leavers in 2007 not in education, employment or training (NEET) rose slightly (up from 50 to 56, or 3.5%), but the number of young people designated as "not known" reduced by a larger proportion (from 1.6% to 0.9%, or just 15 young people) as a result of increased focus on tracking and monitoring of young people as they moved through Year 11. The borough has ambitious targets to reduce NEET to 3.3% by November 2010.

**Key Judgement 5.6: Children and young people who are looked after are helped to achieve economic well-being**

All young people in care have a pathway plan, which is completed and reviewed within timescales. Care leavers are a priority referral group for the Connexions Intensive Personal Advisor (PA) service and there has been an increase in the numbers of young people accessing services delivered through the local Connexions centre, such as job search, CV writing, careers advice and guidance. Four unaccompanied asylum seeker children have been provided with Connexions support through a new Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Personal Advisor post, to identify future career opportunities and move into further education.

11 out of 15 care leavers in their 19<sup>th</sup> year were engaged in EET. Of those not engaged, two young people have profound learning disabilities, one young person has transitioned to adult mental health services and one young person had a six-month-old baby. Eight young people have been supported over the past 12 months through the Connexions-funded Princes Trust mentoring project, with mentors supporting young people to look at future career paths and to sustain work and college placements. Two young people were directly supported into employment through their mentor's personal networks.

Joint funding between Connexions and the council's Leaving Care Team has created a specialist Education, Employment and Training (EET) Personal Advisor post, to progress the development of work experience and training placements for care leavers within the local business community. Care leavers are supported financially to engage in EET. A review of foster care policy for young people aged 18 plus is being undertaken, to enable young people post-18 to remain in foster placements when this is in their best interests. One young person aged 19 has been supported through a supported lodgings arrangement to live with her aunt in America. The placement was considered to be pivotal in enabling her to reach her full academic potential. A celebration of achievements event is planned for October, where all looked after children and care leavers will be recognised for at least one educational and personal achievement over the year.

A review of care leavers' housing needs (particularly those with high and often complex support needs) is being progressed through a review of the Borough's homelessness strategy. A multi-agency housing panel is planned to support the pathway planning process, with care leavers' housing and support needs being addressed through a multi-agency forum, ensuring young people are referred on to appropriate accommodation with the appropriate support services in place.

**Key Judgement 5.7: Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to achieve economic well-being**

There are high levels of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) in education, employment and training. 86% of young people with LDD aged 14-24 are in education, employment or training, well exceeding the national target of 70%. The make-up of the work-based learning cohort is different to the national picture, with a larger proportion of young people with LDD engaged. Our two Further Education (FE) college partners' drive to enhance work experience for LDD learners (both on and off site) has enabled many learners to gain the confidence, skills and ambition necessary to make effective transition into employment. Curriculum planning and content leads to more effective employer engagement.

Identified vulnerable young people whose needs are not being met in mainstream are offered an alternative curriculum to meet their needs, which includes extended work experience and

college placements. This often leads to apprenticeships or continuation in further education. An innovative cookery project run by the youth service this year supported six young people who were NEET and had complex needs to gain accredited qualifications and independent living skills, culminating in the young people delivering a VIP meal to RBWM officers and elected members. Two of the young people from this project have continued as peer mentors to support young people on the next cookery project.

Transition reviews take place for all young people with statements of special educational need. Mainstream schools and the Connexions Personal Advisers are being supported to adjust to the higher levels of need of young people in mainstream education. Year 9 annual reviews have been developed to ensure that schools consider the role of other services in supporting the young person at this stage. A transition information pack is available to young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at Year 9, providing information on personal and welfare support, including support for continued participation in learning opportunities post 16. The Transition Panel includes representatives from health, education, social care, housing and Connexions, allowing for multi-agency working at individual and policy development level. Work is currently underway to enable individualised budgets, of which direct payments form a part.

## **PART D – SERVICE MANAGEMENT**

### **Key Judgement 6.1: Ambition**

#### **b) Ambitions are based on a shared understanding of local needs amongst partners organisations and within the community**

In our first Children and Young People Plan (2006-08) we made a number of pledges for completion by 2008. These pledges demonstrated our ambition to evolve beyond 'common understanding' into a mature local partnership with a jointly-owned needs analysis and integrated processes that achieve concrete improvements in outcomes and value for money. Our successes against these key pledges are reviewed in the 'What have we done so far' section of the Children and Young People's Plan (2008-11) and all these milestones have been met.

The Children and Young People Plan 2008-11 (CYPP) provides a clear sense of direction for the development of children and young people's services, linked to the period of the comprehensive spending review and our knowledge of the resource base that will be available for this period. The views of children, young people and families have been taken into account, as have policy developments laid out in the government's 10 year Children's Plan. The new CYPP is based on a rigorous review of the previous plan. The priorities identified in the CYPP are endorsed by the council and the Local Strategic Partnership and are reflected in the Local Area Agreement.

### **Key Judgement 6.2: Prioritisation**

#### **c) Robust action is taken to deliver the strategy**

We know from our needs analysis, external inspection and from children and families themselves that in general children and young people in the Royal Borough continue to thrive. Outcomes are improving year on year in many areas. There is also evidence of sustained improvements across targeted activities that have begun to narrow the gap for some vulnerable groups including those known to the Youth Offending Team, the stability of placements for children in care, the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs and the low proportion of vulnerable young people who are not in employment, education or training. Ofsted has judged the fostering service in the Royal Borough to be outstanding: children requiring adoption are placed within appropriate timescales, and adoption numbers are excellent.

Whilst acknowledging our successes (which are a result of systematic planning and review), our focus is on ways we can improve our services further through inter-agency working and through shared strategic activities relating to the particular needs of vulnerable children and to areas

where outcomes for all children and young people are under performing (for example, reducing exclusions). The local authority has led robust action to ensure that strategic priorities are delivered and has challenged areas where problems have become hard to shift (for instance, by working more collaboratively with schools, resulting in no schools remaining under notice to improve.). The separation of the provider services from commissioning processes has begun to allow us to monitor and challenge expectations across both externally commissioned services and, crucially, those commissioned through internal service provision. The current review of inclusion services is a good example of this progress.

**Key Judgement 6.3: Capacity**

- a) There is clear accountability and decision-making to support service delivery and improvement
- b) Capacity is used efficiently and effectively and is developed to deliver ambitions, priorities and value for money
- c) The needs of individual children, young people and their families are effectively identified, recorded and communicated

Organisations delivering services for children and young people in the Royal Borough have been working together through the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership since 2003. In January 2008, this became the **RBWM Children's Trust**.

Chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services, the **Children's Trust Executive Board (CTEB)** includes all local partners under the duty to co-operate plus schools, voluntary and community sector organisations and other key partners. The board is responsible for identifying priorities, responding to gaps in service provision through the CYPP and CYPP Review, and monitoring impact through the CYPP Outcome Improvement Plan (which includes targets set against the National Indicator Set). Service contributions are coordinated through the board and necessary decisions are made about operational commitments to achieve agreed priorities.

The Children's Trust also has a **Commissioning Group (CTCG)** that is responsible for outlining the overall vision for children's services, in agreement with the council's executive and partner agencies' executive bodies, and ensuring that resources are deployed to achieve that vision. The CTCG provides strategic leadership by agreeing joint commissioning priorities, and by ensuring that the overall pattern and design of services meets the needs of all children and young people. The CTCG has been responsible for the development of the **Joint Commissioning Strategy (2008-11)**. The strategy outlines joint commissioning activities to support the priorities outlined in the CYPP and the CYPP Outcome Improvement Plan. The CTCG has agreed a programme of work across the 2008-11 funding period. Work has also begun on the identification of opportunities to formally align or pool budgets where this will have an impact. Membership of the CTCG includes the Corporate Director of Learning and Care (Chair), the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Chair of the Schools' Forum, a Headteacher representative, the PCT Director of Commissioning, and the Partnership Director for the Learning and Skills Council.

There are five **Outcome Groups** aligned to the Children's Trust (one for each of the five Every Child Matters outcomes) plus groups relating to children in care and disabled children. Many of the Outcome Groups are jointly led with partners. The commitment to and the quality of the partnership relationships across the Trust is very good, this is particularly evident in the membership and leadership of the outcome groups. RBWM Children's Trust values highly the voice of children, young people and their families: their key contribution to identifying needs that will impact on service design is evidenced throughout the CYPP. The Trust has important links to the Local Safeguarding Children Board and to council consultative forums.

The two **Area Children and Young People Teams** went live in September 2007. An evaluation of the first year will be reported to Cabinet. However, the teams have focused on supporting the needs of the most vulnerable children and the schools that they attend. Reducing the increasing

numbers of exclusions was a priority. A number of initiatives aimed at prevention and early intervention are underway, these include an area based rapid response for young people at risk of permanent exclusion, which to date has been successful in preventing the exclusion of 21 out of 23 targeted young people through support to schools and additional or alternative provision for the young person. Numbers of permanent exclusion so far this academic year are down on last year. The Area Children and Young People Team managers have also worked closely with specific schools that are causing concern.

Workforce planning continues to promote cultural change. Key areas for action in the **Workforce Strategy (2007-09)** are leadership and management, recruitment and retention and integrated working. A common induction event takes place regularly, a one stop shop web area for information about working with children and young people is in place, and a children's services leadership competency framework is agreed and in place. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) went live across the borough in October 2007. This followed an intensive training period for professionals. An agreed practitioner toolkit has been developed and a CAF co-ordinator appointed. A six-month review of the CAF process has been undertaken and feedback from practitioners has informed further development planning. Progress has been made in improving the ability of staff across children's services to analyse all available data thereby identifying challenges as early as possible. This, and the sharing of data through needs analysis across the Children's Trust, supports the identification of priorities for early intervention.

#### **Key Judgement 6.4: Performance management**

##### **c) Knowledge about performance is used to drive improvements in outcomes**

There is a robust programme of performance management operating both across the council's Children's Services and the Children's Trust. The Strategy and Resources Unit in the Learning and Care Directorate regularly monitors key performance indicators, meetings take place with professionals on a monthly basis to ensure that any change in outcomes can be identified and evaluated as soon as possible. Performance is measured against targets that are fully reviewed annually. Where service development needs are identified this has led to service re-design (for example, Healthy Minds/CAMHS services across all Tiers).

The Children's Trust Executive Board also has a schedule of meetings to review new outcomes data each month and to ensure that implementation of the CYPP is on track, including a system of exception reporting where there are particular difficulties moving outcomes forward. Performance monitoring against existing LAA reward targets takes place quarterly. Performance management of staff working for the local authority takes place in line with corporate HR policies. The council retains its Investors in People status and senior managers, service managers and team leaders have benefited from a council wide management programme.

Resources are increasingly targeted towards priorities (e.g. use of Standard Funds) and are used effectively. Planning permission for the development of Holyport Manor Special School on a co-located site within Maidenhead has been approved. Children's services finished the 2007/8 financial year within budget, successfully dealing with in year pressures. Partnership arrangements with the Schools' Forum are evolving. The Schools' Forum has endorsed the CYPP and members will be attending a workshop in September to develop the work of the forum so that it can become an active commissioning member of the Children's Trust. The review of Early Years funding is underway and the local authority is working towards consultation for a single formula. The Local Authority has just completed a comprehensive consultation on the Primary Strategy for Change and is working with schools to develop a strategic plan to begin implementation during 2009/10. During 2007/8 the quality of services and the outcomes achieved by our children and young people have continued to improve.