

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards (Corporate Issue)

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee	18 June 2002
Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee	26 June 2002
Cabinet	29 July 2002

**THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND
JOINT STRATEGY FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE**

**Report of Service Director, Children and Family Resources and Assistant Director
(Pupil and Student Support)**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the current performance of looked after children and of the proposed Joint Strategy for the Education of Children in Public Care aimed at raising standards of achievement for looked after children within Leicester City.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Both the Education and Lifelong Learning and the Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee have requested that this report be submitted to Cabinet for comment and approval.
- 2.2 The City Council's Corporate Parenting initiative was launched in May 1998 and was supported by all senior officers and Members. This initiative has been a good example of joint working. However, is now needs to be re-energised and re-launched to deliver improved life chances for looked after children. It is intended to undertake this during the autumn 2002.
- 2.3 In December 2000 Members demonstrated their collective responsibility to valuing and supporting the education of children looked after as one of the most important contributions a corporate parent can make to their lives by pledging to increase the number of GCSEs achieved by children who are looked after by the City Council.
- 2.4 Central Government intends, through the "Quality Protects" initiative and through recent joint guidance to Education and Social Services Departments, to bring the educational achievement of children who are looked after closer into line with those of their peers, enabling them to fulfil their full potential.
- 2.5 National Priorities Guidance (NPG) sets targets for care leavers aged 16 or over for the past year of 50% of pupils in public care to achieve one GCSE or GNVQ equivalent. Year 11 cohort results indicate that 39% of eligible pupils achieved at least one GCSE. This year the Authority must achieve a target of 60% of eligible pupils attaining one

GCSE or GNVQ equivalent. These results demonstrate that the City Council faces a major challenge to improve attainment over the next few years.

- 2.6 The Social Services Performance Assessment Framework places Leicester City 147th out of 150 Authorities with regard to the number of children looked after achieving five GCSE Grade A-C in 2000/01. Last year no looked after children achieved this standard. As a result, the City Council has identified raising the Educational Attainment of Looked After Children as a target within the Council's Public Service Agreement. Performance in this area is critical to improving both the Social Services Department's, and consequently the City Council's, performance rating. The targets proposed for the city council's PSA are included in appendix 3.
- 2.7 The supporting information highlights that since Local Government Reorganisation, Education and Social Services Officers have worked closely on a number of issues within Leicester. This has enabled some protocols between the two departments to be established at an early stage. However, there is still significant scope for greater working together and synergies as identified in the Best Value Review of Services for Vulnerable Children. However, despite improved liaison and an increased number of protocols between departments, performance has not sufficiently improved. Appendix 2 in the Supporting Information highlights the City Council's current performance relating to year 11 students.
- 2.8 In order to make continued progress in achieving improved educational attainment for children looked after, the Council as a whole, must tackle a number of barriers and challenges, which inhibit improved performance. These can be translated into a eight-point strategy for success.

These are:

- i) Reduce delay and drift in obtaining and maintaining mainstream school places as a result of admission and exclusion procedures, or through stigmatisation of looked after children.
- ii) Provide continuity of care and education from families, schools and social workers working with looked after children, through care and educational placement stability.
- iii) Ensure that teachers have high expectations of children looked after and tackling the mistaken assumption that they have Special Educational Needs.
- iv) Ensure that a high priority is given to educational attainment by social workers, residential staff and foster carers.
- v) Improve co-ordination between relevant agencies with regard to looked after children.
- vi) Improve communication and management information, data collection and analysis, in relation to life chances of looked after children.
- vii) Ensure all looked after children are in receipt of substantive full-time education provision.

viii) Ensure corporate parenting which drives accountability and improvement for outcomes for looked after children has corporate ownership.

2.8 The outline strategy included (Appendix 1) in the supporting information divides the strategy into ten critical success factors, to delivering this improvement across these barriers.

2.9 The implementation of the strategy through an Action Plan is critical to achieving improved educational attainment for children looked after within Leicester. As part of the Public Service Agreement, a comprehensive Action Plan linked to the eight-point strategy and to the critical success factors will be developed and available for scrutiny in the Autumn 2002.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to asked to:

- i) Endorse the corporate parenting work already undertaken within the City Council and support the relaunch of the corporate parenting strategy during the autumn 2002;
- ii) Note and comment upon current performance and proposed action;
- iii) Endorse the Joint Strategy for the Education of Children in Public Care.

4. Financial and Legal Implications

4.1 Ensuring improved educational attainment requires considerable financial investment. To date both Standards Funding and Quality Protects specific grant have been utilised to fund specific developments such as the Joint Team (RALAC) which includes Social Care workers, advisory teachers EWOs learning mentors, a social inclusion officer and designated teacher training.

4.2 The City Council has a corporate responsibility for children looked after, therefore a corporate approach to this small but resource intensive group of young people must be adopted. Currently both the Education and Social Services Departments overspend its budget on this group. Inevitably the way forward these issues will be to establish joint budgets and protocols between Health, Social Services and Education.

4.3 "The authors have highlighted a number of legal issues in the report and addressed them". (Guy Goodman, Assistant Head of Legal Services – ext 7054)

5. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within Supporting information	References
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Children looked after are already designated as a socially excluded group	
Policy	Yes	The report has implications for future policy development	

Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

None.

7. Consultations

Consultation between the Education and Social Services Departments.

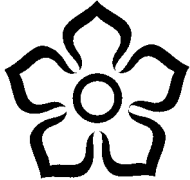
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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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**EDUCATION PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN PUBLIC CARE
(LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN)**

Report of Service Director, Children and Family Resources and Assistant Director (Pupil and Student Support)

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

APPENDIX 1

JOINT STRATEGY FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 *'Children in the Public Care are our children. We hold their future in our hands, and education is the key to that future' (1).*
- 1.2 Leicester City Council places a high priority on improving the life chances of children and young people entering public care.
- 1.3 Looked after is the term used within the Children Act 1989, to describe all children who are the subject of a Care Order (Section 31), or who are provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis for more than 24 hours (Section 20).
- 1.4 Central Government intends, through the Quality Protects initiative and through recent joint guidance to education and social services departments, to bring the educational achievement of children who are looked after closer in to line with those of their peers, enabling them to achieve their full potential. On launching the Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care, the Schools Minister made it clear that children in public care are at the heart of the Government's drive to raise educational standards for all children and to tackle social exclusion.
- 1.5 Research evidence indicates that the education of children looked after has been characterised by fragmentation and unacceptable levels of failure. 75% of care leavers leave formal education with no qualifications, and between 12% and 19% make the transition to further education compared with 68% of the general population. This historical perspective provides the context for this policy document and development

proposals and is aimed at raising the educational achievement of children and young people in public care in Leicester City Council.

2. CORPORATE PARENT

- 2.1 Section 22 of The Children Act 1989, provides the basis for the City Council's role as a corporate parent by requiring it to both safeguard and promote their welfare and make use of other services which are available to children living with their parents which they may need.
- 2.2 The Council's Corporate Parenting Initiative was launched in May 1998 and supported by all senior officers and Members. Since this time Leicester has established itself as a national leader in this field. The Council's approach to corporate parenting was noted as good practice in the Social Services White Paper. The cross-departmental initiative aims to develop corporate parent responsibilities by assisting in the development of new initiatives and monitoring the effectiveness of the outcomes for looked after children. This initiative now needs full member and senior officer support to begin delivering further improved life chances for looked after children.
- 2.3 In December 2000 in order to demonstrate the Members' collective responsibility to valuing and supporting the education of children looked after as one of the most important contributions a corporate parent can make to their lives, the City council has made an unequivocal pledge. To increase the number of GCSEs achieved by children who are looked after by the city Council. This is further reinforced by the City Council's commitment to the raised attainment of looked after children by the inclusion of this key area for improvement in the Public Service Agreement. However, evidence indicates that educational outcomes for looked after children in Leicester are some of the worst in the country making significant improvement imperative.

3. QUALITY PROTECTS

- 3.1 The Quality Protects programme launched in 1998 includes a set of targets aimed at transforming the delivery of children's services. Two objectives in particular focus on improving educational outcomes for children in need and children looked after and within the latter there is a particular focus on looked after children from black and minority ethnic groups. The White Paper 'Learning to Succeed' envisages the creation of a new support service for young people, to improve the coherence of the advice and support.

4. NATIONAL PRIORITIES GUIDANCE

- 4.1 In 1998 the Department of Health (DH) issued National Priorities guidance for Modernising Health and Social Services (NPG) setting out specific objectives and targets. The lead priority for children's welfare is: 'To promote and safeguard the welfare of socially excluded children, and particularly of children looked after by local authorities'. The Children (Leaving Care) Act, 2000 includes proposals to strengthen the powers and duties of the local authority to assess and meet the needs of 16 – 17 year olds. Young people will have a personal advisor and a pathway plan until up to 24 years of age. The City Council is required to support looked after children through both Further and Higher Education careers and to increase the number of care leavers in education, training and employment

5. EDUCATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN PUBLIC CARE GUIDANCE

5.1 The joint DfES / DH Guidance sets a challenging agenda for Local Education Authority and Social Services Departments. Its underlying principles include:

- Prioritising education
- Inclusion – changing attitudes about looked after young people
- Achieving continuity and stability
- High expectations
- Early intervention
- Listening to children.

5.2 The Guidance also proposes a number of measures:

- A senior officer to act as a champion for looked after children to establish and enforce joint procedures
- The establishment of joint decision making structures
- Establishing authority wide policies on the education of looked after children
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all looked after children
- A designated teacher in each school to act as a resource and advocate for looked after children and for whom Education and Social Services must provide training.
- Accurate data collection to monitor children's progress
- All looked after children to have a full time education placement within 20 days of a new care placement
- Educational placements to be used as one of the main criteria when identifying a suitable care placement
- Better liaison between departments where children are placed outside the City
- The provision of support and training for carers

6. OTHER INITIATIVES

6.1 The work of the Social Exclusion Unit on Truancy and School Exclusion (1998) emphasised the need for joined solutions, especially for children in public care, and recommended that 'effective education should be considered a key outcome of relevant social services work involving school age children'. Indeed the Social Exclusion Unit is currently working on guidance for raising the attainment of looked after children commissioned by the Prime Minister.

- 6.2 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 places a duty on local education authorities to promote high standards and produce Education Development Plans (EDPs). These include the NPG target for your people in public care.

The School Standards and Framework Act enabled the introduction of the Standards Funds. This includes ringfenced funding for the education of young people in public care.

7. CURRENT POSITION

- 7.1 Since Local Government Re-organisation, Education and Social Services Officers have worked closely on a number of issues including the Children's Services Plan, Child Protection and Children Looked After by the Local Authority. This enabled some protocols between the two departments to be established at an early stage.
- 7.2 From a combination of Social Services and Education Departmental and Standards Fund monies, a range of provision has been developed. A key appointment was that of a specialist teacher to deliver training to carers and to raise the profile of looked after children within schools. Subsequently, a multi-disciplinary team (RALAC) has been established to target raised attainment and inclusion.
- 7.3 A database has been developed to enable the authority to track and monitor looked after children and their educational progress.
- 7.4 In addition to academic input and training, the RALAC team devised additional policy guidance, provided guidelines for support staff working with looked after children, provided resources for children's homes and additional learning support assistance for secondary schools. Awareness raising days have also been provided for foster carers.
- 7.5 Leicester City is a member of the East Midlands Special Educational needs Project funded by the DfES, which has taken a strategic approach to improving services for children with SEN, focussing upon four key priority areas including an improvement in the educational arrangements for children and young people in public care.

8. TARGETS AND PERFORMANCE

- 8.1 National Priorities Guidance sets target for care leavers aged 16 or over for the past year of 50% of pupils in public care to achieve 1 GCSE or GNVQ equivalent. Year 11 cohort results indicate that 39% of eligible students achieved at least 1 GCSE. This year the Authority must achieve a target of 60% of eligible pupils attaining 1 GCSE or GNVQ equivalent.
- 8.2 Recent publication of National Statistics on looked after children places Leicester City 147th out of 150 authorities in performance on the number of looked after children achieving 5 GCSE A-C Grade. No looked after children achieved this standard last year. In addition, the number of looked after children achieving 1 GCSE A-G has reduced.
- 8.3 The Quality Protects initiative measures educational progress positively by attainment (National Curriculum, GCSE and GNVQs) and negatively by school exclusions and unauthorised absences. The performance indicators and targets are national curriculum tests, SATs, GCSE and GNVQ results, unauthorised absences from schools

and permanent exclusions. Comparisons are then made between children in need, children looked after and the whole school population.

9. LEICESTER CITY'S LOOKED AFTER POPULATION (SEPTEMBER 2001)

9.1 The Council commenced collecting data about the educational profile of children looked after at the beginning of 2000. The following represents the position in September 2001.

- 479 looked after children
- 321 born between 1.9.83 (year 11) and 31.8.96) early years
- 166 of secondary age
- 156 of primary age
- 56% male
- 44% female
- 49 children had experienced a fixed period exclusion at some stage in their school career (15.2%)
- 30 children had experienced a permanent exclusion at some stage in their school career (9.3%)
- 79 children were statemented for special needs (24.5%)
- 19 had been statemented and had also been permanently excluded (5.9%)

10. LEICESTER CITY STRATEGY

10.1 In order to make continued progress in achieving improved educational attainment for children looked after and to achieve the Leicester City Council pledge to increase the number of children looked after achieving GCSE results, the authority must tackle a number of barriers and challenges.

10.2 These are to:

- Reduce delay and drift in obtaining mainstream school places as a result of admission process or through stigmatism of looked after children.
- Provide continuity of care from families, schools and social workers by increasing care placement and school stability, through care and educational placement stability.
- Ensure that teachers and social workers have high expectations of children looked after and tackle the mistaken assumption that they have special educational needs.
- Ensure that a high priority is given to educational attainment by social workers, residential staff and foster carers.

- Improve the co-ordination between agencies with regard to looked after children.
- Improve communication and management information, data collection and analysis in relation to life chances of looked after children.

10.3 This strategy should emphasise the shared commitment of both Education and Social Services Departments to raising achievement and to effective corporate parenting. It is crystallised into ten critical success factors, each requiring a clear action plan, targets and linked performance indicators. These will be developed as part of the Public Service Agreement implementation during June to September 2002.

10.4 These are:

- Gaining political and senior officer ownership, accountability and leadership to ensure effective corporate parenting and to raise the profile of educational achievement of children looked after to a priority within the Authority.
- Ensuring effective joint working between the LEA / SSD and schools through the development of an integrated approach to service provision as indicated in the Best Value Review of Vulnerable Children's Services.
- Linking leisure, culture, social welfare and education by improving life chances through developing life skills and self-esteem through integrated service planning and operational delivery.
- Focussing on prevention by supporting pre-school initiatives and the screening of vulnerable younger children in order to maintain them in schools.
- Ensuring stability and continuity both within education and care placements.
- Ensure reliable management information is available and coherent monitoring systems between schools, the LEA and SSD.
- Ensuring social care and educational staff are trained in order to raise awareness about respective responsibilities, priorities and systems, the experiences of service users and effective interventions.
- Consulting young people and their families to seek views at every stage in order to assist in planning and delivering services.
- Ensuring clarity of the roles and accountabilities for all staff and managers within the LEA / SSD and schools with regard to raising educational standards.
- Ensuring prompt and effective support to schools and children looked after where school placements have been disrupted.

**REPORT ON THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
YEAR 11**

Progress of 28 Year 11 Looked After Children was tracked during the course of the year 2000/2001.

Profile at the start of the academic year:

- 13 of the young people had mainstream school places.
- 2 of the young people were at Leicester College.
- 7 of the young people were with the Student Support Service or at 126 Wigston Lane.
- 5 of the young people were placed in Independent schools outside the LEA.
- 1 of the young people was in custody.
- 7 of the young people were statemented for special educational needs.

GCSE results:

Mainstream young people

10 of the mainstream young people attained at least one GCSE.

Young people placed outside the LEA

0 of the young people achieved at least one GCSE.

Student Support Service/126 Wigston Lane

1 young person attained a GCSE

In total 11 of the 28 pupils achieved at least one GCSE or equivalent = 39%. This exceeded the previous year's figure of 33.3% but did not meet the Education Development Plan target of 50%.

Young person 1 9 GCSEs	Grades: B,2Cs, 4Ds, E, F
Young person 2 9 GCSEs	Grades: 2Es, 3Fs, and 4Gs
Young person 3 9 GCSEs	Grades 2Cs, 3Ds,4Es
Young person 4 2 GCSEs	Grades: C, D,
Young person 5 6 GCSEs	Grades: E, 4Fs, G
Young person 6 3 GCSE	Grades: 3Es
Young person 7 7 GCSEs	Grades: E, 4Fs, 2Gs
Young person 8 7 GCSEs	Grades: 6Es, F

Young person 9 4GCSEs	Grades: 4Gs
Young Person 10 2GCSEs	Grades: D, G
Young Person 11 1 GNVQ	

The students above attended the following schools:

- Hamilton Community College
- Sir Johnathon North
- Rusheymead
- City Of Leicester
- Babington Community College
- Crown Hills Community College
- 126 Wigston Lane
- Leicester College
- Guthlaxton College
- Bosworth College
- St Pauls

Action for the current academic year 2001-2002:

- Year 11 pupils identified in September 2001.
- Communication with CORALs in schools and in SSS to ensure the young people have individual education plans, which are reviewed as appropriate.
- Improve information to EPS and EWS so that additional support can be provided where necessary.
- Liaison with the young people's social workers and attendance at Review of Arrangements meetings as appropriate.
- Continue to support young people in mainstream schools with additional learning support hours from the LAC budget.
- Liaise with the Youth Offending Team in order to establish tracking and monitoring procedures for young people at risk of offending.
- Offer year 11 students the support of a learning mentor.
- Provide revision guides for all year 11 students.

End of Key Stage Results for Looked after Children 2001

KS1

Pupils achieving Level 2 or better:

<u>English</u>	- Reading task	7
	- Writing	9
	- Spelling	8
	- Maths	14

Number eligible for End of Key
stage 1 Tasks and Tests 24

9 of the 24 young people sat all these tests

KS2

Pupils achieving Level 4 or better:

English	5
Maths	3
Science	10

Number eligible for End of Key
Stage 2 Tasks and Tests 23

18 of the 23 young people sat all these tests

KS3

Pupils achieving Level 5 or better:

English	2
Maths	3
Science	2

Number eligible for Key Stage 3 Tasks and Tests 27

16 of the 27 young people sat all these tests.

TARGET 2 (NATIONAL)

Improving life chances of children and young people in care by increasing educational attainment at GCSEs.

Indicator(s) by which performance will be measured

Local	Number of children leaving care aged 16+ with 5 GCSE's at grades A*-C
Local	Attainment at keystone 2 level 4 for looked after children against Leicester's cohort norm in English, Maths and Science
Local	Percentage of looked after children who achieve entry level qualifications eg ASDAN, AEB, Wordpower, Numberpower, NVQ Level 1, 1 GCSE A-G
QP9	To reduce the number of children looked after excluded from school

Current performance (at 31st March 2001)

Local	0 children leaving care achieved 5 GCSEs Grades A* -C
Local	Attainment at keystone 2 level 4 for looked after children against Leicester's cohort norm: English 30% Maths 23% Science 52%
Local	23% of looked after children achieve entry level qualifications eg ASDAN, AEB, Wordpower, Numberpower, NVQ Level 1, 1 GCSE A-G
QP9	5.02% of looked after children were excluded from school

Performance at the end of the period of the Local PSA

Performance expected without the Local PSA

Local	6 children leaving care achieving 5 GCSEs Grades A* -C
Local	Attainment at keystone 2 level 4 for looked after children against Leicester's cohort norm: English 55% Maths 40% Science 60%
Local	35% of looked after children achieve entry level qualifications eg ASDAN, AEB, Wordpower, Numberpower, NVQ Level 1, 1 GCSE A-G
QP9	4% of looked after children excluded from school

Performance target with the Local PSA

Local	11 children leaving care achieving 5 GCSEs Grades A* -C
Local	Attainment at keystone 2 level 4 for looked after children against Leicester's cohort norm: English 75% Maths 65% Science 75%
Local	55% of looked after children achieve entry level qualifications eg ASDAN, AEB, Wordpower, Numberpower, NVQ Level 1, 1 GCSE A-G
QP9	2% of looked after children excluded from school

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

Local	5 additional child leaving care achieving 5 GCSEs Grades A* -C
Local	Increase in attainment at keystone 2 level 4 for looked after children against Leicester's cohort norm: English 20% Maths 25% Science 15%
Local	20% more looked after children achieve entry level qualifications eg ASDAN, AEB, Wordpower, Numberpower, NVQ Level 1, 1 GCSE A-G
QP9	2% less looked after children excluded from school