

## **Select Committee on Children's Services – 26 March 2007**

### **Summary of performance against selected indicators**

The Quarterly Performance report highlights a number of indicators on which performance is below target and these are identified by a red triangle in the body of the report. This summary provides a commentary and an update on progress against those indicators, building on a similar report presented to the previous meeting of the Select Committee.

#### **BV 050 (PAF A2)**

##### **The percentage of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least 1 GCSE at grade A\*-G or a GNVQ**

Educational attainment is one of the most important determinants of future outcomes and a measure that is supported by readily available information. There is clearly a need for close co-operation between the Directorate and schools to improve the attainment of children in care. The recent Green Paper "Care Matters" emphasizes the importance of improving educational outcomes for children in care. The Director is a member of the National working group making recommendations to Ministers on this aspect of "Care Matters". The indicator includes all children in care as this emphasises the council's corporate responsibility for the education of vulnerable children. Research published in 1992 and 1995 showed that up to 75% of children in care left school with no qualifications. The targets take account of this baseline, and the fact that some 30% of children in care have a statement of special educational needs.

Figures for quarter 3 are based upon those children in the cohort who left care in quarters 1, 2 and 3 and on the results of those young people who will be 18 in the financial year 2006/07. The figure is an estimate of the final year end result.

#### **A&I027**

##### **The percentage of children in care having a current (up to date) Personal Education Plan (PEP).**

The Action Plan that was brought to the attention of the Select Committee has now started to be implemented and although the performance in the Quarterly Report shows only a minor change from the previous quarter, the latest available figures (to the end of February) show a PEP completion rate of 60.5%. The challenge will be to maintain and improve that degree of improvement over the remaining quarter of 2006/07 and to sustain the improvement into 2007/08.

Some of the actions to improve the completion rate include the monitoring and reporting of performance monthly to senior managers and team members, direct contact with social workers regarding outstanding PEPs and a programme of workshops to support officers involved in the PEP process.

**L&P LDS130****The percentage of children in care satisfied with work experience place offered**

This indicator was considered at the meeting of the Corporate Board on 6 March, when it was agreed that there is a need to redefine the indicator, as at present it does not provide a meaningful measure of work placements for children in care. The Council, as both Corporate Parent and the largest employer in the Borough, should take the lead in offering work placements to children in care. The redefined measure will quantify more usefully how well the programme of work placements is operating

**BV046****The percentage of half days missed due to total (that is authorised and unauthorised) absences in primary schools maintained by the Local Education Authority.**

The 'red triangle' has been triggered by the primary absence figure for the summer term 2006. The additional performance information contained in the table for the autumn term 2006 shows an improvement in performance in excess of target, 4.74% against a target of 5.25%. This significant improvement is due in the main to the re-configuration and re-focusing of the Education Welfare Service and to the 'winter sickness' virus outbreak which had a major impact on last year's figures with several schools reporting absences of over 30% at the height of the outbreak. It is worth noting that a further breakdown of primary absence shows that 4.27% is authorised and 0.47% is unauthorised.

Secondary absence rates are also improving, from 8.05% to 7.23%, moving closer to a revised target of 7.2% (down from 8%).