

Services for 8-13 year olds

Scrutiny Inquiry Report

Introduction and Scope



Introduction

1. The Leeds Children and Young People's Plan sets out local priorities and actions to deliver universal and targeted services to all children and young people aged 0-19, and older for those with special needs.
2. This background complemented the strong conclusion of the Board's inquiry on youth services, carried out last year, which was that there needed to be more investment in universal and targeted services for the 8-13 age group, and that seeking to re-engage young people and their families in structured provision and support at 13-plus was often very difficult.
3. This is not to suggest that there is no provision for the 8-13 age group currently, but to identify a need for a more formalised approach to ensuring that the full range of services is extended across the whole 0-19 age range, by enhancing current levels of provision for the 8-13 age group. Much of this delivery will be channelled through extended schools – now badged as extended services.
4. In order to decide on an appropriate and manageable focus for the inquiry, the board commissioned a small working group from amongst its membership to scope the inquiry. The working group met with the council's Acting Chief Officer for Early Years and Youth Service on 31st July 2007.
5. The working group discussed the strategy for achieving a more joined up service framework so that there is a smooth transition and continuity of opportunities, involvement and support for young people and their families from 0-19.
6. Members also learned about the statutory impetus provided by the new requirement within the Childcare Act to provide information for children and families covering the 0-19 age group, combined with the new duty to provide a sufficiency of childcare up to the age of 14 to support working families.
7. The working group was concerned to identify areas where the Scrutiny Board's input could add value to the development of services for 8-13 year olds in Leeds, having regard to the proposed timescale for the inquiry.
8. The group identified a number of aspects of the 'infrastructure' necessary to successful delivery of universal and targeted services for 8-13 year olds, and suggested that the Scrutiny Board's inquiry could focus on these areas:

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- Meeting the requirement to provide information for children, young people and families
 - The use of assets, particularly schools but also other buildings, to deliver services
 - Governance models in relation to extended schools
 - The role of councillors in supporting and promoting local delivery of services for 8-13 year olds
 - The opportunities that are available for young people aged 8-13 to participate in decision-making and influence issues that affect them
 - The infrastructure required to deliver the play strategy
9. Many of these themes (such as the provision of quality, accessible information) have formed key strands of inquiries by the Board on a range of topics in the past.

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Background

10. At the outset of our inquiry we learned about a number of statutory duties which need to be offered to children, young people and their families, and which impact particularly upon services to the 8 to 13 age range.
- A new duty to provide parents with all the information they need as parents of children aged from 0 to 19 (25 where the young adult has disabilities)
 - The delivery of all schools as 'full core offer' extended schools by 2010
 - A children's centre in every community by 2010
11. In order to shape the Leeds response to the expectations within the legislation a new 'core offer' of universal, extended services from schools, children's centres, youth provision, community learning facilities and health was developed as part of the Children and Young People's Plan in 2007. The 'core offer' represents what services all children and families in Leeds can expect to receive and is one of the foundations for implementing the Every Child Matters agenda locally.
12. The 'core offer' of universal, extended services from schools, children's centres, youth provision, community learning facilities and health includes the following elements:
- Fully integrated and flexible early education and childcare services for children up to age 14
 - An entitlement for all learners that meets their individual needs and maximise their potential
 - Family support, including parenting, health and social care providing early intervention and swift referral to more specialist help where appropriate
 - Access to health visiting and school nursing services, providing health information, support and advice for children 0 -19 years, at home, at school and in community settings
 - Access to information and support to children and young people to improve their own health, including smoking cessation, alcohol and drug misuse, sexual health, healthy eating and physical activity
 - Increased access to services and activities at home, school, children's centres and in community settings for children with disabilities
 - A menu of positive activities for children and young people beyond the school day and year on school and other sites
 - Access to local, age appropriate play, leisure, and recreation

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- opportunities that are freely chosen and done for their own sake
- Access to informal social education programmes within community settings
 - Access to high quality, comprehensive and independent information, advice and guidance to children, young people and parents, covering all aspects of need, including childcare
 - Access to individual support for all young people to plan and review learning and fulfil their career aspirations
 - Outreach to support vulnerable and/or isolated families and assist them to engage with appropriate community resources
 - Access to support and training to assist families with work readiness and employment issues
 - Community access to enhanced school, children's centre and other sites
13. We also heard about changes taking place in the way that services will be funded in the future, in particular that the development of a Joint Preventative Commissioning Panel with key partners pooling budgets. New procedures will be used in a phased programme to commission services across the 0 to 19 age range starting in April 2008.
14. External grant funding to support the development of services for children and young people has in the past been allocated with a ring fence to particular age ranges. So, for example, funding for children aged 0 to 4 and families has come through general Sure Start grant and funding for children aged 5 to 13 has been allocated through the Children's Fund. From 2008–11 local authorities will have increasing flexibility to commission services in ways that bring the benefit of integrated service delivery and a focus on the whole family.
15. We know that there is a lot of work that takes place that is funded on a short term or pilot project basis, either through local grant funding and short-term contracts, or through successful bids for government funding. We would not want Leeds to miss out on the added value and extra activity that this funding makes possible. However we were conscious that there was perhaps a higher proportion of work with the 8-13 age group that has been funded in this way, probably related to the historically lower profile for this work that we identified as one of the reasons for undertaking our inquiry.
16. We are concerned that there needs to be more stability in this area if the momentum gained

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through work with the early years age groups (which has received substantial investment in Leeds over a long period and provides nationally recognised excellent services) is to be properly sustained, and services avoid having to play catch up when young people reach the age of 13 or 14.

Recommendation 1

That the Director of Children's Services reports to us within 3 months on how the new commissioning strategies being adopted by the Children Leeds Partnership will provide a more stable funding framework for services to 8-13 year olds.

Extended Services

17. For most 8-13 year olds, one of the best ways to access leisure activities and other services is through their school. The extended services agenda has a vital role to play in developing the range and quality of these activities.
18. The Council has a statutory duty to provide the 'full core offer' of extended services to all children and families in the city by 2010. These services include leisure activities, health services and learning opportunities, and will be provided by a range of bodies. The 'full core offer' of extended

services required from schools includes

- High quality childcare (from 8am to 6pm, five days a week, 48 weeks a year)
- A varied menu of study support and enrichment activities
- Access to parenting support
- Swift and easy access to other relevant services, particularly for children with additional needs.
- Community access to school facilities.

19. The board received information on current progress in Leeds in the development of extended services. There are 38 clusters of extended schools across the 5 wedges of the city and 114 schools in Leeds already provide the 'full core offer'.
20. 165 Primary Schools and 35 High Schools provide a varied menu of activities for children aged 8 to 13 during term time. These activities include study support and a wide range of extra curricular activities including sport, arts and hobbies. Most clusters provide before and after school childcare facilities to support working parents and breakfast clubs. In summary, around 90% of high schools and 74% of primary schools are currently providing at least some aspects of the 'full core offer'.

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21. The city's secondary schools are already on target to meet the 2010 deadline. We were told that primary schools and Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) need further assistance, but should also be able to reach the target.
22. We learned that Leeds has self-set an aspirational target of full Core Offer by SILCs for September 2008. A SILC strategic plan was being developed, which would need to address some of the practical challenges such as:
 - Transport provision for accessing after-hours (after school) and out-of-hours (evenings, weekends) provision
 - Additional staffing needs, e.g. escorts
 - Staff support and training, e.g. behaviour management
 - Logistics of what is provided where and when
23. For pre-school children, the main focal point for delivery of extended services is children's centres. 50 of these centres cover all Super Output Areas in the lowest 30% in the index of multiple deprivation across Leeds. Children's centres also provide a large amount of family support services and holiday activities for older children as partners in extended services provision. In 2007 there were family 'Fun Days' at most of the children's centres, which were attended by 750 families with children, mostly aged up to 11.
24. The Board asked about extended services access to PFI schools. There are now 7 PFI high schools and 16 primary schools operating across Leeds. Members were reminded of the briefing paper produced for the Board by the Public Private Partnership Unit the previous year in relation to their inquiry on youth services, on the use of PFI schools by community groups and third party groups. This paper had indicated that the allocation of time within the contracts was not being fully utilised. We heard that initial problems with some PFI built schools, in terms of access to facilities outside of school hours, were being resolved, and that lessons had also been learned for future projects.
25. The role of extended schools coordinators was discussed. Members were concerned about the fact that only 24 of the 38 clusters had an appointed coordinator when we asked the question in October 2007. We were pleased to be told that there was a commitment from Children's Services to appoint coordinators for all clusters, but we are concerned about the impact of short-term funding on the stability of these posts and the potential to

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discourage high calibre staff from applying. With the emphasis on locality working across Children's Services, these posts are an important link in the chain.

26. We were especially pleased to hear about developments in the LS10XS cluster, which has included after-school club provision based at the South SILC since May 2007.
27. In addition we learned that three clusters in South Leeds had received joint funding from Surestart to provide a pilot from January to March 2008 of localised after-school clubs for children in Beeston, Belle Isle, Holbeck, Hunslet and Middleton. 17 primary schools and Broomfield SILC were providing opportunities for children to attend clubs local to their home, rather than based on the school they attend.
28. The cluster and the SILC are also providing training for local providers of extended services to help provide an inclusive programme of activities for all children and young people.
29. Officers are working to ensure that schools make the best use of existing resources, and also that all partners are actively engaged. It is important that headteachers and their staff buy into the process and understand the wider educational benefits which extended services can bring. School governors (including many councillors) also have a role to play in driving the process forward.
30. We were also pleased to hear that Education Leeds was working on these issues through the development of quality improvement strategies for extended services. It is important for schools that they can see how extended services help them to improve achievement and outcomes for their pupils, as their primary purpose. It is also important that we can assess the contribution extended services make to the five outcomes for children and young people more generally, and start to identify and disseminate best practice.
31. We were provided with information on the various options for governance in relation to extended services, including information prepared specifically to help governing bodies consider the most appropriate way forward for their own schools as extended services providers, as well as their responsibilities in relation to the five Every Child Matters outcomes. We heard that this had generally been well received by governing bodies and had also led to Leeds feeding into the DCSF draft national guidance.

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32. For those schools that are already providing extended services, parent and community representation is the next level of challenge in relation to governance.

Recommendation 2

That the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within three months on how she will encourage all schools that are not yet participating in the provision of extended services to do so.

Holiday activities

33. As well as those services offered to 8-13 year olds via schools all year round, the board also examined the activities provided by Council departments during the school holidays.
34. There are a huge range of different activities on offer for children of all ages during the summer break. Many of these activities are available free of charge and are designed to be accessible to a wide range of children of different ages and backgrounds and from different parts of the city. However, it is recognised that some problems with access remain.
35. Where possible, detailed data is recorded to enable the service providers to make sure that a broad range of young people are accessing the services. Attempts are being made to identify 'cold spots' in the city where there are currently no summer events, or where children are not taking advantage of the facilities available. Improving inclusion for children with disabilities is also a priority. Transport is recognised as being key to accessibility.
36. Breeze, mini Breeze and Positive Activities for Young People provide a wide range of activities and events for children and young people during school holidays. These activities are focused upon the older age range, but uptake in the 8 to 13 range is high. More than 9,000 children aged 8 to 13 attended Breeze events in summer 2007. A number of young people are also carers for, or choosing to bring, younger siblings to organised events. In some cases parents bring whole families to enjoy facilities on offer. The rich and varied parks and countryside areas of Leeds host a number of open days and events in July and August which are well visited.
37. We received information from Parks and Countryside, the library service, Positive Activities, Leeds Children's Fund and Breeze on the activity programmes and participation levels, which showed the range of events available for children and young people to participate in.

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38. We also learned that 80 playschemes had been funded by the Council over the summer. We were pleased to hear that some of these schemes were held in schools, as well as to hear that the youth service is getting more access to schools in the evenings and holidays. Around 5,000 11-13 year olds access youth service activities despite being outside the core youth service age range.
39. We also received an analysis of attendances at the various Breeze events by the former Leisure Services department. The information showed that 8-13 year olds are the predominant participants in most of these events, although there was a spread of young people both much younger and older, as well as participants from neighbouring authorities – and further afield in some cases. The 0-10 age group has been identified as targets for the take-up of the Breeze card.
40. We are interested to hear and see how officers are starting to analyse participation data taken from the Breeze cards in order to identify areas of low take-up and to consider targeting of activities to fill gaps. At least 9,000 children and young people accessed Breeze events over the 2007 summer holiday period.
41. We requested information on activities hosted by secondary schools during the 2007 summer holidays as an example of how accessible the city's schools are outside school time. We were disappointed that there was a nil return for 16 of the 39 high schools reported, implying that the facilities were not in use over the summer holidays. Most of the activities listed were Gifted and Talented provision.
42. The most active programme we heard about was based around Garforth Community College, which produced a comprehensive programme brochure listing a wide range of on and off-site activities. However, we were aware that this programme is for 11-16 year olds and therefore only covered a part of our age range. Most activities had a cost, although there was a 50% reduction for those entitled to free school meals.
43. We acknowledged that there is a role for us as Scrutiny Board members - and also for all councillors - in our roles as school governors to encourage our schools to make themselves accessible in summer for activities, whether under the school's initiative, or by making the premises (and possibly transport) available to voluntary, community and faith sector

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organisations running holiday schemes.

for all children by disabled children is not clear.

44. Transport for this age range is an obvious issue. Children aged 8 to 13 are often in need of escort to attend events or activities that are not locally based. This further prejudices vulnerable groups and disabled children. Transport is frequently raised by young people as a barrier to participation for reasons of cost and safety, as evidenced by the 'Catching the Bus' report produced in 2007 by our Young People's Scrutiny Forum. Information on the geographical spread of activity is not available other than for Breeze on Tour and some Parks information. It is not clear if some children in this age group are particularly disadvantaged because of the activities available to them where they live and what transport alternatives are safely available for them to access opportunities that are further a field.
45. Access to services and activities by vulnerable groups is an issue. The data does not always indicate the ethnic origin of attendees or indicate whether the opportunities are accessible by disabled children. There are specific events and opportunities organised for children with disabilities. However, access to the full range of activities available
46. We were pleased to hear that many summer holiday activities are free to attend. We also learned that some paying schemes are eligible for tax credits, but we were not sure how widely known this was or whether take up was good.
47. Members were particularly keen to examine the attempts made to engage children from more disadvantaged backgrounds. The way in which events are advertised was seen to be crucial in getting the message across. At present a number of different forms of advertising are used, including mailings to children with Breeze cards, door-to-door mail-drops, internet advertising, posters in libraries and direct mail to looked after children.
48. However, members felt that there was still a danger that some young people could 'slip through the net' and suggested that some additional techniques be used, such as asking teachers in extended schools to help identify those children and families who would most benefit from accessing summer provision. We also particularly feel that there could be some thought given to targeting parents via, for example, children's centres, and perhaps actively encouraging them to plan

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attendance at activities for their children during the holidays.

**Recommendation 3
That the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within three months on how parents and families will be assisted and encouraged to access holiday activities for their children.**

Information

49. In addition to looking at the advertising of summer activities, members also examined the broader ways in which information is communicated to children and families by the Council. This mainly takes place via two websites – The Family Hub and the Breeze website.
50. The Breeze website is aimed at young people and provides them with information on 'where to go' and 'what to do' in the city. The site contains a facility to find events and activities by postcode and users can look at a map of their area showing what is available. The site is mainly focused on leisure activities, although there is also a message board where breeze card holders can discuss a whole range of issues affecting young people.
51. Information for parents and families is available via The Family Hub. Users can search for information under three categories – Childcare, Services for Families and Activities. Services can also be located by postcode or on a map.
52. Both websites are widely advertised and are visited by thousands of people each week. However, members did have some concerns that such a heavy emphasis on the internet as a source of information could lead to the exclusion of those families who do not have access to a computer. It was explained that different tactics were being employed to get information to 'hard to reach' groups. For example, by sending vans with mobile advertising screens out into communities. Hard copies of the Family Hub Directory are also available and information is sent by text message to anyone who registers with the service.
53. We were told that, in preparation to meet the new extended statutory duties of information provision to parents, and also our aspiration to provide an excellent information service to children, young people and families in Leeds, a senior officer had been seconded to develop comprehensive, well linked web sites and service directory with a clear strategy for service provider input, the rationalisation of leaflets and locality based publicity for all services available. The work will

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pay particular attention to access to information and services for vulnerable groups, in particular disabled children and socially excluded families.

54. We were impressed with the Breeze and Family Hub websites and their development so far. However, we feel that there is still need for further input and investment if the sites are to be a truly comprehensive source of information on what is available for children and young people in Leeds. We are pleased that contributors will be able to keep their own information up to date, but this is a 'must' not an option if the site is to be useful. We also think that it is crucial that the sites are user friendly.

**Recommendation 4
That the Director of Children's Services reports to us within three months on how she will ensure that the Breeze and Family Hub information is kept up to date.**

55. We are also somewhat concerned at the possible over reliance on the internet as a source of information. Whilst it is undoubtedly the best way of keeping information up to the minute, and covering the vast range of services across the city, the internet is still not readily accessible and accessed by many people in Leeds.
56. In general we felt that more still needs to be done to publicise the available activity, using a wide range of methods in order to ensure as many children and young people as possible (and their parents and carers) know what is available to them.
57. There remains a need for a more comprehensive approach to making the right information available to people quickly and easily. This includes paper based information, and raising awareness at events. It may also involve taking computers out into the community and helping people to access the information they are interested in. We also suggested that the team might consider promoting the websites at school open days, fairs and parents' evenings as a way of raising awareness.
58. Besides the awareness and accessibility of information, we also feel that there is a further more strategic role for those staff working with the Hub: for example in liaising with local staff such as extended services co-ordinators and others to identify services that could be added to the Hub; and also in identifying potential duplication and gaps within local areas and across the city.
59. We saw some interesting examples of locally based activity programmes during our inquiry.

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These ranged from single venue programmes listing holiday activities, to a ward based directory of all notified provision for children and young people including uniformed organisations, sporting activities, arts and clubs.

60. The quality and clarity of these publications varied, depending on experience, funding and coverage, but we think these are an excellent way of informing children and young people, parents and workers of what is available at a local level at a glance, and provide a useful supplement to the hub website.
61. At present, the production of these programmes is on an ad hoc basis. As one of our key themes was information infrastructure, we believe more thought needs to be given to supporting a more comprehensive coverage across the city, in order to promote better awareness of what is on offer. We are not advocating a bureaucratic centralised publication process, but do recommend that the information strategy for children's services promotes a network of publications that covers the whole city.

Recommendation 5

That the Director of Children's Services ensures that there is comprehensive provision of local activity programmes and directories across Leeds, and

reports back to us within three months on how this will be achieved.

The Play Strategy

62. The Play Strategy in Leeds has been approved by both the Children Leeds Partnership and the council's Executive Board. The Play Network is leading work in relation to the Play Strategy on behalf of the Children Leeds partnership.
63. We agree with the foreword to the strategy that improving play in Leeds is vital if we want to improve the lives of children and young people. Children and young people tell us that more places to go and more things to do in the city are very important for them and we need to work to meet their expectations. Play is so important because opportunities for good, free play help children and young people to thrive – helping them to be happier, healthier, safer and to develop new skills, new confidence and new friendships. Above all, play allows children to enjoy life.
64. Whilst play is important for all children and young people, not all of them enjoy the same opportunities. Many of our children and young people have more limited opportunities for play because of their own circumstances or because there

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are fewer facilities and choices in their neighbourhood. The strategy identifies children and young people from the following groups as facing particular challenges in accessing play provision:

- Looked After Children
- Disabled children and those with other support needs
- Semi-rural fringes of the authority
- Inner city areas
- Mobile and transient families
- Black and minority ethnic groups

The strategy aims to narrow the gap to make sure that all children and young people in Leeds have the chance to play.

65. There is a recognition that play has historically been too divided between organisations and too much considered as an unimportant afterthought or as the responsibility of others. A key aim of the strategy therefore is to create a common culture in the city where everyone recognises the importance of play in their work and for children, young people and their families.
66. In terms of physical infrastructure, the strategy covers a range of traditional fixed play provision and the development of more adventurous less structured play

opportunities, many of which are targeted at the 8 to 13 age range. A New Lottery Bid has successfully brought £1.3 million into the city to develop new fixed play provision and increase the amount and scope of less structured play provision and adventure play grounds.

67. Play sub groups are operating in each of the 5 wedges of the city and bringing together local practitioners with an interest in play. This is improving co-ordination and delivery. We were told that closer relationships between play workers and co-ordinators in clusters of extended schools are enabling the more effective use of school sites to deliver positive activities outside of school terms. The street play project supports many children in the 8 to 13 age range in the summer holidays. 'Play is Sorted', which we visited as part of our inquiry, is an example of excellent practice in the west of the city and this model could be developed across the city.
68. The Play Strategy recommends the recruitment of a Play Project Officer to strategically lead on the implementation of the strategy and the establishment of a Play Partnership. This partnership would take a governance role in developing an integrated commissioning plan for play.

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Recommendation 6
That the Director of Children's Services reports back to us within three months on the Play Officer's work plan and progress in establishing the Play Partnership, with specific emphasis on how this work will narrow the gap for the groups identified in the Play Strategy as facing particular challenge in accessing play.

Inclusion

69. The Board considered a summary of the short break service across Leeds as an example of services provided to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and their families.

70. We learned that the Disabled Children's Inter-Agency Partnership leads on strategic planning, service development and joint commissioning of services for disabled children. The group recently appointed a jointly funded programme manager to support the further integration and development of services for disabled children in line with key legislation and guidance. Priorities for the post are:

- leading on a review of short break provision including further developing both specialist and targeted provision;

- supporting disabled children and young people to access universal provision; and
- further developing parent and child involvement and access to information about services.

71. We were told that Leeds is in a strong position to further develop inclusion in universal provision. One of the clusters is involved in a SEN Regional pilot in respect of inclusion in extended services.

The Youth Service wants to further support inclusion; the Inclusion Support Service and Play Network have specialist staff that support inclusion of disabled children in play and leisure settings. There is a specialist sports service and a wide range of voluntary sector provision (such as weekend and holiday play schemes) in the city.

72. We were pleased to hear that it was recognised that children who attended specialist setting such as SILCs were in danger of missing out if they did not live close to the setting they attended for school. Transport and additional care needs can present additional barriers for these pupils in accessing provision. We were particularly interested to learn about some examples of how the Leeds Inclusion Support Service (LISS) is tackling this on a small scale at a local level, by providing funding for the specific needs of

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individuals and small groups of pupils with additional needs from both mainstream schools and SILCs to attend extended services provision, either on site or elsewhere. We also visited the excellent inclusive provision at Ireland Wood Primary School.

73. We identified a need for more opportunities for children and young people to access general provision. We recognise the need for some specialist provision, and that this will be the preferred option in some instances where it is most appropriate to the service being used by the young people. However too often it is issues such as accessibility of venues, transport, support staff costs and even parental confidence that present organisational barriers to inclusion.

Targeted provision

74. We heard about the 'all relative' project as an example of targeted provision for our chosen age group. This project is hosted by the Youth Offending Service and delivers Incredible Years parenting programmes to parents of 8-13 year olds at risk of anti-social behaviour. Although the programmes have been funded in 2006/07 and 2007/08, all funding ceases in March 2008.
75. We heard that the programmes had good records of attendance,

completion and parental satisfaction although many families need additional support from workers between group sessions to hold them in the project. A clinical psychologist provides expertise where this is needed. In addition to project funded staff a range of partnerships have provided additional personnel to support the programme delivery. These include, for example, colleagues from Early Years, Anti-social Behaviour Unit, CAMHS and Education Leeds. All staff are trained in Incredible Years, thus building capacity within the city.

76. Targets for attendance and completion at the groups by parents have been exceeded and significant reductions in the number of young people who are first time entrants to the criminal justice system (many from the super-output areas covered by the project) have been evidenced.
77. We were also given a copy of the analysis report on the project produced by Bangor University, which evidenced the positive impact of the programme.

"From the results we can conclude that although the participating families were mainly socially deprived, and had suffered many negative experiences and problems, the parenting course reduced depression and helped

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parents to manage difficult child behaviour by improving their parenting skills. We know that it is parent behaviour that has modified child behaviour as only the parents attended the group; the children were not seen.

Child behaviour was much improved after parents had participated on the parent course and teachers reported some positive outcomes for children in their learning and behaviour at school."

Participation

78. We discussed the Leeds Children and Young People's Participation Strategy, which brings together in a single approach how the Children Leeds partnership will work to plan, deliver and improve the participation of children and young people in the services that matter to them.

Recommendation 7
That the Director of Children's Services reports to us within three months on the progress of the Participation Partnership in delivering the implementation plan arising from the Participation Strategy.

79. We also heard about the '5-13 Crew' and the 'Crew on the Move', which encourage young people in this age group to get involved in participation. There is a regular

group which meets 2-3 times a month to produce a quarterly magazine. In addition Crew on the Move works with schools and other groups of young people on an outreach basis. Over 2,700 young people are signed up to receive the magazine and newsletters. We also heard about the work of Youth on Health with this age group, as well as visiting the school council at a local primary school to see participation in action.

Voluntary, community and faith sector

80. Mark Law of BARCA reminded us that the voluntary, community and faith sector is the most significant provider of extended services for 8-13 year olds, largely due to the fact that this age group covers a traditional gap in core services. In particular the uniformed and faith based organisations are particularly active in this sector although often their role is unacknowledged. There are many small providers working very locally engaging with communities, and there is some very innovative work going on at a local level. One example of innovative work was the playwork sessions provided by BARCA's Play is Sorted programme for parents accessing the drugs service.

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81. We heard how some of the larger voluntary organisations, such as BARCA, were effectively providing a strategic framework for much of this work, whilst the local umbrella organisations in the city – Voice and Voluntary Action-Leeds – also play an important role in training, support and communications. As with our inquiry on youth services, we were reminded that capacity is a real issue for many smaller organisations.

82. We were pleased to hear from the Director of Children's Services, in her quarterly update report in February 2008, that this issue is being recognised through the appointment of an officer to provide additional support to the sector by the Children Leeds Partnership.

83. Many of the smaller organisations would benefit from nurturing, from support for training, capacity building and to meet the requirements of various contracts and inspection regimes. We made a recommendation along these lines in our inquiry report last year on Youth Services, and we feel that this type of support should also cover organisations offering services for the younger age group.

Recommendation 8
We recommend that the Director of Children's Services promotes the development of

local networks to help smaller organisations to continue to play an effective part in the provision of services for 8 to 13 year olds and qualify for funding.

Transport

84. One of the issues that came up regularly during our visits, and also in our discussions with witnesses at the Board meetings, was transport for children and young people to access activities. The problems were exacerbated further for those with disabilities.

85. This is not a new issue; it regularly features as a concern in the inquiries that we undertake, and was the subject of last year's report by the Young People's Scrutiny Forum. We therefore feel that it is time that a more fundamental review was undertaken to explore how more effective use can be made of existing transport provision. We also believe that potential transport costs need to be considered and built in at an early stage when projects and services are planned, as well as consideration being given to the appropriate location(s) for provision.

Recommendation 9
That the Director of Children's Services commissions an in-depth review of transport, to

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promote more effective use of existing resources and improve children and young people's access to services, and that she reports back to us within three months on progress.

Visits

86. We visited Ireland Wood primary school to discuss its role within the extended services cluster. The school is open 7.30am to 6.00pm, for 51 weeks per year. On-site services include a children's centre which incorporates a before and after school club (also available to other schools although transport is an issue) and a holiday club for about 30 children. This is a joint venture between three primary schools, which has made the provision viable.
87. Ireland Wood is an inclusive school with resourced places and specialist facilities for pupils with complex needs. Again transport is an issue for the school as there is a lack of vehicles that can accommodate more than one wheelchair.
88. There is a community room, used by parent and toddler groups; ante-natal and post-natal classes; midwives; and after school clubs. An Arabic supplementary school is held on the premises at the weekend. Links with the local community include around 50 older people taking part in the school's Christmas events.
89. The headteacher has an ambitious vision for extending the services offered from the site still further, including more specialist therapy services; behaviour provision; more study support; and outreach facilities.
90. After school activities take place across the cluster and try to include children with disabilities wherever possible. However, there is a wider issue about variable provision across the city. Children who travel a long for school should still be able to access extended services close to home, but this is often not the case at present.
91. There is an issue that an inclusive approach affects the school's results, even taking account of contextual value added data. This distorts Leeds' position in the national picture, and needs to be challenged accordingly.
92. At Bankside Primary School we saw how all pupils are able to make their voices heard and be part of the decision-making process through weekly class council discussions which feed into the weekly school council meetings through class representatives.

Conclusions and Recommendations



93. When we visited, the school council was being consulted about the new building planned for the school. This will be an ongoing process as the project develops. It was exciting to hear the children quiz the visiting officer on a whole range of aspects of the new building.
94. Other examples of where the school council had made an input included a 'playground friends' scheme; interviewing 'young road safety officers'; a presentation to parents on passive smoking; fundraising initiatives; health awareness initiatives; and sports zones.
95. The Weekenders Club provides play services for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities - as the name suggests, at weekends. Most participants are 8-14 although the full age range covered by the scheme is 0-19. The club works intensively with small groups of young people and there is a waiting list, as this is currently the only such provision in the city. The club is funded by Social Services and the Leeds Children's Fund, but there is an issue of annual uncertainty about grant funding.
96. We were told that there is a possibility of a second club being opened at Ireland Wood or John Jamieson school sites. Mencap own the base and they also run a youth club during the week for 8-14 year olds. Neither this nor the Weekenders club is inclusive.
97. Another example of specific provision for children with disabilities is the Leeds Athletics Club Junior Disability Group. The Group meets weekly during term-time and focuses on team building and skills development. It is part of a network of multi-sports partnership arrangements across the city, providing access to sports for children and young people as well as adults with disabilities. We were given a copy of the fairly comprehensive programme of facilities and activities on offer. The group relies heavily on parental networking for membership. Issues raised with us included the question of regular guaranteed funding; transport; communication with parents; and holiday provision.
98. Members also spoke to officers supporting the Playing for Success and Double Club schemes. These are national schemes that use sports to inspire learning and promote young people's self-esteem. The schemes are run in conjunction with local teams such as Leeds United, Leeds Rhinos, Yorkshire Cricket Club and Hunslet Hawks.
99. Play is Sorted is part of BARCA. It aims to create safe opportunities

Conclusions and Recommendations



for children to play freely and make positive use of their leisure time. The project delivers play and leisure services for children in West Leeds including:

- Mobile and outreach play work at specific points using a mobile bus
- Holiday playschemes
- One to one play support
- Out of school clubs
- Weekly club for children and parents which encourages parents to lead activities with their children
- Play provision based at the Hillside Reception Centre for the families of newly-arrived asylum seekers and refugees.

Once again the issue of short-term funding was raised as an issue.

100. BARCA is also involved in a junior YIP (Youth Inclusion Project) programme. We saw and made recommendations on this work last year as part of our inquiry on youth services. We were very pleased that our recommendations for funding to be prioritised for all YIPs to be supported by junior YIPs was implemented.

And finally

101. When we embarked on this inquiry, we identified structures as a key area of focus. During our inquiry we heard of several

examples of groups of staff meeting up to explore joint working as a first or early meeting – for example children’s centre managers and cluster coordinators; sports centre staff and the programme manager for disabled children. We are pleased to hear that progress is being made and trust that as staff learn more about each other’s work there will be a more joined-up approach, resulting in more coherent services for children and young people and their families.

102. Despite this encouraging environment, we still feel that there is a need to be strategic in plotting developments and gaps, disseminating good practice and challenging lack of progress where appropriate. As with our inquiry on youth services last year, we see a strategic role for the Director of Children’s Services in engineering a basic level of provision across all areas of the city so that children do not miss out on opportunities.

Recommendation 10
That the Director of Children’s Services reports to us within three months on how the Children Leeds Partnership is ensuring that the core offer of universal provision is available to children across all areas of the city.

Evidence



Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

- Report of the Chief Officer Early Years and Youth Service – Inquiry into services for 8 to 13 year old children in Leeds – October 2007
- Core Offer of Universal, Extended Services from Schools, Children's Centres, Youth Provision, Community Learning Facilities and Health
- Extended Services in and around school sites – progress towards extended services core offer in Leeds – September 2006-August 2007
- Models for Community Governance for Children's Centres and other Community Provision
- Nuts and Bolts Governance information and guidance – Governing bodies and extended services
- Positive Activities for children and young people – Parks and Country side
- Positive Activities for children and young people – summer 2007
- Breeze on Tour summer 2007
- Breezecard Holders – map analysis of takeup and participation
- South Leeds Summer Chill 2007
- The Yag-mag summer 2007 – Directory of voluntary agencies youth provision in Moortown, Roundhay and Chapel Allerton
- Garforth and Villages School Holiday Programme 2007
- Implementing the Play Strategy: A briefing note to accompany the Play Strategy for Scrutiny purposes

Reports and Publications Submitted (continued)

- The Leeds Play Strategy – Playing our Part: Creating the Play Friendly City – Children Leeds
- Leeds Children’s Play Application to the Big Lottery Fund
- List of summer events as schools and learning centres
- Report of Networks Gifted and Talented Dance Summer School
- Scrutiny Board Briefing Paper: Use of PFI Schools by community groups and third party groups – December 2006
- Aiming High for Disabled Children – Short breaks pathfinder programme bid
- Leeds Youth Offending Service ‘All Relative’ briefing report for Scrutiny Board
- Pathfinders Project: Leeds – Initial report on three Incredible Years Groups – Bangor University – Dr Tracey Bywater – November 2007
- Leeds Children and Young People’s Participation Strategy 2007 – Children Leeds
- Young People’s presentation on participation – Children Leeds
- Leeds Sport and Active Recreation Programme for Disabled People – January 2008
- Breeze summer 2007 magazine
- Briefing on developments in the LS10XS cluster
- Examples of the use of funded transport for children with additional or special needs to attend locality provision

Evidence



Witnesses Heard

Sally Threlfall	Acting Chief Officer for Early Years and Youth Service
Mark Hopkins	Team Leader, Extended Services, Education Leeds
Richard Smith	Team Leader, Governor Support, Education Leeds
Frank O'Malley	Leeds Play Network
Rosie Wilks	Development and Communications Officer
Ian Green	Family Hub Manager
Jason Tabor	Programme Officer, Out of School Activities Project
Chris Finnigan	Programme Manager, Disabled Children
Salena Riley	Cluster Manager, LS10XS Extended Services Cluster
Barbara Newton	Strategic Leader, Partnership and Participation, Children's Services
Deborah Howe	Children's Involvement Advocate, The Project
Mark Law	Chief Executive, Bramley and Rodley Community Action (BARCA)
Wendy Gledhill	Deputy Manager, Youth Offending Service
Maggie Smith	'All Relative' Project, Youth Offending Service
Jody Sheppard	Programme Manager, Leeds Children's Fund
Kris Nenadic	Parks and Countryside

Dates of Scrutiny

31 July 2007	Working Group to scope terms of reference
11 October 2007	Scrutiny Board meeting
26 November 2007	Working Group to explore Breeze and Family Hub websites
30 November 2007	Visit to Ireland Wood Primary School and Extended Services cluster
2 December 2007	Visit to Weekenders Club
6 December 2007	Scrutiny Board meeting
11 December 2007	Visit to Playing for Success Initiative
17 December 2007	Visit to School Council at Bankside Primary school
10 January 2008	Visit to Play is Sorted provision at Hillside Reception Centre
17 January 2008	Scrutiny Board meeting
29 January 2008	Visit to Leeds City Athletic Club Junior Disability Group