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*Islington's Voluntary,
Community and Faith Sector*

Children and Young People's Plan

2006/07-2008/09

Annual Review 2006/07 - Summary



Introduction

Welcome to the first annual review of our Children and Young People's Plan. When we completed our three-year plan for 2006-2009, we did not want the plan just to 'sit on the shelf' but be a practical reference point for our Children's Partnership. I was delighted to see so many people involved in our Area Children's Network meetings to discuss our progress and priorities for the coming year. It was heartening to see colleagues from across the council and our partners including the health service, schools, police and voluntary, community and faith sectors involved in these important discussions. We are also very pleased with the contribution made by children and young people through a range of events organised by Listen Up – a feature I hope will grow and develop.

Overview of 2006/07 and our priorities for 2007/08

2006/7 was a good year for children and young people in Islington. It produced our best ever GCSE results with 47% gaining 5 A*-C; many outstanding and good Ofsted reports on our schools and early years services; improvements across the board in outcomes for children in care; more young people than ever in education, employment and training; an excellent summer university programme; and even better support to parents in our children's centres.

Celebrating Islington's Young People was the mayoral theme for the year, ending with Islington's first ever civic awards for young people, which was designed and managed by young people themselves.

Through our Joint Area Review (JAR) – an inspection of all services for children in the borough and the impact they make on outcomes, the inspectors by and large agreed with our judgements and rated our services and their impact as good, they also rated us as having good capacity to improve.

That judgement about capacity to improve rested in large part on the strength of our partnerships. Over the last year, we have seen a strengthening of the voice

and contribution of the community, voluntary and faith sector. The Parent Forum came into being and parents and carers are now having a direct input into policy and practice. The good work of Listen Up continued and we will build on this to bring a better approach to involving and empowering young people. On the ground, in children's centres and schools, there were many examples of effective partnership working to improve outcomes for children and their families.

The challenges in Islington remain considerable. The Islington Strategic Partnership (ISP)'s Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is likely to focus on the impact of poverty, especially child poverty on our community and the potential of education and work to transform the lives of those affected.

A sharper focus on a smaller number of priorities recommended by the JAR does not mean that we will not pursue the range of actions set out in the three-year plan but that we will focus on priorities that everyone concerned with children can identify with and contribute to.

- These priorities are:
- Prevention is better than cure – giving young children the best possible start in life
- Every child going to school every day
- Outstanding learning in every Islington school
- Young people with access to all the support and help they need
- Islington's children in care enjoy the lives we want for our own families

We ask all our colleagues and partners to consider how you can make a difference to the lives of Islington children and young people through these priorities. If we all focus our efforts on these issues during the course of this year, we will make significant improvements in outcomes for children. We want to see significant progress on these priorities through the year but recognise that some may need a longer-term focus to achieve the progress we are looking for.

We have three major service reviews commencing this year: Integrated Services for Young People; Parenting Support; and Services for Children and Young People with Disabilities and their Families. Our Prevention and Early Intervention Framework will underpin these major service reviews and our

service planning and commissioning strategies.

There are three key themes that cut across all areas of our work:

- The central role of parents and carers in supporting improved outcomes for children and here we will be developing our first parenting support strategy.
- The crucial part that schools play in improving outcomes in all areas of children's lives, not narrowly in educational attainment.
- The importance of strengthening further our partnerships with the community, voluntary and faith sector to reach out into our community and provide excellent services.

These priorities and themes reflect the council's vision for 'One Islington' and priorities of listening to residents and service users, building a stronger community and making Islington a safer, cleaner and greener place to live.

We still hold to our original vision and the ambitious programme of work and improvement as set out in the 3-year plan. 2006/07 was a good year and our thanks go to all who contributed to our successful Joint Area Review. 2007/08 already offers a host of new opportunities to deliver the council's ambition of services that are excellent in the eyes of residents.



Councillor Ursula Woolley

Executive Member for Children and Young People

Copies of the full review and the 3-year Children and Young People's Plan are available on the Islington Council website at: <http://www.islington.gov.uk/Community/childrenpartnership/default.asp>

For more information, please contact the Children's Partnership Planning and Projects Team on 020-7527-3080.



2007/08 Priorities

Prevention is better than cure: giving young children the best possible start in life

Where are we now?

Services are often organised to intervene when things go wrong rather than to help families look after themselves.

At any one time approximately 20% of our children are vulnerable and need help. Intervention at an early stage can help develop resilience and increase the life chances of children. We still have high levels of expenditure on specialist services with parents asking for help sooner.

To succeed educationally and as adults, young people need social and interpersonal skills and in turn these skills are invariably dependent on good parenting and early identification of problems.

What do we have to work with?

- Well connected universal services, which can work well for the majority of people.
- Excellent results on user choice and satisfaction when midwives work in the community with defined populations.
- The universal approach provided by Children's Centres reducing stigma associated with social care services and enabling families to benefit from an inclusive network of support.
- The central role of schools offering extended services creates real opportunities for partnership working.

Where do we want to be?

Our partnership working to: identify need and jointly commission services; firmly establish our Common Assessment Framework to help our information sharing, referral and planning processes; and implement a universal model of provision aimed at supporting parents and children within their community.



How do we get there?

During 2007/8 we will:

- strengthen parenting support at all stages but particularly in the early years;
- ensure systems are in place to identify children who have developmental delay, language and communication disorders or emotional and behavioural problems;
- use the Common Assessment Framework to enable children and families to receive the help they need at the time they need it, particularly at points of transition;
- invest in prevention and early intervention services through all our service developments.

2007/08 Priorities

Every child going to school everyday

Where are we now?

The high level of primary absence is of most concern to us with some of our youngest children having the highest absence levels. Early patterns impact in a variety of ways in later years. For secondary schools, the absence level was closer than our primary figures to national and inner London levels, but still unsatisfactory.

Over the past year, there has been a significant improvement in primary attendance but we still need to do more.

What do we have to work with?

- Our schools are committed to improve attendance. Primary schools are focussed on school level improvements. Secondary schools have just embarked on a programme to reduce levels of persistent absenteeism.
- A range of partnerships have developed to improve attendance such as with Arsenal FC, School Home Support, the police and with 14-19 partners. We are also working alongside the DCSF and other local authorities to build on good practice existing nationally.

Where do we want to be?

Overall levels of attendance at least at the national average, whilst focusing on attendance at the individual pupil level of every child attending school every day.

A borough strategy that ensures that all partner agencies are fully engaged in the improving attendance agenda.

Partnerships developed at a local area level to improve attendance e.g. a partnership to improve attendance is being developed in the EC1 area.

How do we get there?

During 2007/08, we will:

- improve attendance for the most vulnerable children and young people;
- support schools in greatest need;
- provide more focused support and challenge for parents;
- provide rewards and sanctions;
- develop improved data analysis to drive improvement;
- develop curriculum approaches to raising attendance;
- produce clear policies, guidance and expectations;
- improve our publicity and media strategy.



2007/08 Priorities

Outstanding learning in every Islington school

Where are we now?

In all of the schools inspected since September 2006, the judgements for effectiveness of teaching and learning has been better than performance nationally and represents sustained improvement in the overall quality of provision in Islington schools. But this is not good enough.

All Islington head teachers want learning to be outstanding in their schools and every Islington family wants to attend an outstanding school. Doing well at school promotes resilience in children, is a significant protective factor and indicates good outcomes in adult life.

What do we have to work with?

- Schools, and particularly head teachers and governors are signed up to outstanding as a legitimate benchmark for the services they provide.
- Enough outstanding primary schools to support other schools on their path to improvement.
- Good secondary schools that are ambitious and where leadership is strong.
- Partnership working and networking between schools is a feature of Islington schools.
- Some of our currently outstanding schools serve challenging communities, and the teachers in these schools are highly effective in bringing about outstanding learning.

Where do we want to be?

The proportion and consistency of outstanding learning continues to increase. Outstanding schools to remain outstanding and continue to improve and good and satisfactory schools to become outstanding.

How do we get there?

During 2007/08, we will:

- identify outstanding learning and the outstanding teaching that brings it about and share this good practice, working cross borough where practicable to share and develop our expertise;
- value our teachers and improve support to them, establishing secure networks to promote the pedagogy that brings about outstanding learning;
- identify and communicate what leadership does to promote outstanding learning;
- support schools in ensuring that the organisation and content of the curriculum promotes outstanding learning, embedding Assessment for Learning in schools' day to day practice;
- talk to children and young people to better understand what outstanding learning means for them;
- talk with parents to share our understanding of high expectations and outstanding learning;
- support schools in ensuring that behaviour is good and children and young people attend school every day;
- robustly review the progress we make, identifying and overcoming any barriers and establishing an academic rigour to support and sustain this work;
- understand and be able to characterise the learning environment that supports outstanding learning and work with schools to ensure that teaching, learning and transformation are at the heart of the implementation of the BSF programme.

2007/08 Priorities

Young people with access to all the support and help they need

Where are we now?

Most young people in Islington succeed in their transition to adult life, more than ever are moving on at 16 to further education, training or employment. Increasing numbers are succeeding in progressing into higher education. There are some groups of young people who need additional support for whom we have not achieved as much. There is a small group of young people 16-18 not in education employment or training for more than 20 weeks who may fall into some or none of these groups.

What do we have to work with?

- A 14-19 Partnership committed to collaborative working to tackle this challenge.
- Strong specialist services working with most target groups.
- Shared ownership of the issue across the Islington Strategic Partnership.
- An extensive offer of positive activities for young people, used by about one third of the relevant age group as well as a growing extended schools programme.
- Effective models of multi agency working
- Strong support for developing our strategy for Integrated Services for Young People

Where do we want to be?

A situation where all young people achieve successful progression to further education, training or employment and can sustain their engagement.

An offer of provision that delivers what is needed for each young person, and is provided where and how they want to access it. The curriculum offered provides all young people with a route that suits their interests and abilities



with good quality advice and support for young people to make good choices in learning and life.

Through our review of Integrated Services for Young People, to effectively engage all stakeholders in the process and reach a consensus on our priorities for the future. We will ensure an appropriate balance between universal, targeted and specialist services and invest in early intervention and prevention services where possible

How do we get there?

During 2007/08, we will:

- develop a comprehensive needs assessment including patterns of current service use; and consultation with young people and parents, service providers and other stakeholders;
- review evidence of effective practice in Islington and elsewhere;
- involve young people in managing the consultation for the Integrated Services for Young People review;
- agree our strategic priorities and commissioning objectives.

2007/08 Priorities

Islington's children in care enjoying the lives we want for our own children

Where are we now?

We have been highly successful in improving services and outcomes for children in care over the past four years. This is reflected in a consistent pattern of improvement, alongside a reduction in total numbers of children being looked after. This reduction has been achieved in a planned and safe way by investment in community support services and improved practice.

Islington's performance is now as good as most other authorities and better than many, particularly in respect of adoption and health outcomes.

Many of the initiatives recommended in the Green Paper, Care Matters, are already in place in Islington, such as bursaries for young people at university. However, the gap between the outcomes of our looked after children and their peers remains unacceptable.

What do we have to work with?

- Investment on children in care in Islington is high. The focus of that spending is changing.
- More children are now placed in family rather than residential placements
- More investment in the development of fostering services to keep Islington children close to home
- Our successful permanence planning has resulted in higher expenditure on adoption and Special Guardianship allowances.
- A range of initiatives to retain social workers have resulted in a far more stable staff group to enable good outcomes.
- Good partnership working to fund specialist support services for children in care
- A contract with Shaftesbury to provide leaving care services

Where do we want to be?

The challenge for Islington will be to reduce the gap between the outcomes achieved by its children in care and those of the wider population. We want to see:

- fewer children in care;
- children in care having greater placement stability, improved educational outcomes and greater engagement in enrichment activities;
- more children in local family placements and fewer in residential care.

How do we get there?

During 2007/08, we will:

- establish a multi-agency, community support service for young people at risk of going into care;
- establish a specialist adolescent fostering service designed to enable more teenagers to remain with their families;
- develop a new strategy to promote placement stability;
- develop a new strategy to ensure young people in care are involved in enrichment activities;
- create a multi-agency specialist service for children in care.

If you would like this document in large print or Braille, audiotape or in another language, please contact 020 7527 2000.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই তথ্যগুলো আপনার নিজস্ব ভাষায় (প্ৰতিভা, তাহলে দয়া করে 020 7527 2000 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Chinese (Traditional)

如果你想閱讀此文件的中文本, 請致電 020 7527 2000 聯絡。

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Haddii aad jecnaan lahayd macluumaadkan oo ku qoran luqadaada faclan la xidhiidh 020 7527 2000

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