



Policy & Research Briefing

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A short guide for Trust partners on what's new in policy and research

Dear Colleagues

Recently we had the local elections and as a result of that we have a new Children and Young Peoples Services portfolio holder, Mrs Samantha Leaves. Sam works for NHS Plymouth and is looking forward to working with us all. Last year's portfolio holder Cllr Joan Watkins supported the development of our new Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011-2014; championing the consultation, working directly with our young people to ensure that their thoughts on the plan were heard. The new Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011-2014 is complete and will be available on the Trust webpage's very soon and we thank Joan for all her help last year.



Ofsted has announced their inspection of the Adoption Service on the 6 June 2011. I hope you all continue your high quality collaborative working and support our colleagues in adoption throughout the preparation and duration of this inspection.

In the past couple of weeks there have been some notable celebrations for Children's Services. On 13 May young people in the care of the Local Authority enjoyed the 'You can do it' Achievement Awards. They celebrated a range of personal achievements, many against considerable odds, across a wide range of areas from academic success to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. It was a pleasure to be with them on such a brilliant evening, to share their pride of themselves and each other. The 17 May saw our HMS Heroes presented with their Standard and I am looking forward to being with them again in June when the Standard is dedicated in a Church Service. It was interesting to listen to their stories of how children of our armed forces personnel really benefit from the support of this group.

Finally, our Food Charter featured in the professional publication for School Caterers demonstrating how our local food project works. I am looking forward to tasting the 'Plymouth Burger' to be made to a recipe created by our school children!!



With Best Wishes

Bronwen Lacey

Chair of the Plymouth Children and Young People's Trust Executive

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Focus on: Munro Review of Child Protection: A child centred system

In June 2010, the Government commissioned Prof. Eileen Munro, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics, to lead an independent review to improve child protection. The review's first report published in October 2010 identified the problematic issues in the current child protection system. The second report in February 2011 considered the child's journey through the child protection system and how the system could be improved. Extensive consultation on the reform areas set out in that report, have contributed to Munro's third and [final report](#).

The final report sets out proposals for reform and signifies a shift from a system that has become over-bureaucratized and focused on compliance to one that values and develops professional expertise and is focused on the safety and welfare of children and young people. Munro makes a total of **15** recommendations

Key recommendations and implications

- **A system that values professional expertise:** a key theme in this review is the move from a compliance culture to a learning culture. It recommends the Government reviews and revises statutory, multi-agency guidance, to remove unnecessary prescription and focus only on essential rules and principles that underpin good practice, for example; remove the statutory requirement of Local Authorities (LAs) to complete social care assessments within "artificial set timescales".
 - **Inspection** should be conducted on an unannounced basis to reduce the bureaucratic burden. Inspections should follow the child's "journey" through services, add more weight to feedback from children and families and examine how all local services, including health, education; police and the justice system contribute to the protection of children.
 - **Performance data** needs to be interrogated to understand reasons why outcomes happen and should not be used as a simple measure of good or poor performance like previous performance indicators have tended to be.
- **Sharing responsibility for the provision of early help:** The Government should place a duty on LAs and their statutory partners to secure the sufficient provision of local early help services for families whose need does not meet the threshold for social care intervention.
- **Developing social work expertise:** Social work training and professional development is given high priority within the report and is an area where Munro recommends initial investment is spent. The report builds on the work of the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) and Reform Boards. It recommends that the Professional Capabilities Framework explicitly informs all stages of social work training, development, performance appraisal and career structures.
- **Supporting effective social work practice:** The report supports the view of the SWTF that current career structures can hamper the development of expertise, and recommends experienced social workers to be kept on the frontline even when they become managers. It is recommended that each LA appoints a Principal Child and Family Social Worker who is still doing frontline work and would be responsible for taking the views of Social Workers to those whose decisions affect their work. At national level it is recommended that a Chief Social Worker should be established to advise the Government on social work practice.
- **Clarifying accountability and creating a learning system:** The report states that due consideration be given to protecting the discrete roles and responsibilities of Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members to ensure they are not given additional functions that do not relate to Children's Services unless exceptional circumstances arise.
 - **The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010* should be amended** to state that LSCBs when evaluating local arrangements include an assessment of the effectiveness of help being given to children and families, and the effectiveness of multi agency training to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
 - **LSCBs should adopt and apply a 'systems approach' to Serious Case Reviews** to improve learning and in the meantime Ofsted's evaluation of SCRs should end. LSCBs should work with the sector over the coming year to help develop national resources to aid learning and practice.
 - **LSCBs statutory requirement to provide an annual report to the Children's Trust Board should be changed** and reported direct to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, and subject to the passage of legislation to report to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing board.

News

Research in Practice (RiP) has launched two new resources this month

[Performance Pointers: The education of young people who offend](#) - Research indicates that a young person's educational experience is a factor in their risk of involvement in crime. Persistent offenders have poor long-term outcomes, but access to effective education and training services can improve their futures and help reduce the likelihood of re-offending. This briefing from RiP looks at key research messages, how local data can support planning effective services, the potential for education services to prevent offending, the role of education in the youth justice system, and post-offending educational support following a youth justice intervention.

[Frontline briefing: Promoting resilience in children and young people](#) - This briefing is aimed at frontline practitioners and identifies processes that can help promote and enhance resilience in children, young people and their families. It describes some evidence-informed interventions. The accompanying hard copy tool offers an easy-to-reference table of threats, assets and interventions for children and young people at different stages of development.

Visit the RiP website www.rip.org.uk and create an account and you can view and download for free these excellent resources. Your link officer is Theresa Brooks, Tel: 307113 if you have any questions.



Child Safety Week 2011

[Child Safety Week](#) begins on the 20 June 2011. The week is for anyone working with families or children, including people who work in a nursery, children's centre, GP surgery, school, in the community, in road or fire safety or anywhere else working with children or families, child safety is everybody's business.



The emphasis of the week is on empowering families to take positive action rather than telling them what to do, or lecturing them about what they are doing wrong. Accident prevention is not about restricting children, it is about creating safer environments, in and outside the home, to enable children to thrive and lead a healthy active life.

The theme this year is "[Take a second look for safety](#)". This can mean taking a second look to make sure that

- hot drinks are out of reach of small children
- the safety gate on the stairs is closed properly
- you are driving carefully through a residential area.

Check out the [Child Accident Prevention Trust \(CAPT\) website](#) where you can register for updates on this year's child safety week and also where there is a raft of useful information about all aspects of child safety.

In Plymouth plans are underway, with a multi agency approach, to work with Children's Centres, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and the Police and will aim to raise awareness and provide education to families across the city.

National Family Week Sports Day in Plymouth

For the second year running Plymouth are hosting a Sports Day Extravaganza in partnership with [National Family Week](#). This year the week will run from the 30 May to 5 June

This year's event will take place on Friday 3 June on Plymouth Hoe between 1 – 7 pm and will provide families with the opportunity to enjoy a variety of activities and sports. The event will be free for all, making a cheap, healthy and fun family outing! This is a fantastic opportunity to try out a number of sports or discover a new hobby to put families on track for a healthy future. Various sporting taster sessions will be on offer such as volleyball, roller hockey, athletics, football, rugby league and bowls and everyone is welcome to take part and join in!

For more information, please call Annabel Allen on 01752 307137.

Schools transferring to academies

Some schools in Plymouth have gained academy status whilst some are undergoing the process. This may have an impact on services provided by the Council and other organisations. Some key considerations are:

- Academies are a separate business and new working relationships may need to be considered;
- The Council will no longer be able to automatically recharge for any work done within schools, orders and invoices must be raised;
- Services should be aware of personal liability when advising an external body such as an Academy;
- Academy employees are no longer Council employees.

If you believe your service area may be affected or are looking to charge for future services please email: jayne.gorton@plymouth.gov.uk. The School Organisation Team (Department for Services for Children and Young People)

Policy

Behaviour and discipline in schools: new and updated guidance documents

[Guidance documents](#) have been published and are currently out for consultation. The final versions incorporating comments from the consultation will be published in July 2011. Key changes in the new documents are as follows:

- **Ensuring Good Behaviour in Schools** is a new document which summarises the powers and duties that apply to behaviour and attendance;
- **Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Guidance for Governors** provides statutory guidance to governing bodies on their role in shaping their school's behaviour policy;
- **Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Guidance for Head Teachers and School Staff** provides advice on developing the school behaviour policy. It also provides greater clarity

on the scope of the power to discipline pupils who misbehave outside school;

• **Use of Reasonable Force** provides clarification to help school staff feel more confident about using force. It makes clear that, where staff are accused of using excessive force, employers should not automatically suspend the staff member;

- **Screening, Searching and Confiscation** includes new information about the legislation and new statutory guidance on how to decide whether or not to hand over stolen items and illegal drugs to the police.



The use and effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies in schools

The aim of this [project](#) were to examine which strategies schools use to tackle an incident of bullying and why they chose particular methods. In addition it evaluates the strategies from the perspective of the school bullying lead, pupils and other school staff.



The project highlights the following key messages for school strategies:

- **A toolkit** of strategies providing a range of interventions is fundamental as all students and bullying incidents are individual. What works for one will not necessarily work for all;
- **A consistent approach** is important for a whole-school approach, all staff need to be trained, students briefed, parents informed, peer supporters trained and embedded in the curriculum;
- **Staff training** about bullying, and the range of anti-bullying interventions, should be a part of initial and ongoing teacher training, for a wide range of staff;
- **Auditing for bullying behaviour** on a regular basis provides base line information from the students about the levels and types of bullying prevalent in the school;
- **Reporting systems** should be in place that is non-stigmatising or exposing;
- **A centralised recording system** which identifies vulnerable students at intake; tracks student behaviour for evaluation of support and provides evidence for the effectiveness of interventions;
- **Regular evaluation of anti-bullying work** is vital to know what is working and what is not.

Alcohol Marketing Bill

This Private Member's Bill, aims to reduce children's exposure to the marketing of alcohol products. The Bill would prescribe where alcohol can be promoted, which would include the print media, radio after 9pm and films with an 18 certificate. Marketing and promotion not specifically permitted would be banned, including television, social media, youth-certified films, viral phone marketing and internet games.

The Bill is only at the initial stages and will need to be further debated before it is passed. The second reading of the Bill is due in September, click [here](#) for more details.

[C4EO](#) has recently released a research review into reducing alcohol consumption, click [here](#) to read the full review, which also discusses influences such as marketing on young peoples drinking behaviours.

Ofsted children's services assessment guidance

This [document](#) provides guidance for local authorities on Ofsted's children's services assessment for 2011.

This guidance seeks to:

- set out the arrangements for the children's services assessment in 2011 in terms of the performance profile and the principles that will be applied in determining the assessment;
- re-affirm the scope of the annual children's services assessment;
- clarify the reporting procedures for the children's services assessment;
- set out the practical arrangements for the 2011 children's services assessment process, including: communication with local authorities; quality assurance processes and appeal procedures;
- set out the overall timeline for the process including the date of publication.

Research & Consultation

Families' experiences and behaviours in the Childcare Affordability Pilots Disabled Children's Pilot

In 2009 the Government introduced the Childcare Affordability Pilot for disabled children, in recognition that some parents of disabled children may face higher childcare costs. This was a way of offering working parents with disabled children extra financial support with childcare costs through the tax credits system.

This [research](#) aims to test the importance of the affordability of childcare in parent's decisions to go back to work and use formal childcare. The research involved 50 interviews with different parents from the 'control' group and the 'pilot' group, all eligible for the offer.

Key messages from the research include:

- A number of attitudinal barriers prevented parents taking up child care, such as them not feeling others would understand their child disability and that work did not pay;
- Affordability of childcare, although a consideration, was not felt to be the main barrier to using formal childcare and going back to work;



- The key factor affecting the decision to go back to work was feeling 'work ready' as well as having the information, confidence and skills needed to find both suitable work and childcare.

Early Intervention, using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and its cost effectiveness



This [research](#) from the Local Authorities Research Consortium (LARC) has looked to answer the extent to which the CAF process itself is cost effective, in enabling better early intervention with a consequent reduction in the demand for more costly specialist services.

Key messages for Policy Makers:

The CAF process is cost effective -

Suggestions that the CAF process itself is costly are not reflected in the case study data, which shows the CAF process costs are mostly under £3,000, the exception being the most complex cases where multi-agency intervention is required. Even here case study data suggests an upper limit of £8,000 which is still relatively low when set against a potential saving of £100,000.

The CAF process makes an important contribution to schools in tackling barriers to learning - Case studies demonstrate the benefit to schools where the CAF process has enabled them to engage with learners who would otherwise have been at risk of under achievement and/or exclusion.

Scenario analysis can inform service and financial planning at local level

The LARC research has developed a costing model, which bases potential savings on practitioners' and families' assessment of "futures avoided", with a systematic method for estimating the costs attributed to the negative outcomes avoided.

Promoting the quality of life of looked after children

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) joint guidance [promoting the quality of life of looked after children](#) can now be accessed as an online guide. This format allows practitioners to easily access the topics of most relevance to them, including:

- sibling placements;
- care provided by family;
- improving education;
- preparing for independence.

This guide includes practice recommendations ranging from audit and inspection to health assessments and training for practitioners. This guide is accompanied by two newly launched [Social Care TV films](#). The films focus on the views of looked after children and highlight the ways that looked after children are being heard and getting the support they need.

Housing: practical ideas to help young people

Affordable housing in the private and social rented sectors is in short supply, and buying a home is out of the reach of many young people. This [paper](#) outlines 27 ideas taken from the housing sector which aim to improve outcomes for young people. Local case studies are described and analysed. The paper discusses in detail initiatives:

- that improve access to generalised information for young people about independent living and housing advice;
- that improve access to information for individual young people about independent living and housing advice;
- that support vulnerable young people;
- that provide financial support to young people;
- that help young people to find a suitable home.

Training and Events

Local events

Sportivate

Young people aged 14 to 25 are being offered the opportunity to try out a new starting in June. Activities are £1 per session and will last for 6 weeks. All activities must be booked in advance, contact 01752 307008/307140 from Monday 16 May at 9:30am

Activities on offer include:

- Sailing at the Mount Batten Water sports Centre.
- Cricket at Plymouth Cricket Club, Mount Wise
- Scuba Diving at Plymouth Pavilions
- Zumba at UCP Marjons Sports Centre.
- Trampoline at Lipson Community College
- Skiing at Plymouth Ski Centre

Activities are mainly on week days from 6pm, with Golf being offered on a Sunday at 11am. Check out the [website](#) for more details.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Training



If anyone is interested in training or would like to speak to Amanda Paddison (CAF Co-ordinator) to discuss a case or for further advice and guidance, please feel free to contact her:

CAF@plymouth.gov.uk

Tel: 01752 307160

Mobile: 07774 336 579

Safer Recruitment Training



The Children's Workforce Development Council has an online FREE training programme for all staff involved in the recruitment of staff to work with children, young people and their families. Click [here](#) to get started.

The training covers:

- What abuse is
- Recruitment processes that should be followed
- How to manage allegations.

Other areas of interest available on the website are:

- Safer recruitment training for schools
- Safer recruitment resources
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

The [Plymouth Workforce Development team](#) are also offering some face to face training around safer recruitment at a cost of £40. The full day programme involves, what abuse is, Recruitment processes that should be followed, Vetting and Barring Scheme, Role of the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguard Authority and How to Manage Allegations.

For future dates contact Kate Maidment on: 306688 or email: kate.maidment@plymouth.co.uk

Useful Links

Plymouth Children and Young People's Trust

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/pcypt.htm>

Research in Practice

www.rip.org.uk

Care Knowledge

www.careknowledge.com

Department for Education

<http://www.education.gov.uk/>

Plymouth Parent Partnership

www.plymouthparentpartnership.org.uk

Safeguarding children

www.safeguardingchildren.org.uk

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board

www.plymouthscb.org.uk

Department of Health

www.dh.gov.uk

Children and Young People Now

www.cypnow.co.uk

Service Directories

National Service Directories

<http://www.careknowledge.com/secure/contenttypes/doc.aspx?id=58466>

Plymouth Service Directory

<http://www.plymouthparentpartnership.org.uk>

Supporting People Service Directory

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/supportingpeopledirectory>

Parents Guide to Plymouth

<http://www.plymouthparentpartnership.org.uk/index.php?p=4>

Plymouth's Public Interpretation and Translation Service

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/communityandliving/socialinclusion/translateplymouth.htm>

Printing Schedule

For further information contact:

Abigail Jago, Assistant Policy and Planning Officer
Services for Children and Young People Tel: 307113

To download previous Policy Briefs go to:

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/socialcareandhealth/childrensocialcare/pcypt/pcyptpolicybrief.htm>

Next Month's Issue	Submission deadline	Publication date
Issue 6	June	3 June 2011
		15 June 2011