



Policy & Research Briefing

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

Dear Colleagues



I hope the beautiful weather has provided you with an opportunity to get outside. Unfortunately the weather was not so good for the first day of the summer half term week which was the date for the Plymouth Half Marathon Schools Challenge. Set up in 2008 to inspire young people to be part of a major sporting event in Plymouth, organisers of the Plymouth Half Marathon and the local UK Athletics representatives agreed that young athletes could achieve small chunks of the set distance over a number of weeks in their schools and then come together to complete the final mile at the official race line on the Hoe. The pouring rain and cross winds did not deter the 1200 children across the city who all received a medal and goodie bag, or their families and friends who came to support them in their efforts. Well done to all our budding athletes!

Luckily the sun was shining for the remainder of the summer half term week, which was also National Family Week. Numerous activities took place across the city and Plymouth was also one of the few cities to host a Family Sports Day event. Families took part in the biggest ever three-legged race on Plymouth Hoe and managed to set a new Guinness World Record. We now look forward to the six weeks summer holiday and hope the weather remains as it is!

Finally, can I say a big thank you to all of you who attended the recent staff briefings where we were proud to share our Ofsted Inspection results and introduce you to the new portfolio holder for children and young people - Cllr. Joan Watkins. We look forward to working closely with her and continuing the excellent work to improve outcomes for our children, young people and families.



With Best Wishes
Bronwen Lacey
 Chair of the Plymouth Children and Young People's Trust Executive

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Focus on: Ofsted and Care Quality Commissions (CQC) inspection 2010 of Safeguarding and Looked after Children's Services

Plymouth's results finally revealed on the 21 May 2010

What is the purpose of the inspection?

To evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the local area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers.

What happens during an inspection?

Since the case of Baby P the inspection regime has been tightened in response to Lord Laming's recommendations (follow the link <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/HC-330.pdf>) Inspections now involve a rigorous test of performance, which go far beyond one site visit and written report. In Plymouth this involved the following:

- 40 days of data collection and visits;
- All agencies i.e. Plymouth City Council, NHS, Police, voluntary and community sectors and schools were involved;
- 350 staff interviews;
- 80 interviews and focus groups with parents and carers;
- 80 children and young people spoken to;
- Hundreds of pages of case files and staff records looked into.

The successful journey of Plymouth's Services for Children and Young People

Since previous inspections, such as the 2005 Annual Performance Assessment of children's services and the 2006 Joint Area Review, services for children and young people have showed a gradual improvement. During this inspection however the wealth of evidence that was provided painted the true picture in Plymouth and showcased the excellent work that is happening across the Trust. In fact in the new regime Plymouth received the most areas for **outstanding** within specific criteria than any other Local Authority (LA)

Our overall results:

- The overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is **good** and our capacity to improve is **good**
- The overall effectiveness of services for children in care is **good** and our capacity to improve is **good**

What do these results actually mean?

Outstanding (Grade 1)	A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Good (Grade 2)	A service that exceeds minimum requirements
Adequate (Grade 3)	A service that only meets minimum requirements
Inadequate (Grade 4)	A service that does not meet minimum requirements

Areas to focus on for the future

The inspection also outlined some areas where improvements could be made, such as recording of information, particularly in case recording.

In order to continue to improve outcomes for children and young people, work has already started on the following areas:

- Upgrading CareFirst system to make recording information easier and simpler;
- Investing in training so that staff are well equipped with the most up-to-date information to do their jobs;
- Continuing to invest in recruitment to help with caseloads;
- Continuing to invest in retaining staff by implementing the advanced practitioner role and career progression for non-social work qualified employees;
- Continuing to work on the quality of supervision, case recording and file auditing.

To view the full report from Ofsted, follow the link below:

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/\(id\)/5785/\(as\)/LAC/lac_2010_879.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/(id)/5785/(as)/LAC/lac_2010_879.pdf)

Summer Mix - Excite Your Future (formerly Summer Uni/FutureVersity)

Plymouth's new Summer Mix - Excite Your Future programme is developing rapidly. This FREE programme of summer holiday activities for learning, fun and raising aspirations, will take place between 2 – 27 August.

This programme is open to children and young people living in Plymouth aged 11 - 19 years, or 11 - 25 for young people with disabilities or special educational needs. 2363 places are available, spread over 123 courses delivering 76 different activities. Everyone who completes a course will receive a certificate. These courses provide a 'taster' and an insight into what's on offer in the city, and will provide an opportunity for children and young people to explore new hobbies or possible future career paths.

Courses that will be running include:

- Arts and fashion
- Business and careers
- Digital media, film and photography
- Music and performing arts
- Skills for life
- Sports and fitness

A dedicated website

<http://www.summERMIX.co.uk>

is available and via this you can view an online brochure detailing all the courses, times they are running and what age group can apply. Online applications to courses can be made from 1 July.



Investors in People update: The team needs your help!



Please tell us:

- How we can improve sharing good practice in leading people, as encouraged in Managers' Charter?
- How do you measure the payback on the learning and development you invest in your team?
- What learning and development success stories can you share with us. Below are some examples.

An administrator at the Professional Development Centre who was keen to progress felt that a full-time degree would not suit her due to family commitments. Her manager recognised her potential and recommended a Higher Level Skills Pathway. She has now completed the Open University short course 'Understanding Management' and is enrolled on a Business Studies course. Pivotal to her success was access to the tutor outside office hours. She is now more confident, proactive and organised and feedback from centre users has improved.

A Support Worker in the Fostering Team has recently discovered that he has dyslexia and probably dyspraxia too. His manager has worked with him to identify what needs to be in place for him to learn effectively. He has now completed an OU 'Starting with Psychology' course. The experience has been positive. The children he works with relate well to him and he feels the boost to his confidence is helping them to thrive.

Contact workforce.development@plymouth.gov.uk with your thoughts and stories.

Motorbike Safety Day

This month a motorbike safety day was held by the Miers Close neighbourhood police team at Tamarside Community College. The day included

- Free safety checks by GT Motorcycles
- Hazard awareness talks
- Surepass learning opportunities
- GT Motorcycle displays
- Motorcycle crime prevention talks

The event was aimed at 16-21 year olds and was a really successful day with about 35 young people attending. Surepass organised a 'skills circuit' at the event, as well as assessing motorcyclists' abilities and giving out some safety tips. Plymouth Road Safety team were also present and giving safety advice.

School's Out Event

This year's School's Out event was held on Saturday 12 June, all day at the Piazza in the city centre. The event was all about publicising summer holiday activities for young people and families, and a range of activity providers were present, providing information about a host of things to do this summer. Free activities and taster sessions were available on the day. These included a chance to have a go with Plymouth Argyle's speed cage, a climbing wall, Skate Park, live music, arts and crafts and face painting. Plymouth Youth Service organised live music and brought their brand new mini bus mobile drop in "Urbie". The day was well attended and has helped to raise awareness of what's on this summer. For more information about what's on in the city follow the link below:

<http://plymouthparentpartnership.org.uk/?p=401&m=06&y=2010>

POLICY

Education and Children's Bill

The purpose of this Bill is to give full effect to a range of programmes envisaged by the coalition government.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- To provide schools with the freedom to deliver an excellent education in the way they see fit and a slimmer curriculum so that teachers have more space to decide how to teach it.
- To reform Ofsted and other accountability frameworks to ensure that head teachers are held accountable for the core educational goals in attainment and closing the inequalities gap.
- To introduce a reading test for six year olds to make sure that children are learning and to identify problems early.
 - To give teachers and head teachers the powers to improve behaviour and tackle bullying.
 - The creation of more Academies.
 - Ensure that money follows pupils, and introduce a 'pupil premium' so that more money follows the poorest pupils.



To find out more about the Bill follow the link below:

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/queens-speech/2010/05/queens-speech-education-and-children%E2%80%99s-bill-50848>

The Academies Bill

The Academies Bill was introduced into the House of Lords on 26 May 2010. This Bill will enable all maintained schools to apply for academy status. The key factor in submitting a successful application for the first wave of applicants will be that the school is currently rated as outstanding by Ofsted. The government expects to see a significant number of academies open in September 2010 and the numbers to continually rise.



Further elements include:

- All primary and special schools will be able to apply to become an academy in their own right.
- The process of applying to become an academy will be made as simple as possible and the obligation to consult with the LA will be removed.
- All new academies will automatically become charities.
- Schools that successfully apply for academy conversion will be able to keep any surplus balance they hold.
- They will be able to control their allocated funding that LAs would previously spend on their behalf and chose what to spend it on themselves, depending on the needs of their pupils.
- It will allow the Secretary of State to issue an academy order requiring any LA to relinquish control of a school.

For more information follow the link below:

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

Statutory guidance for Children's Trusts

Published under the previous Government this document provides statutory guidance on Children's Trust co-operation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). It outlines what exactly a Trust is and who the partners involved are and how it improves outcomes for children and young people.

Requirements include:

- Integrated processes and tools
- Partnership and governance arrangements within the Children's Trust Board
- New guidelines and statutory guidance for the CYPP
- Transitional Arrangements

To view the full document, follow the link below:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/about/aims/childrenstrusts/childrenstrusts/>

Budget implications of the coalition government

George Osbourne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, outlined his first round of spending cuts on 24 May. The Department for Education's budget is to be cut by £670m. However, schools funding, the Sure Start programme and spending on education for 16-19 year olds will be protected until at least 2011, with any savings made to be recycled within their budgets. This is the only money to continue to remain ring fenced in Children and young People's Services. Ring fencing around £1.7bn of grants in 2010/11 has been removed in order to allow LAs to prioritise funding on frontline services as they deal with cuts. £6bn of cuts are to be fast-tracked in this financial year in order to cut public deficit. The full extent of budget implications will be outlined in the budget released on 22 June 2010 – See <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/> for the latest news.

Research & Consultation

The impact of staffed play provision on children, families and communities

This report – *People Make Play* – offers a range of qualitative perspectives on the role and impact of local play provision. This report draws on literature reviews and six in-depth case studies of good quality, free, staffed play provision across England.

Key findings include:

Parents' stories – parents were keen to express the difference these facilities had made to their children's lives and also their own. These spaces provided a place to form social networks and breakdown divides by bringing neighbours together. Some felt that it provided a crucial lifeline for parents in need.

Children's stories – although children valued the attractive and well designed playgrounds the common theme was that it was the play workers who also made the difference and allowed children to play and socialise with peers.

Staff stories – play workers had to get a balance between allowing full expression of play while maintaining safety, tolerance and mutual respect.

Play workers are increasingly working beyond the boundary of their site and do work with under represented groups.

To view the full report follow the link below:

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/people-make-play.pdf>



Transition through detention and custody



This report evaluates the range and effectiveness of arrangements for education and training for young people. Relating specifically to those identified for their likelihood of offending, young offenders who move into and between custodial establishments and those who move between custody and the community

A lack of provision and access to education, training and employment is a significant barrier to modifying the behaviour and expectations of these young people.

Key findings include:

- Young people who moved between establishments during custody found it very hard to continue with education or training due to the lack of consistency in what was offered within the different establishments.
- Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIP) were very effective in preventing first time offending (YIP are bespoke programmes for 8-17 year olds at high risk of offending).
- Essential to the young person's success was the attachment to a key worker who would provide a continuity of support and guidance, rather than being bounced between a number of different case workers.

To view the full report follow the link below:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Transition-through-detention-and-custody>

Integrated children's services and the CAF process – LARC2 Report

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is an important example of integrated working and aims to ensure that children and young people experience a joined up service to identify their needs as early as possible. The Local Authority Research Consortium (LARC) undertook research to address how close we are in achieving this and what is holding us back? The following features were identified as determining the successfulness of the CAF

- Engaging children, young people and families
- Developing a better understanding of needs
- Ensuring consistency of the lead professional
- Ensuring multi-agency working and information sharing
- Integrating all of the elements of the CAF process

Follow the link below for the full report:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/LAQ01/LAQ01.pdf>

Thresholds for children's social care

Research in Practice provides interactive prompts on specific topics and has recently released Prompt 7 on Thresholds for children's social care.

The prompt considers three areas of threshold:

- **The Threshold between Tiers Two and Three:** Where the CAF process plays a central role
- **Threshold between Children in Need (CiN) and Child Protection (CP) work:** Within children's social care, scarcity of resources can contribute to a tension between CiN and CP agendas
- **Thresholds in the context of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs)** In particular the finding that a 'preoccupation' with thresholds is a risk factor in relation to SCR's

To access the prompt follow the link below:

<http://www.rip.org.uk/prompts/p7/mapping.asp>

Training and Events

Local Events

Big Arts Festival (BAF) 2010 is an annual programme of events celebrating the arts in Plymouth with the emphasis on young people. Now in its 11th year, BAF 2010 promises to be the biggest and best yet. The programme will go from June 28 to July 10.

Coordinated by Barefoot www.barefoot.org.uk BAF provides opportunities for schools, community groups, children's centres, arts organisations, artists and many more to showcase the creative work that happens all year round throughout the city. With the ongoing theme of 'inclusion', BAF also enables local communities to get involved with exciting arts activities happening during a week-long programme of events. The Barefoot website has a page outlining confirmed events across the city so check it out and see what's on!

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

Following the re-launch of the CAF in September 2009 we have trained approximately 900 practitioners. The number of CAF assessments is steadily rising with more families benefiting from a multi agency approach.

Training dates are now available until

December 2010. If anyone is

interested in training, discussing a case or would like further advice and guidance to speak to Amanda Paddison (CAF Co-ordinator) or contact her:

CAF@plymouth.gov.uk Tel: 01752 307160, Mobile: 07774 336579



National Events



What: Child Poverty Conference

Will provide an opportunity to give guidance and share best practice in tackling child poverty as we move forward from the economic difficulties of the past year.

When/Where: 9 July 2010, Central London

Target Audience: Workforce from across the Trust

Contact:

<http://www.capitaconferences.co.uk/public-sector-conferences/education/full-conferences/article/child-poverty-1.html>

What: What does the Queens Speech mean for you?

Measures outlined in the speech will change landscape of local government. Four proposed government bills will be analysed to determine opportunities and challenges.

When/Where: 16 July 2010, London

Target Audience: Councillors and officers responsible for community safety, housing, education, citizen engagement, policy and senior officers.

Contact:

<https://member.lgiu.org.uk/events/Pages/CLD160710.aspx>

Useful Links

Care Knowledge

www.careknowledge.com

Department for Education

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

Plymouth Parent Partnership

<http://www.parents-guide-to-plymouth.co.uk/index.htm>

Safeguarding Children

www.safeguardingchildren.org.uk

Plymouth's Safeguarding Children Board

www.plymouthscb.org.uk

Department of Health

www.dh.gov.uk

NHS statistics

www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics

Children and Young People Now

www.cypnow.co.uk

Research in Practice

www.rip.org.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.parents-guide-to-plymouth.co.uk/index.htm>

Printing Schedule

For further information contact:

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To download previous Policy Briefs go to:

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

Next Month's Issue	Submission deadline	Publication date
Issue 7	July	7 July 2010
		14 July 2010