

DRAFT 15-3-10

Second Phase of Consultation

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2010/11

HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS

SIX STRATEGIC GOALS

	Page
1. Think Family	3
2. High Aspirations	7
3. Safeguarding	11
4. Disabled Children	14
5. Looked After Children	17
6. Skills and Qualifications	21

This document gives a narrative about each of the six goals for the Children and Young People's Plan 2010/11 and the high level actions for each of the goals. The key task for this second phase of consultation is to build up the detailed action plan that lies beneath each goal's high level actions, drawing on ideas coming out of the first phase of consultation.

Some of the suggestions put forward by children and young people and those who work closest with them during the first phase of consultation are referred to in this document. Please see separate document for the full responses.

The second phase of consultation is aimed at teams who work in children's services and other professionals who will be responsible for delivering the improvements we are seeking to make through the Children and Young People's Plan.

Instructions

Please respond to this consultation using the consultation response form and return completed forms by Friday, 16th April 2010 to

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SIX STRATEGIC GOALS

The Children and Young People's Plan is about what organisations intend to do together to deliver joint priorities, which are represented here as our six strategic goals. The overriding purpose of the plan is to drive forward better integrated services to improve outcomes for children and young people, not simply to map everything each Children's Trust partner does for children and young people.

The Goals

- (i) Our goal is to 'Think Family' and break the cycle of poor outcomes for children and young people in the most vulnerable families
- (ii) Our goal is for children and young people to lead healthy lives, to make positive choices and have high aspirations
- (iii) Our goal is to safeguard vulnerable children and young people by ensuring those who are at risk are identified and protected
- (iv) Our goal is for disabled children and those with learning difficulties and their families to lead fulfilled lives
- (v) Our goal is to improve outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers
- (vi) Our goal is for young people to be suitably equipped with the skills and qualifications needed to gain appropriate employment and to have the confidence to succeed in life

Goal 1: Think Family

Our goal is to 'Think Family' and break the cycle of poor outcomes for children and young people in the most vulnerable families

All families experience problems from time to time. For some, timely advice from a friend, trusted professional or signposting to a source of help is all that is needed. For others more intensive help may be needed. Taking wider family needs into account when helping individual family members is key to success. The children's centres are central to our plans for targeting harder to reach families, including those with disabled children, and ensuring that they are able to access the universal services they require and identifying when targeted specialist services might be helpful.

Raising the attainment levels of children experiencing social and economic disadvantage is a fundamental aspect of what we want to achieve under this goal and we will continue to support the efforts of schools in tackling this issue¹. By supporting disadvantaged families we hope to further narrow the gap between how well the children from these families do at school compared with their peers. The continuing development of children's centres and extended school services is an important aspect in reaching such families early, providing them with appropriate support, focused on tackling issues associated with child poverty such as low attainment. A robust approach to preventing poor behaviour and attendance in schools² is an important strand to this, particularly amongst primary pupils, so we tackle the problem early – only pupils who attend regularly and concentrate on their learning are able to achieve to the best of their ability and this is a habit that needs to be developed from the start.

'Think Family', which is a national requirement, is about making sure support provided by children's, adults' and other relevant services is co-ordinated and focused on problems affecting the whole family. In Sutton we have begun to make progress with this agenda and we will be continuing with our efforts in the coming months to ensure that Think Family is made a reality in day-to-day practice, including in the crucial area of safeguarding (see Goal 3).

There are powerful economic arguments for targeting intensive and co-ordinated support towards families with the most complex problems. Assessing and identifying broader needs of all family members and supporting them in a co-ordinated way can minimise duplication by frontline services and free up resources to provide additional support to the families that need it most. Intervening early with a Think Family approach can help avoid problems escalating to crisis level and reduce the number of families and individuals who need intensive support in future.

We will continue to develop our Family Intervention Service which entails providing intensive and flexible family-focused interventions with the most

¹ See School Improvement Plan [LINK TO BE ADDED](#)

² See Behaviour and Attendance Strategy [LINK TO BE ADDED](#)

chaotic families and those with complex problems (particularly those families at risk of homelessness due to anti-social behaviour and where there are children at risk of offending or re-offending). The aim is to bring about change in families who have not been sufficiently engaged with services in the past. By valuing and investing in parents³ we aim to improve the life chances of children and young people.

Workforce implications

Implementing Think Family depends on existing areas of the workforce owning the concept and leading the change in working practice. The workforce will need to work and learn together across professional boundaries and organisations, develop new ways of working, relationships and communication to create a culture and an infrastructure for teams to seamlessly work together, share information and design holistic support programmes for the families that require it.

Goal 1 Objectives (target outcomes)

- Reduce child poverty (using a range of targets to be decided by the Child Poverty Task Force)
- Improve levels of attainment amongst disadvantaged children
- Improve levels of attainment amongst children with special educational needs
- Improve behaviour and attendance in key geographical areas
- Reduce overall numbers of school absences
- Reduce numbers of families made homeless due to anti-social behaviour

Goal 1 High level actions

TF1 Implement Think Family reforms to children's, adults' and community services so that support is focused on problems affecting the whole family

What are the next steps for making Think Family a reality in day to day practice – e.g. the changes that need to be made to assessment processes?

TF2 Provide intensive support to families in the greatest difficulty by developing the Family Intervention Service

What are the next steps for developing this service, building on the approach adopted for the Family Intervention Project?

³ See Parenting Strategy [LINK TO BE ADDED](#)

TF3 Develop a consistent approach to commissioning services for improving parenting skills of mothers and fathers of children of all ages who are at risk of poor outcomes

What are the next steps for developing parent support services e.g. developing an agreed set of criteria for assessing need?

Some points raised in the consultation exercise: does the borough provide mediation support for families? Do new parents get information given to them about post-natal groups, children's centres etc in their local area? Could we have more parent groups for parents of teenagers? Could we re-instate the two year old health visitor check? Could we run classes for parents and children to learn together e.g. cooking? Could we use the voluntary sector more?

TF4 Develop a rigorous approach to targeting hard to reach families through children's centres, extended schools services and the family information service to provide support for the whole family to tackle the causes and effects of child poverty

How can outreach work be developed, picking up on examples of where this has already been successful?

Suggestions from the consultation exercise included: 'Schools in disadvantaged areas need the best teachers - pay teachers more to work in these areas.' 'Drop in centres with internet access and advice should be within communities. Homework clubs after school may benefit some.' 'Free tutoring on estates.' 'Sutton's schools are too exclusive and too content to rest on their laurels, they are letting children from poorer families down.' 'Would be nice to set up groups similar to scouts, where young children meet up once a week, and different subjects are taught, games and activities organised for the children'. 'Children's centres are fab, but they should be open all day so parents can drop-in, not just attend one or two specific sessions in a day.' 'Try and encourage family fun weekends with activities in a park or sports centre, doing different activities and competing family v family. This was done a few years ago at the Grove Park and was great fun for all involved. Maybe would need to be run by volunteers.'

'More could be done to encourage people who would not normally use the library service to visit their local library. We are already working with Children's Centres and it would be a good opportunity to use this partnership to start Family Reading groups, support Parenting Classes and generally promote the library service to those families involved with the centres'.

TF5 Focus on developing and implementing innovative approaches to improving levels of attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils, including using a geographical focus to target behaviour and attendance issues amongst primary pupils where they are most prevalent in the borough

The aim here is to tackle behaviour and attendance issues early in a pupil's school life so that bad habits do not then get replicated in secondary school. How can behaviour and attendance issues be dealt with in the community rather than just leaving it to schools?

Some ideas from respondents to the consultation exercise regarding attendance: 'Incentives e.g. bike/ipod/£50 voucher for 100% attendance'. Lots of comments like this: 'As well as rewarding good behaviour there should be a clearly laid out plan of punishments pupils can face. Exclusion is not an effective punishment for a child who doesn't like school and resents having to be there anyway.' 'Organise a group of teachers or adults to pick up kids that are often late and take them to school together in one car.' 'Collection of students in poor attendance area to walk them to school.' 'Closer schools, according to address – try to fit children in best and closest schools possible.' 'Breakfast clubs to encourage child to go to school.' 'You don't exclude primary school children – it's just wrong and makes them feel unwanted.'

'During the summer holidays, the library service runs a Summer Reading Challenge, which is a national scheme to encourage children to keep reading outside of school and to nurture reading for pleasure. This scheme could also be built upon through partnerships with schools and other organisations to target primary age children who may have low literacy skills'.

Goal 2: High Aspirations

Our goal is for children and young people to lead healthy lives, to make positive choices and have high aspirations

Despite the negative portrayal of young people in the media, many parents, carers and others say that improving activities for teenagers is a priority above other services. When young people have somewhere safe to go and something positive to do in their free time, communities see the benefits. Improving the capacity, accessibility and quality of services for young people, and importantly, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties, is a key focus for this goal. For most young people, their parents or other adults in the family will support them to take part and benefit from opportunities. But for those facing disadvantage, the support and motivation they receive from other adults such as professional youth workers can be life changing, by providing new role models who raise aspirations. Activities delivered by voluntary organisations are essential for widening the range of opportunities available for young people.

Participation in positive activities can also provide a route for targeted youth support services to reach out to disaffected or vulnerable young people. But to achieve this, young people want access to support in places where they feel comfortable and from people they can trust. To this end we are reinvigorating our approach to empowering young people to increase their influence over the design and delivery of services so that they are more likely to access these services and sustain their participation⁴.

The Sutton Life Centre which is due to open in summer 2010 will be an important new venue for young people in the borough. It will provide new youth facilities, focussing on services that help young people to play a positive role in the community. The centre will feature high tech facilities including a new library, youth centre, games court, climbing wall, coffee shop, eco and environment gardens, and a coffee shop. It will also provide a permanent base for primary school pupils' junior citizen scheme.

This goal is also about encouraging children and young people of all ages and their families to think about the wider lifestyle choices they make. It is about helping parents to promote a positive outlook to children and young people that encompasses encouraging responsible attitudes whether it be using the internet, mobile phones, drugs and alcohol, sex, relationships, eating healthily, taking regular exercise, or road safety.

The quality of relationships young people have with their parents and friends is a key risk factor for their emotional well-being and we know from the TellUs survey that this is an issue where Sutton is behind other authorities. We hope that the SEAL programme (social and emotional aspects of learning) which has been rolled out to all Sutton primary schools and eleven secondary schools in the borough will have a positive impact. We have also introduced

⁴ [Establishing a Young Advisers' Network in Sutton](#) (Report to the Executive, 9-2-10)

training for schools on dealing with issues such as eating disorders, anxiety, and self harm. The introduction of a targeted mental health services programme⁵ (TaMHS) will also enable us to build on these and other initiatives, including family support programmes.

Workforce implications

[To be added]

Goal 2 Objectives (target outcomes)

- Reduce levels of childhood obesity⁶
- Increase numbers of young people accessing youth services and positive activities generally⁷
- Reduce teenage conceptions and teenage pregnancy
- Improve emotional health and well-being
- Improve perceptions about parents taking responsibility for their children in the area
- Reduce number of children killed or seriously injured in road accidents

Goal 2 High level actions

HA1 Develop a multi-agency approach to providing and promoting more activities for young people, including those with disabilities, that are easily accessible by public transport; and further develop targeted youth support aimed at vulnerable young people

How should youth services develop its offer to young people, including those with disabilities and learning difficulties e.g. partnership with voluntary sector? How should we respond to the MORI survey finding that activities for teenagers is the issue in most need to improvement (31% overall) - particularly in St Helier, the Wrythe and Wandle Valley (41%) and Beddington and Wallington (36%) What are the next steps for developing targeted youth support services?

How should we respond to young people's requests for more information about what is available? Are we making enough use of social networking?

'Include the library service in the extended schools programme and give assistance to provide and run homework clubs and other activities. With additional advice and support we could also improve provision to those with mental health issues through advice and information, book recommendations (including fiction/stories aimed at vulnerable young people and those with mental health issues) and events and activities offering opportunities for young people to build confidence and meet new people.'

⁵ See TaMHS project plan [ADD LINK](#)

⁶ NI 55 (obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year) is an LAA target for which SCTB is responsible

⁷ NI 110 (participation in positive activities) is an LAA target for which SCTB is responsible

HA2 Improve our understanding about the extent and underlying issues around teenage pregnancy, including cross borough working, so that we have a more accurate and up to date picture and are better equipped to identify young people at risk of poor sexual health and teenage pregnancy

What do Children's Trust partners need to do to break down the barriers (e.g. data sharing) to getting a better understanding of teenage pregnancy and tackling this issue more effectively?

How should we go about refreshing our approach to sex and relationships education (see Youth Parliament's SRE report 2009)? Responses to the consultation exercise included the following comments: 'There is still a tendency in schools to gloss over the practicalities such as where you can obtain contraception and too much focus on the idea that sex before legal age/unsafe sex is wrong.' 'One idea which being implemented in some community settings is 'clinic in a box' which is where the nurses attend a community setting such as a youth club on a regular basis with a basic contraception pack. Discussion is currently taking place re implementing this in some high schools although this is not happening yet. It has been very successful in reducing teenage pregnancy in other areas.' 'It is important that it is not just about stopping teenagers from having unsafe sex but to promote abstinence as a positive alternative.'

HA3 Develop a multi-agency approach (targeting areas of deprivation where necessary), tackling risky behaviours amongst children and young people; and provide appropriate information and support for and from parents to help take this forward

This high level action is about what we plan to do to target key messages to young people around reducing risks associate with alcohol and drugs, sexual behaviour and internet use – i.e. in addition to PSHE classes in schools. Is there something imaginative we can do in partnership with pubs, clubs, fast food outlets etc?

HA4 Develop and promote multi-agency approach to supporting healthy lifestyles targeted at local communities where childhood obesity is most prevalent

Whilst overall levels of childhood obesity in Sutton are in line with the rest of the country these levels are still worrying and particularly in some particular geographical communities or wards where levels are higher than the national average. What are the next steps in developing our targeted approach e.g. is there more that we could do with local businesses such as fast food outlets?

Suggestions from the consultation exercise: free activities for lower income families; famous sports people visiting schools; more PE lessons and opportunities to experience playing different sports and games; making

healthy lunch options more attractive with proper fresh salad options; work with local supermarkets to limit specific marketing ploys such as sweets at the till; work with local cafes near schools to improve fast food choices; work with cinemas to limit unhealthy food; availability of more information about activities on offer in the borough

'The alive n' kicking programme provides young people the chance to come and speak to trained advisors about ways to live a healthier lifestyle. The trouble is very few people know about its service'.

HA5 Increase road safety awareness amongst drivers and children and young people with the aim of reducing the number of children and young people involved in road accidents

How should we develop our approach to road safety particularly around hotspots for accidents?

HA6 Develop targeted mental health services along three main work streams: information and communication; training and support for schools; and direct work with identified young people

What are the key steps to be taken over the next year with the TaMHS project?

Goal 3: Safeguarding

Our goal is to safeguard vulnerable children and young people by ensuring those who are at risk are identified and protected

Working in partnership to safeguard all children and young people is the top concern for agencies working with them in Sutton. Early identification of potential concerns and effective intervention to avoid more significant damage later are hugely important in our approach. The Local Safeguarding Children Board ensures that work to protect children and young people at greatest risk is properly co-ordinated and effective. Inherent in its key focus on child protection, is the particular attention paid to those aspects of prevention, which are known to be linked with later safeguarding issues, such as domestic violence, parent/carer mental health problems, learning disabilities and substance misuse.

The Think Family method described in our first goal is also important to this safeguarding goal - with the development of our 'safer families' approach to safeguarding across adults, children's and community services. This is about making sure we think about all family members when we plan interventions to improve resilience and reduce risks. In addition, the other goals deal with safeguarding and improving outcomes for our children and young people who are most susceptible to poor outcomes, including looked after children and care leavers; children and young people from poorer backgrounds; teenagers with low self esteem; those who are disabled or have learning difficulties; teenage mothers; youth offenders and young people not in education, employment or training.

A key focus for this goal is on targeted and responsive safeguarding of children and young people in need or at risk of harm i.e. physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation. A successful strategy to reduce domestic violence is a key part of protecting our children and young people. In 2008 over half of children on the child protection register or subject to child protection plans were from families where domestic violence was taking place.

Effective communication and information sharing are vital for keeping children and young people safe. This helps identification of vulnerable individuals and enables professionals to consider jointly how to proceed in the best interests of the child, and informs effective assessments of children's needs. Like many other authorities across the country we will continue to work on improving our processes, including timely and effective referrals and assessments procedures; better information on children missing education and children being educated at home; and more information on young carers.

Another key part of strengthening our approach to safeguarding is about further development and clarification of the lines of responsibility of the Lead Member and the Director of Children's Services; the Children's Trust Board; and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, which all have differing but complementary roles in this crucial area.

Workforce implications

[To be added]

Goal 3 Objectives (target outcomes)

- [Referrals and assessment targets to be added when the new set of safeguarding indicators are released]
- Reduce levels of domestic violence⁸
- Increase numbers of home educated children on home education register

Goal 3 High level actions

SG1 Encourage more multi-agency prevention work at the lower thresholds of need which do not require a referral to social services, and further embed the understanding amongst agencies around when a referral to social services is appropriate

What needs to happen to get this culture change?

SG2 Develop effective systems for processing and screening contacts coming into the Referrals and Assessments Service that quickly identifies those in need of urgent protection; and improve data collection in order to help with better targeting and forecasting of service needs

What do we need to adapt as a result of the pilot screening arrangements?

SG3 Refresh our framework for safeguarding children, clarifying roles and responsibilities and raise the profile of safeguarding with partners and the public

What are the key steps we need to take to ensure we follow national guidance and pick up on best practice checks and balances elsewhere?

SG4 Develop our approach to tackling domestic violence, including tackling alcohol and drug abuse amongst parents, as one of the key ways of preventing child abuse

What do we need to do differently in tackling domestic violence – particularly with reference to the role of drugs and alcohol?

SG5 Develop a robust approach to children missing education and on home education in line with the Badman report and any new guidance

⁸ NI 32 (repeat incidents of domestic violence) is an LAA target for which the Safer Sutton Partnership Board is responsible

Our concern always is that children are safe and are receiving a full time education, suitable to their needs and abilities – what are the key steps we need to take to ensure we have robust information and procedures?

SG6 Ensure young carers are protected from inappropriate caring roles and they are able to thrive as any young person should

How can we use the Think Family approach to identifying young carers i.e. those who have a parent or sibling in their household who has a disability, illness or other vulnerability (physical or mental)? What steps do we need to take to ensure young carers are able to thrive?

Goal 4: Disabled Children

Our goal is for disabled children and those with learning difficulties and their families to lead fulfilled lives

One of the strongest messages from disabled children and young people, and their families, is that they want to be treated as full members of society, with the same choices and opportunities as everybody else. There are too many barriers that prevent them from being able to choose to do the things that other children and families do. There is much in current legislation and policy that promotes social inclusion. But making sure it happens is challenging because it involves changing attitudes and practices in a very wide range of organisations.

Sutton schools, children's centres and extended school services all have vital roles to play in ensuring that the needs of disabled children, children with chronic conditions, and children with learning difficulties are fully considered in the planning and delivery of universal services - including education and after school activities. In our goal around children and young people having high aspirations we have highlighted the need for more activities and places to go that are inclusive and suitable for disabled children and young people.

We know that disabled children are generally safest and do best when they and their families are enabled to lead as ordinary lives as possible. We also aim to support families in providing good care for their children before problems escalate, instead of waiting until they get into crisis. We have made good progress with our prevention measures and have transformed short breaks services under Aiming High for Disabled Children but we need to do more, particularly for children and young people presenting sleep and behaviour management issues, and for young people making the transition to adult life.

Successful implementation of improvements in support for disabled children and their families depends on managing the twin pressures of rising demand for services and severe financial constraints for the council and health service. Until recently much of the growth in support for disabled children living at home with their families has been offset by fewer children needing to be cared for away from home in expensive residential placements. However, the number in care is now so low that further reductions cannot be relied on.

With suitable support, participating in universal services can be a cost-effective, as well as being good for the child, way of supporting families. An important focus for our strategy for disabled children, young people and their families is to increase choice by removing barriers to universal services for all children and young people, including those for whom it has not until recently been a realistic option.

Workforce implications

To support the development of staff to change practice from a range of different roles and organisations across the workforce in Sutton both private, voluntary and independent sectors that may not have seen that their roles are traditionally within the children workforce will be a key message to communicate, there will be key skills to develop including for staff who have not traditionally had to assess risk in this area to be able to confidently advocate a new support or intervention, further development of staff's knowledge and skill in supporting children with disabilities to integrate into mainstream recreational and other services are seen as the key workforce challenges for this goal.

We welcome the recommendations of the Lamb inquiry⁹ and endorse particularly the widening of duties of schools to children with SEN and disabilities, the training of all teachers in SEN and disability and the strengthening of the duties of schools under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Goal 4 Objectives (target outcomes)

- Increase the take-up of in-house provision for Sutton children with special educational needs
- Increase availability of out of school activities for disabled children and children with learning difficulties within universal services
- Improve parents' experience of services for SEN and disabled children
- Increase the level of registrations on the I Count Register

Goal 4 High level actions

DC1 Continue to develop opportunities to meet the special educational needs of our children and young people within the local community

What more do we need to do to attract parents to applying to Sutton schools for their children with special educational needs?

DC2 Ensure primary school children with special educational needs are fully prepared for the transition to secondary school and that the secondary schools are prepared for meeting the children's needs in a holistic way

What do we need to do to ensure that children with special educational needs receive a package of support, where the school is able to help parents navigate the available support outside of the school?

DC3 Further develop a joined up approach to supporting children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders

⁹ [Improving Parental Confidence in the Special Educational Needs System: An Implementation Plan \(DCSF February 2010\)](#)

Where are the gaps and duplication and what needs to be done to improve our approach to ASD e.g. could CAMHS play a bigger role?

DC4 Reduce demand for high cost or long term services through more effective prevention and earlier intervention

One aspect is to encourage more families to register their disabled children on the I Count register to aid planning – how can this be achieved? What other steps do we need to take?

DC5 Respond to parents' experience of services for disabled children by improving our approach to assessments and providing feedback

This will involve looking at the detail behind the disappointing results for national indicator 54 survey of parents – what are the key learning points?

Goal 5: Looked After Children

Our goal is to improve outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers

Despite the dedication and perseverance of social workers and carers, the outcomes and experiences of young people who have been looked after by the local authority are not always as good as they could be. Instead of compensating for their often extremely difficult pre-care experiences, certain features of the care system itself can make it harder for young people to succeed: for instance if they are moved frequently.

Stable, reliable bonds with key individuals are fundamental to children's security and development. Children who are looked after do not always have the sort of relationship with their social worker that they want. High staff turnover, heavy workloads and an administrative burden can make it difficult for relationships to flourish. Continuity in relationships with foster carers depends on preventing placement breakdowns and building long-term placements into care plans. The quality of support that foster carers receive in terms of planned respite, input from other agencies, and access to advice at times of crisis is crucial to preventing placement breakdown and they make up a key focus for this goal.

The Government has placed a new duty on local authorities to ensure a sufficient supply of placements locally and we are working hard to comply with that requirement. A range of options in the local area is vitally important for finding the right placement for a child – an inappropriate match is far more likely to break down.

Only by really getting an understanding of children's satisfaction with their care will we have an understanding of how stable and secure their lives seem to them, and whether they have the opportunities, support and encouragement needed to take them. We are determined that the Care Council will embody best practice in children's participation and Sutton's Pledge for Looked After Children will make a difference to the extent to which looked after children are listened to and that they can influence decisions made about their care. The aim is always for better outcomes in terms of health, happiness and educational achievements.

Workforce implications

[To be added]

Goal 5 Objectives (target outcomes)

- Improve emotional and behavioural health of looked after children
- Improve timeliness and stability of placements of looked after children
- Improve the timeliness of looked after children cases being reviewed
- Sustain improvements in the educational attainment of looked after children
- Increase the proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation

Goal 5 High level actions

LAC1 Continue to develop and implement the Sutton pledge for looked after children and the Care Council so that they make a meaningful difference to looked after children

What do we need to do to ensure that we make progress? How can we improve our mechanisms for ensuring that ideas that are suggested by looked after children and foster carers are seriously considered?

One respondent to the consultation exercise said: "I'm always asked my opinion and how I feel and what I want but nothing ever changes so what's the point?"

LAC2 Raise the profile of the council's role as corporate parent to looked after children, with particular emphasis on new councillors joining the council after the local elections in May 2010

What are the steps we need to take now to ensure that we are prepared for giving the new administration the right information? How will we develop similar messages for council staff – do we make the most of the opportunity at staff induction days?

LAC3 Further develop the support available for extra tuition for looked after children and closely monitor its impact on the progress being made by our looked after children; and develop the support we can give to looked after children's interests outside of school

How can we ensure that the local authority undertakes its corporate parent role in as similar a way to any other parents? Suggestions arising from consultation exercise: 'school to take an interest in past history and work with social workers.' 'Buddy system at school to help ease transition and making new friends' 'Provide a mentor and take to activity perhaps once a week.'

LAC4 Secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children within the borough, with regard to the standard for commissioning practice set out in statutory guidance on the 'sufficiency duty', and aim to increase the stability of placements

What are the steps we need to take to ensure we comply with the statutory requirement?

Ideas arising from the consultation exercise about stability of placements: Are initial placements thoroughly investigated to ensure that the child/young person and foster carer are compatible i.e. a matching process? Why can't all parties have more information before the placement begins? Could there be a settling in period? Are foster carers getting appropriate training, particularly when a child has special needs? One respondent said 'more should be done to ask us where we would like to be placed when we first come into foster care, what we like doing and things which may help to make a placement last longer.'

LAC5 Improve the transition from being looked after to leaving care and improve support provided to care leavers, including the availability of appropriate accommodation

What are the barriers to having the right sort of accommodation available and how do we overcome them? Are there any further improvements that need to be made to the leaving care team offer? (See Young Inspectors' Report into the Leaving Care Team, 2009)

Respondents to the consultation exercise suggested: 'What needs to be replicated as much as possible is the support that a child would receive from a stable and loving family, that does not end abruptly at an early age.' 'Run genuine training sessions on the basics like how to budget, how to manage a place, what bills need paying each month and how to pay them etc. The book that's provided is rubbish'.

Goal 6: Skills and Qualifications

Our goal is for young people to be suitably equipped with the skills and qualifications needed to gain appropriate employment and to have the confidence to succeed in life

There are still too many young people who remain disengaged from education, employment or training and the gap in attainment persists between those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers. This goal is about taking decisive action to ensure that all young people, including the most vulnerable such as care leavers and teenage parents, are able to participate in learning so that they are equipped to succeed in life.

From 1st April 2010 the local authority has statutory responsibility for funding the education and training of young people aged 16-19. This means planning and commissioning a coherent, integrated and responsive offer to all young people, extending over the range of learning opportunities available including greater access to apprenticeships, diplomas and foundation learning and creating the right infrastructure for when the age of compulsory participation in education or training is raised to 17 in 2013 and then 18 in 2015.

An important aspect of making this work is down to an equal partnership between schools, colleges, independent and third sector training providers, those who manage the youth custody system and employers. Increasing the numbers in education, employment or training will also depend on the availability of clear information advice and guidance for young people as well as providing additional support for care leavers and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Workforce implications

[To be added]

Goal 6 Objectives (target outcomes)

- Narrow the inequality gap in the achievement of Level 2 qualifications by nineteen years old¹⁰
- Narrow the inequality gap in the achievement of Level 3 qualifications by nineteen years old¹¹
- Increase the proportion of care leavers in suitable education, training or employment
- Increase the numbers of pupils achieving five or more grade A* to C GCSEs including English and maths
- High take up of 14-19 learning diplomas

Goal 6 High level actions

SQ1 Identify and track those young people who are at risk of disengaging, or have disengaged from learning, and intervene as appropriate to provide, through effective commissioning, the right learning opportunities and support to maintain their engagement

What are the next steps we need to take to improve our approach to identifying these young people?

Ideas raised in the consultation exercise: Council could provide 'Saturday jobs' for children 14 and upwards, cleaning graffiti, litter picking etc, keeping them busy and on course of employment in future years. Do citizenship classes at school do enough to highlight importance of the work ethic? Do schools give enough realistic advice to pupils unlikely to go on to higher education e.g. how to apply for jobs? Do parents understand what is available for young people? Could we do more using positive role models? 'Improved opportunities for volunteering and building up skills to make these young people more employable despite poor exam results is key.' 'There should be mentoring schemes where people have come from a similar background and been through the same thing to show there is a point in making an effort.'

Could we make more of linking with Sutton libraries? 'If we were able to identify this particular group of young people, we would be prepared to set up a volunteer scheme that is tailored to their needs'.

¹⁰ NI 82 (inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19) is an LAA target for which SCTB is responsible

¹¹ NI 81 (inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19) is an LAA target for which SCTB is responsible

‘Through the provision of computers and information that can be accessed for free, we can also offer support to the parents and carers of young people in terms of CV writing, career guidance and job searching. This would also be the case for young people in this target group (including NEETS etc), as they begin seeking employment. In partnership with other organisations, it would be possible to use the library as a venue for help in gaining employment- for example, it would be possible to use our facilities to run workshops and set up advice stands and drop-in sessions’.

SQ2 Ensure that young people receive high quality, relevant and personalised advice, guidance and support through learning providers, Connexions and targeted youth support services so that they become engaged

How can we ensure that there is enough challenge in the system so that advice and guidance is of a consistently high quality?

SQ3 Ensure that the provision on offer in the area closely matches the needs and aspirations of local young people and that it is sufficiently flexible

What steps do we need to take to ensure that Sutton provision matches Sutton needs?

Issue raised in the consultation exercise: ‘Sort out the special needs colleges because you give too many places away to out of borough and the children who have been on the waiting list and reapply year after year are turned down at 19 years old because no places.’

‘Positive Futures would like to provide more opportunities for young people over the age of 16 to provide alternative education packages based around ‘gaining employment’ issues’.

SQ4 Ensure that young people receive support at transition points (e.g. at ages 16 and 18) through integrated youth support services and close joint working with Jobcentre Plus

What are the steps we need to take to ensure these services are sufficiently joined up?

SQ5 Support care leavers into education, employment and training in line with the recommendations in the Cabinet Office report Realising Young Potential (Nov 2009)

What are the key issues we need to tackle to ensure we are doing enough to help care leavers?