

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **21 September 2009**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Reconciling Policy and Resources (RPR)**

Purpose of report: **To enable the committee to consider and comment on the detailed planning for 2010/11 and beyond as outlined in the State of the County report.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Send Cabinet any comments or changes it wishes to propose to the policy steers and their contribution to the objectives of the whole Council, especially in light of work carried out during the last year;**
 - 2. Establish a scrutiny board to act on behalf of the committee to provide input into the RPR process until March 2010 and in particular to consider the detailed departmental portfolio plan.**
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1. Background

1.1 The State of the County 2009 report was presented to Cabinet on 28 July 2009. That report outlined the national and local context providing an overview of the main issues which will affect the County Council in the coming year. The report listed all the policy steers (which provide the structure within which business and financial planning is developed) agreed by the County Council last year along with 'performance stories' which set out what we achieved subsequently against each policy steer. This information forms the focus for RPR scrutiny at this first stage.

2. Scrutiny's role in Reconciling Policy and Resources

2.1 Scrutiny's engagement in the RPR process is important as scrutiny Members bring the experience to bear that they have gained through their work during the year. It is an opportunity for the scrutiny committees to use the information provided to inform their future work programmes.

2.2 The Committee is asked to review the current policy steers which lie within the committee's remit. Cabinet will then agree any changes to the 'Promise' and policy steers in the light of scrutiny proposals at its meeting in October. To assist, there are specific points which scrutiny may wish to bear in mind when undertaking this task, and later work:

- Cabinet wants the new policy steers to contain *more* specific and realistic medium term aims, and *less* activity description
- The 'Promise' is likely to include an amendment to reflect the severity of the economic outlook
- There are three newly added political priorities: community transport, activities for young people and the "Place priority".

- Scrutiny commentary is valuable on issues where there is a particular tension between universal services and those for vulnerable people – either within a service or between departments
- Scrutiny is invited to make judgements about value for money for areas of above-average costs, and provide challenge to ensure return on investment by increased performance (establishing what 'good performance' will look like, preferably before initiatives are put in place)
- Scrutiny is well placed to recommend potential savings through cross-council initiatives as well as within departments.

2.3 Appendix 1 contains the policy steers within the remit of this committee. Appendix 2 contains the performance stories.

3. Next steps

3.1 In November or December the scrutiny committees, or their RPR scrutiny boards, will be asked to consider detailed portfolio and budget plans and the emerging savings strategy. The scrutiny task then will be to consider:

- whether the amended policy steers are reflected satisfactorily within the proposed key areas of budget spending for 2009/10 and beyond
- whether all possible efficiencies are identified, and the likely impact of those savings on services provided to County Council customers.

3.2 Previous Member feedback has resulted in the following provisions which apply to the detailed draft portfolio and budget plans when presented to scrutiny:

- Each proposed saving should show the percentage the saving represents of the total appropriate budget to help Members visualise the scale of proposed changes.
- Sufficient detail is required about the pressures and the likely impact of proposed savings to enable Members to gain a full understanding of proposals being put forward.
- The terms 'high', 'medium' and 'low' used to describe the general impact of savings should relate to the impact upon customers.

ANDREW OGDEN
Director of Law and Personnel

Contact Officer: Paul Dean, Scrutiny Manager (01273 481751)

Local Member: All

Background Documents: None

POLICY STEERS 2008/09

Pride of Place - The East Sussex County Council Promise

We will be an efficient, customer focused, accountable authority working with partners and local communities to:

- Make a positive difference to local people's lives
- Create a prosperous and safe County
- Provide affordable, high quality services at lowest possible council tax.

This vision for the whole authority is supported by policy steers for each portfolio.

Children's Services

Cllrs Glazier, Stroude and Elkin

Overarching

- Improve the way that we work with partners through the Children's Trust arrangements.
- Shift the pattern of investment towards prevention and early intervention, including increasing the range of family support services.
- Improve access to services, especially in rural areas.

Be Healthy

- Promote good health for children and young people and reduce health inequalities
- Reduce teenage conception rates across the County.

Stay Safe

- Protect children and young people from harm.
- Reduce bullying and anti-social behaviour by and towards children and young people, wherever it occurs.
- Improve support to children and young people on the edge of care, especially vulnerable teenagers.

Enjoy and Achieve

- Develop integrated services for children under 5 and their families through a network of children's centres and increase take up and quality of early years education.
- Continue to raise educational achievement and aspirations at all key stages for children of all abilities, and reduce the attainment gap for children and young people from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Economic Wellbeing

- Increase the choices for vocational learning opportunities for children and young people aged 14-19 and reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training.

Make a Positive Contribution

- Provide positive activities for children and young people and increase opportunities for them to be involved in decisions that affect them.

Children's Services Portfolio

1. Introduction by Lead Member

The overriding aim of children's services is to help children and young people aged 0-19, and their families, to improve their life chances by providing them with effective, responsive and joined up services.

We work closely with partners and local communities to provide seamless, coherent support to children, young people and their families to help them maximise their skills for life, their enjoyment of learning and to ensure they are safe and healthy. Our key challenge, narrowing gaps between the outcomes for some children and young people and the rest, remains demanding. There is still a long way to go to address key gaps in outcomes around health, educational attainment and access to activities and support.

We want East Sussex to be a place where children and young people are celebrated and we are committed to enabling children and young people and their families to participate as fully as possible in decisions which affect them personally, as well as in helping us develop our services.

1.1 Key Children's Services policy changes since April 2008

- Building Brighter Futures: next steps for the children's workforce (April 2008)
- Youth Alcohol Action Plan (June 2008)
- The National Challenge (June 2008) - a programme of support to secure higher standards
- Young Runaways Action Plan (June 2008)
- Youth Crime Action Plan (July 2008)
- Report of the Bercow Review into the provision of services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (July 2008)
- Education and Skills Act 2008, which introduces a requirement to remain in education or training beyond the current statutory leaving age and contains measures to encourage more young people to participate in learning post-16
- Children and Young Persons' Act 2008 which reforms the statutory framework for the care system
- Gaining Ground – Improving progress in coasting secondary schools (2008)
- Sir Jim Rose's Review of the Primary Curriculum (2009)
- Sir Alasdair Macdonald's Review of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education in schools (2009)
- Child Internet Safety Strategy (2009)
- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill (2009) which includes proposals giving local authorities responsibility for commissioning and funding all education and training for young people up to the age of 19 and putting Children's Trust Boards and Sure Start Children's Centres on a statutory footing.
- Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures. The strategy for children and young people's

health (February 2009)

- Government response to Lord Laming's Progress report (May 2009) which strengthens guidance on safeguarding children
- Your child, your school, our future: building a 21st century schools system (June 2009)
- Achievement for All – Local Authority Prospectus (June 2009)

2. Overarching

- ❖ (CS 1) Improve the way that we work with partners through the Children's Trust arrangements
- ❖ (CS 2) Shift the pattern of investment towards prevention and early intervention, including increasing the range of family support services
- ❖ (CS 3) Improve access to services, especially in rural areas.

2.1 What are we trying to achieve?

We are committed to developing a holistic, integrated approach to support all children and young people, including effective prevention and early intervention. We want to see:

- Maximum possible engagement of parents and carers and the wider community;
- Effective support for parents and carers;
- An interconnected system of services and support, focused on prevention; and
- Diversity that is valued and equality and community cohesion promoted.

2.2 Where are we now?

In the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) by Ofsted, the Council's overall performance in providing children's services (including education) was assessed as grade 3 (performing well - consistently above minimum requirements) out of a possible 4.

In order to provide **effective support for parents and carers**, we continue to provide targeted integrated services, such as family support, youth support services and Connexions, together with highly specialised integrated services for those with the most complex needs, including the Youth Offending Team, respite services for disabled children, speech and language and other therapy services, substance misuse services and mental health services.

As at 31 March 2008, 488 families were supported by the Family Outreach Service and parenting programmes are now offered across all the 22 Local Partnerships for Children areas (LPCs) on a needs basis, with applications continuing to be agreed by both provider organisations and individual LPCs.

145 schools have trained Parent Information Contacts and all schools have access to Parent Support Advisers. A survey is currently planned for mid-2009 to ascertain

how many schools are running information sessions for parents at transition points. The findings will inform further planning in this area.

We are continuing to develop our services with a strong **focus on prevention and close joint working**, including children's centres and extended schools, which are enabling our services to reach out into communities. Across the County, 69% of children have access to our network of 28 Children's Centres and 98% of children within the 30% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOA's) have access. Phase 3 of the Children's Centre programme, which will result in universal access, is on schedule to be delivered by 31 March 2010.

100% of secondary schools currently provide the core extended school service offer. In addition, 69% of our primary schools, which are not part of the national target, are also offering the core extended offer. Overall this means that 76% of all schools are now making the full offer and a number of additional schools are likely to be judged at full offer by September 2009 which will increase the total proportion of extended schools to 85%.

Our two trailblazer initiatives, based in Eastbourne North East and North St Leonards LPC areas, aim to support families with children aged 0-11 who live in the most vulnerable communities by focusing on helping frontline children's services to work together more effectively. Practitioners have the opportunity to identify common issues and are supported in addressing these through training and induction, integrated processes, family support and pooling of resources. Local trailblazer events bring together local practitioners from across key services. The aim of the events is to encourage and support more integrated working between these key services and address common issues and needs. Family involvement is also vital to the work of the trailblazers.

Implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Lead Professional role is being embedded across the Children's Trust so that we can ensure, in as systematic a way as possible, that those who need help are given it, at the right time, and that the joint working which is required is organised and reviewed as efficiently as possible. As at 17 April 2009 there were 673 active Children's Index accounts and 1541 active CAFs. Resources are now being deployed to ensure a smooth transition from the Children's Index to ContactPoint and to undertake quality assurance on the content of the CAFs.

The county-wide **Equality and Diversity** Coordinating Group organised a workshop in December 2008 which involved representatives from all Children's Trust partners. A mapping exercise was carried out which established there was inconsistency in recording within each agency, as well as between agencies. As a result a task group has been set up to agree a common approach and plan for further partner training in 2009/10.

An annual equality information report is now produced and shared with partnership agencies, which informs decision making and service developments.

In the 2008 Safer Schools Survey, carried out by the anti-bullying team, 75% of respondents thought that young people from different ethnic, faith or cultural backgrounds got on well in East Sussex and 71% said they had friends from different ethnic, faith or cultural backgrounds.

A new county-wide Hate Crime process has recently been developed which encompasses racist and homophobic incidents, as well as widening the scope to include incidents against people with disabilities and women.

2.3 What are our Key Areas for Improvement?

Strengthening the Children and Young People's Trust Partnership

The Children's Trust Partners have considered together what practical steps need to be taken to strengthen Partnership working in 2009-2010, taking into account national guidance, the 2008 Audit Commission report, "Are we there yet?" and the implementation of World Class Commissioning across the NHS and local government.

3. Be Healthy

- ❖ (CS 4) Promote good health for children and young people and reduce health inequalities
- ❖ (CS 5) Reduce teenage conception rates across the County

3.1 What are we trying to achieve?

We want children and young people to live free from the avoidable causes of poor health and unhappiness. In particular, we want to see:

- Better emotional well being and mental health for all children and young people;
- Better physical health and the adoption of healthy lifestyles by all children and young people;
- A reduction in risky behaviour by young people and fewer teenage conceptions; and
- Improved support for children and young people with complex health needs, promoting maximum independence and inclusion.

3.2 Where are we now?

In the 2008 APA, services to improve the mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people were graded as outstanding.

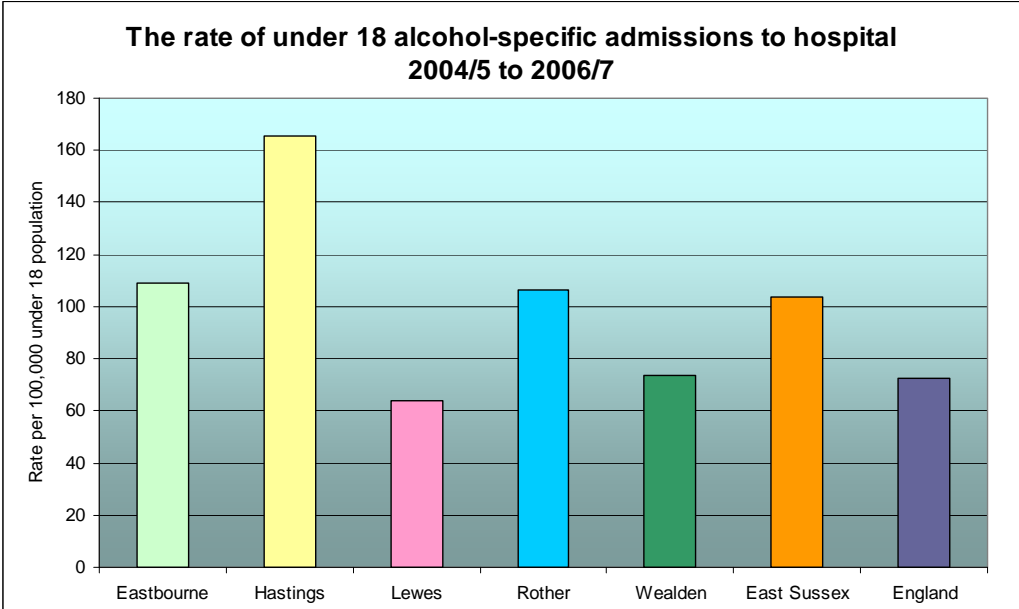
We continue to promote better **emotional well being and mental health** for children and young people through implementing the Healthy Care Strategy for Looked After Children, the Anti-Bullying Strategy, the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme and the Commissioning and Planning framework for Children and Young People's Emotional and Mental Health. In addition, a key priority of the Youth Development Service Strategy 2007-2010 is to ensure that the promotion of healthy life styles and access to relevant health services underpins all support provided through positive youth work interventions with young people. As well as promoting emotional health and wellbeing, this Strategy aims to help young people avoid risky behaviours by ensuring a wide geographical spread of sexual health services and easier access to support around substance misuse.

Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) has been extended through additional Primary Mental Health Workers and a helpline for professionals. The Tellus3 Survey in 2008 showed that 64.9% of children and young people in East Sussex enjoy good relationships with those around them, a proxy

measure for emotional health. This is above both the regional (62.1%) and national (63.3%) averages. The interim measure for Effectiveness of CAMHS for 2008/09 is the comprehensive CAMHS target which was previously a PAF indicator. East Sussex scores 4 (fully achieved) except services for 16/17 yr olds which score 3 (partly achieved).

The emotional and behavioural health of looked after children is assessed through the use of a 'primary carer' *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ) which covers details of emotional difficulties, conduct problems, hyperactivity or inattention, friendships and peer groups and also positive behaviour. For the 237 looked after children in East Sussex the average score was 16 (mid range). The individual scores for each child, however, varied due to the range of different needs. Those children scoring higher than 17 on their individual score are cross referenced with a CAMHS clinician to see whether they are known to their service – if not, a referral is made.

We have sought to **reduce risky behaviour** by young people through implementing our Drug and Alcohol strategies, providing targeted information, advice and guidance and, in particular, through the new Teenage Pregnancy Action Plan which was put in place for 2008/09.



The East Sussex average for under 19 alcohol-related emergency admissions to hospital in 2008/09 was 103.7 (the crude rate per 100,000 under 18 population) taken from Local Authority Alcohol profiles.

The under-18 alcohol-specific admissions to hospital between 2004/5 and 2006/7 in Hastings and Eastbourne are of particular concern, falling in the worst 10% and 20% of local authorities in England, respectively. The Children’s and Young People’s Trust have undertaken a comprehensive needs assessment of this area, including a more in-depth analysis of alcohol consumption across a number of alcohol related indicators. Some very marked patterns have emerged, for example, Eastbourne’s alcohol-related “months of life lost” ranking for females is the third highest in the country and Hastings’s alcohol-specific hospital admission for males is the ninth highest in the country. Conversely, Wealden’s rankings were among the lowest 20% in the country.

The percentage of young people reporting, through the Tellus3 Survey, frequent misuse of drugs/volatile substances and/or alcohol in 2008 was 10.7%. This is higher than the regional average (10.1%) but below the national average (10.9%).

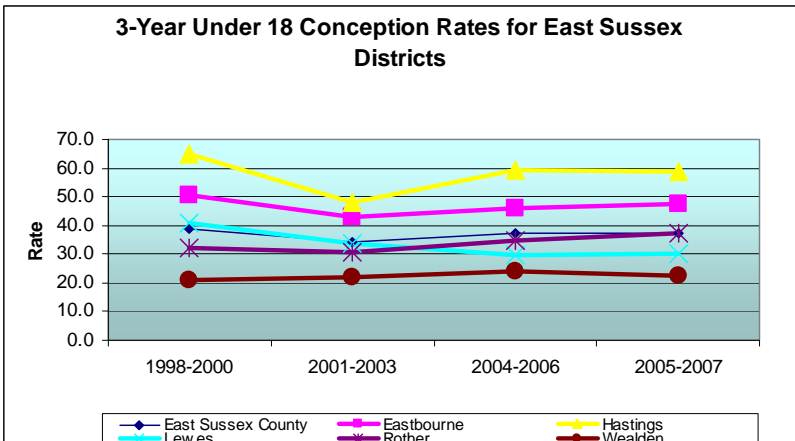
We recognise that alcohol misuse is a significant issue within East Sussex, and has a direct correlation to local teenage pregnancy rates, offending and anti social behaviour amongst young people and also admissions to local Accident and Emergency Services.

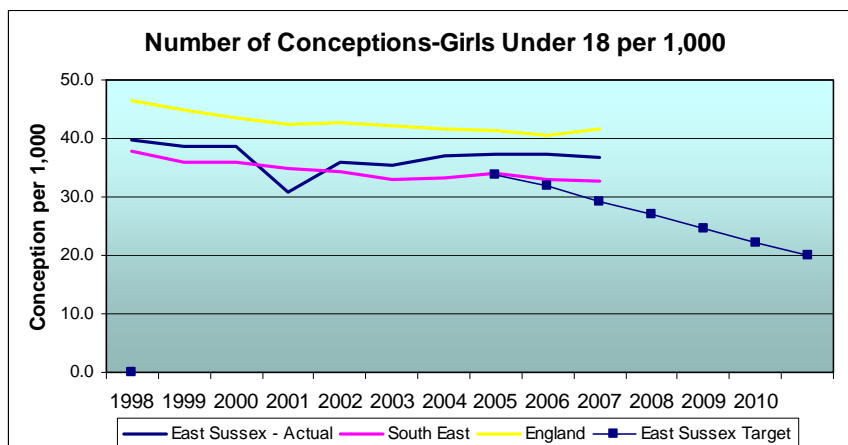
For 2009/10 the Young People’s Specialist Substance Misuse Treatment team will be taking a more detailed look at possible faults within existing screening and referral pathways into treatment. The new accident and emergency referral pathway and alcohol arrest referral pilot will also give access to a new mechanism of early identification of potential problematic use. These new points of screening will be used to identify areas in which young people’s substance misuse is remaining unidentified or not referred.

To further support our most complex and vulnerable young people, the Complex Case Plan (CCP) approach has been implemented; this approach delivers a flexible and holistic, multi-agency response for young people aged 11-17 years who have identified multiple needs that cannot be met by a single agency.

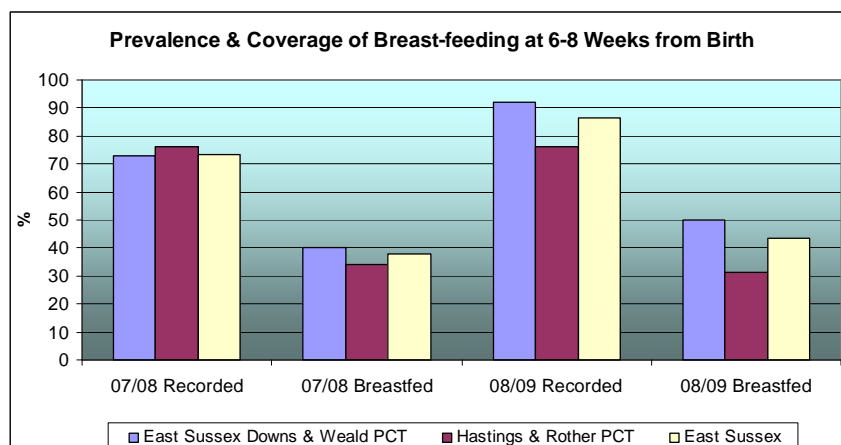
The commissioning arrangements for Chlamydia screening were changed in 2008/09 and a new national Chlamydia 0800 phone number launched. Postal kits were made available for young people on request and the PCT worked with GPs and pharmacists who participated in the generating of tests of young people. Part of this campaign was to send out letters to all 15 - 24 yr olds inviting them to come and take a test. An additional £42k investment programme has also been agreed by the PCT which includes a health promotion campaign on buses, radio and magazines across the county. As a result, the number of screenings is already rising and rates in under 24 year olds was 13% for Hastings & Rother and 12% for ESDW in 2008/09, compared to 4.4% and 4.6% respectively in 2007/8.

The County-wide Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board has been strengthened with all four key agencies represented. Data has been improved to give estimated figures at District level on a quarterly basis. This has allowed local targeting of activity in a more timely way and, as a result, additional Strategic Health Authority money was used to support youth outreach provision in rural towns in the west of the county. Increased funding was also secured to improve access to contraceptive services across East Sussex and provision was increased within schools, with ten now offering sexual health advice on-site. The provisional under-18 conception rate for 2007 is 36.8 per 1000 15-17 year old females. While rates are still higher than we had hoped, this reduction (from 37.2 per 1000 in 2006) compares well to the national trend of increasing rates. The overall baseline percentage change since 1998 is 7.6%.





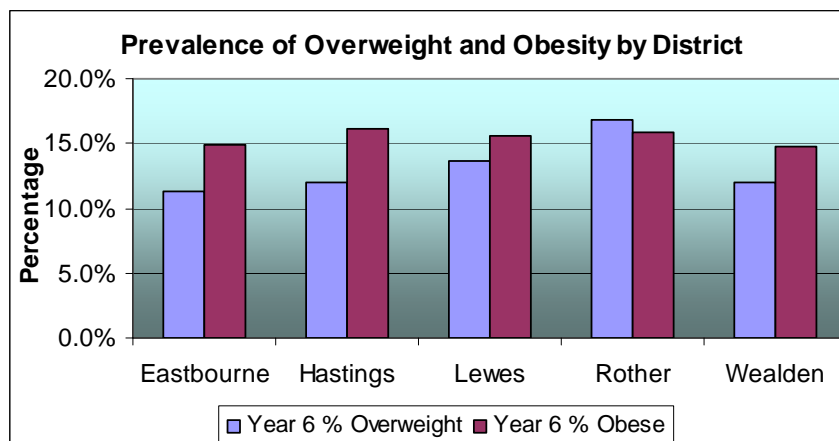
As at April 2009, the County average for breastfeeding coverage at 6-8 weeks was 86.3% and the prevalence of breastfeeding was 43.4%. However, these figures mask quite marked differences between the East and West of the County. Coverage and prevalence in the East Sussex Downs & Weald PCT area are 92.0% and 50.1% respectively, while in the Hastings and Rother PCT area they are 76.2% and 31.5%. This is partly due to a key post in the east of the county remaining vacant for 9 months, which has affected data collection. This situation has now improved following a successful recruitment campaign in March 2009.



Collection of data has also been affected by problems in recruitment of health visitors; the PCT now has a clear plan in place to address the shortfall in the east so that there will be a consistent approach to the reporting of breastfeeding data over the next year. Breastfeeding has also been included as a priority in the LAA with the aim to increase the proportion of mothers continuing to breastfeed after 6 weeks.

We have been working to achieve better physical health and the adoption of healthy lifestyles by children and young people through programmes such as the Child Health Promotion programme, the expert patient programme for children and young people, the Family Nurse Partnership Programme, the Healthy Schools programme, the Obesity Strategy, School Travel Plans and the Sports Development strategy.

The prevalence of obesity among pupils in reception year in East Sussex schools has reduced from the 2006/07 figure of 8.2% to 7.7% in 2007/08. However, in Year 6, the obesity figure was 15.4%, broadly in line with the 15.3% recorded in 2006/07.



100% of schools continue to participate in the Healthy Schools programme and 88% have already achieved the new National Healthy School status.

The overall figure for young people in East Sussex undertaking two hours of high quality PE in all key stages is 93% (academic year 2007/08).

Currently data on the take up of school lunches is only available for schools within the County Council contract. For these, primary school meal uptake is 32% and secondary school meal uptake is 29%. There are 8 out-of-contract primary schools and 13 secondary schools; these are not obliged to return information but we have made contact with the schools and expect that some figures will be available next year.

Data released in January 2009 shows the infant mortality rate in East Sussex to be 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births (2005-2007). This remains below the national rate (4.9) and above the regional rate (4.0) but, due to the small numbers involved, these differences are not considered to be statistically significant.

90.5% (313/346) of looked after children, who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, had their teeth checked by a dentist and had an annual health assessment during the year.

The strategy for children's palliative care was refreshed during the year to make sure it met the requirements of the key national standards in Better Care: Better Lives. This strategy has strong links with the Aiming High for Disabled Children's Short Breaks joint action plan. We have commissioned a review of services for children with chronic medical conditions and complex health needs as an addition to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The recommendations from this review will form the basis of a joint action plan.

3.3 What are our Key Areas for Improvement?

- ***National strategy for children and young people's health, "Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures"***

Planning for implementation locally will be a key focus, including strengthening information and support for parents, implementing the pilot Family Nurse Partnership programme in Hastings, continuing the anti-smoking campaign following the Youth Cabinet work. Planning for delivery of a Healthy Child programme for school aged children, tackling obesity, encouraging more take up of sport, rolling out the "You're Welcome" standards for young people's services and enhancing services and opportunities for disabled children and children with complex needs.

Implementation of our joint local commissioning plan for expanding short breaks for disabled children (as part of the “Aiming High for Disabled Children” programme) will be a key strand of work in this context.

- ***Childhood obesity***

Evidence from the 2008 annual exercise to measure the height and weight of children at age 4/5 and 10/11 (reception and Year 6) indicates that, in line with (slightly below) the national average, nearly a third of children in East Sussex aged 10/11 are either overweight or obese.

On the basis of the data we have identified areas within East Sussex for targeted action, beginning in 2009-2010. Raising awareness of the issue is critical and we will increase efforts to promote healthy lifestyles, contributing to the nation-wide “Change4life” programme.

- ***Teenage pregnancy***

Although there has been a reduction in teenage pregnancy from last year, the rates are still higher than envisaged. To support continued reduction, we will further improve the use of data at local level to inform service development and targeted work, ensure media messages are delivered to our most vulnerable groups of young people and target schools in hotspot wards.

Strong partnership working was a key characteristic of the success in 2007. We will ensure that the target is owned fully by all key stakeholders and not dependant on one single stakeholder, encouraging consistency and strengthening links with other key plans and developments.

- ***Breastfeeding***

In order to continue the upward trend of breastfeeding coverage in the county, a variety of measures will be implemented during 2009/10; these include:

- Universal use of the UNICEF DVD across the area and promotion through leaflets
- Continued training for all staff on the promotion of breastfeeding
- The implementation of the Family Nurse Partnership
- Work with primary care and children’s centres in promoting breastfeeding
- Continued development of peer support programmes
- Contact with new mothers within 48 hours of the transfer home or 48 hours after a home birth
- Encouragement of women from minority ethnic communities whose first language is not English to train as breastfeeding peer supporters

The data collection issues in 2008/09 will not continue, due to a successful recruitment campaign for Health Visitors and with the PCT confirming a clear structure for the reporting of breastfeeding data.

4. Stay Safe

- ❖ (CS 6) Protect children and young people from harm
- ❖ (CS 7) Reduce bullying and anti-social behaviour by and towards children and young people, wherever it occurs

- ❖ (CS 8) Improve support to children and young people on the edge of care, especially vulnerable teenagers.

4.1 What are we trying to achieve?

Keeping children and young people safe is a key priority. In particular, we want to see:

- Children and young people safe from bullying and discrimination;
- Earlier intervention to prevent more serious safeguarding and safety issues arising in the future;
- Vulnerable children in need of care protected, while minimising disruption to their lives, and emotional stability achieved for those children who need to be looked after;
- Children and young people safe from accidental injury and death;
- Children and young people protected from neglect and abuse, including domestic violence; and
- Children and young people safe from being victims of crime.

4.2 Where are we now?

In the 2008 APA, services to safeguard children and young people were graded as outstanding.

The Schools Forum agreed to provide funding to extend the **anti-bullying** service and we have continued to reduce the incidence of bullying experienced by children and young people through the Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Safety Action Plan, by implementing the Anti-Bullying Strategy and through projects such as the “Fear and Loving – Challenging Homophobia” Resource.

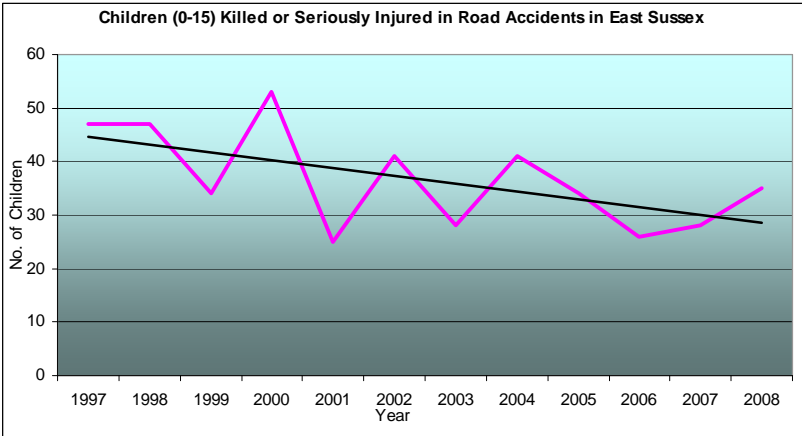
In the Tellus3 Survey (2008), 48.7% of respondents reported having been bullied in the last four weeks. This is below the regional average (50.4%) but slightly above the national average (48.0%) and is much higher than reported through the more comprehensive East Sussex Safer Schools Survey also carried out in 2008. That survey showed that only 29% of children and young people felt they had experienced bullying. The proportion of reported incidences of bullying which have stopped following intervention was 85% in 2008/09 (213/250).

A total of 173 schools reported racist incidents during Terms 1 and 2 of the 2008-2009 academic year. Last year for the same reporting period, only 156 schools reported so this represents a welcome increase in reporting, largely as a result of having a new worker in place.

During 2008/09 we continued to progress with **earlier intervention** to prevent more serious safeguarding and safety issues arising in the future through use of Contact Point and the Common Assessment Framework, implementation of strategies such as the Family Support Strategy and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Safety Action Plan, as well as programmes such as the roll out of Children’s Centres and Extended Schools. In addition to the core funding for children’s services, the

County Council dedicated some new funding to deal with the effects of increased numbers of children with child protection plans.

Provisional figures for 2008/9 revealed that child casualty figures increased in Eastbourne from one child in 2007 to nine children in 2008. There has also been an increase in pedestrian casualties (of all ages) from 15 in 2007 to 22 in 2008.

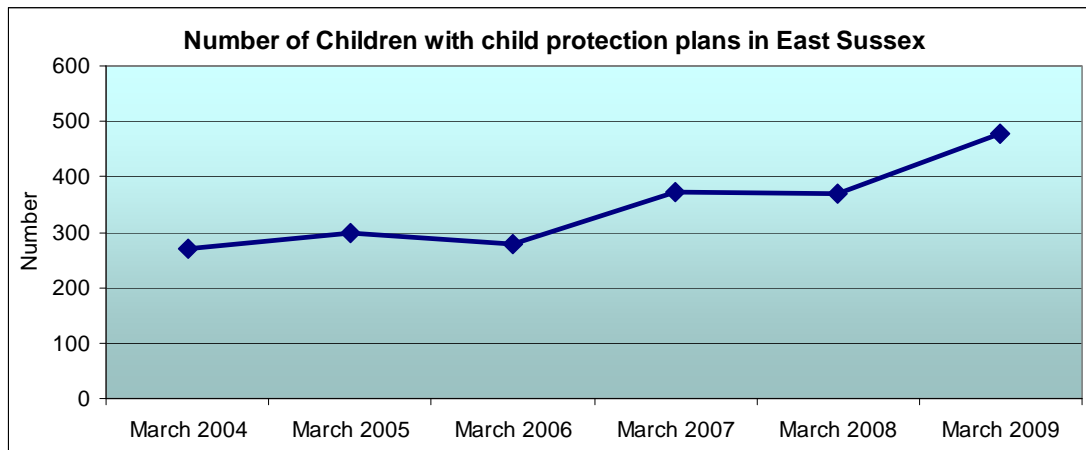


At the beginning of the year, provisional figures showed a rate of admissions to hospital due to unintentional and deliberate injuries to children to be 192.4 per 1,000. This was an increase of 8% on the previous year and included a 7% increase in all emergency admissions for that age group over the same period. This rate did reduce again during the year so that the annual outturn was 173.8 per 10,000; however, this was still significantly above the target of 152 per 1000.

We continued to improve our **support to vulnerable children and young people** on the edge of care, ensuring consistency of thresholds and processes to inform decision making about a child/young person becoming looked after. We also continued to integrate the work of social care, behaviour support and re-integration and Family Group Conference services.

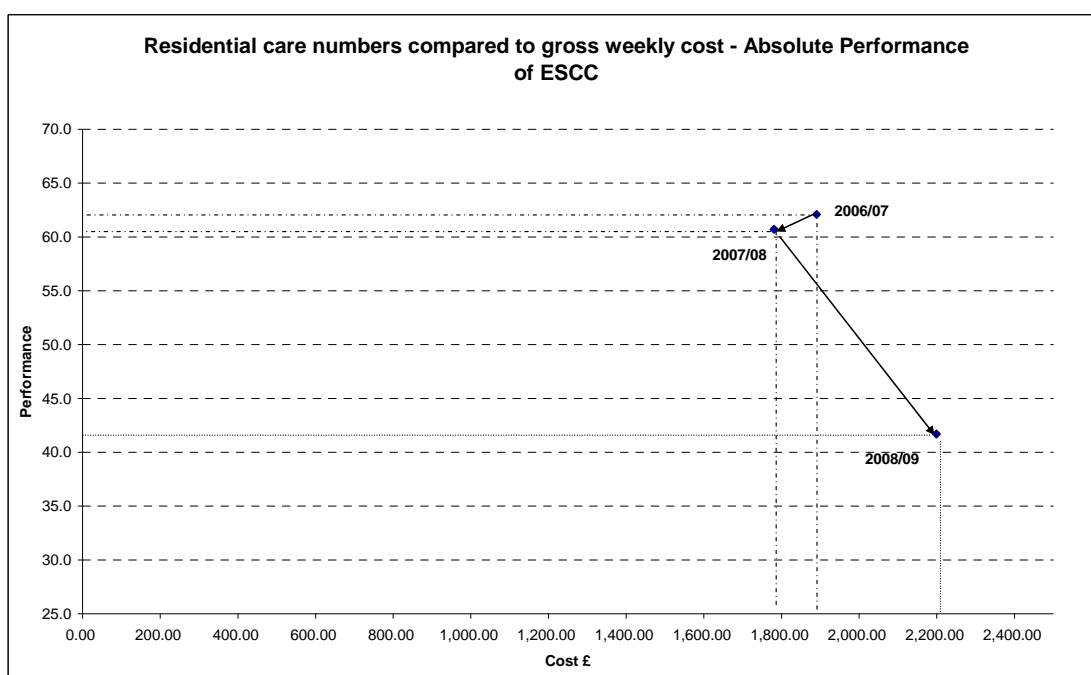
In the year to March 2009, 90.3% (4067/4503) of referrals to Children’s Social Care went on to initial assessment. 71.9% (2923/4067) of those initial assessments for children’s social care were carried out within 7 working days of referral, which compares with 81.3% achieved in the previous year. Although this seems to be a reduction it actually represents a significant (39%) increase in activity with an additional 1150 initial assessments completed. 82.9% (1312/1582) of core assessments for children’s social care were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement, which compares with 81.3% in the previous year.

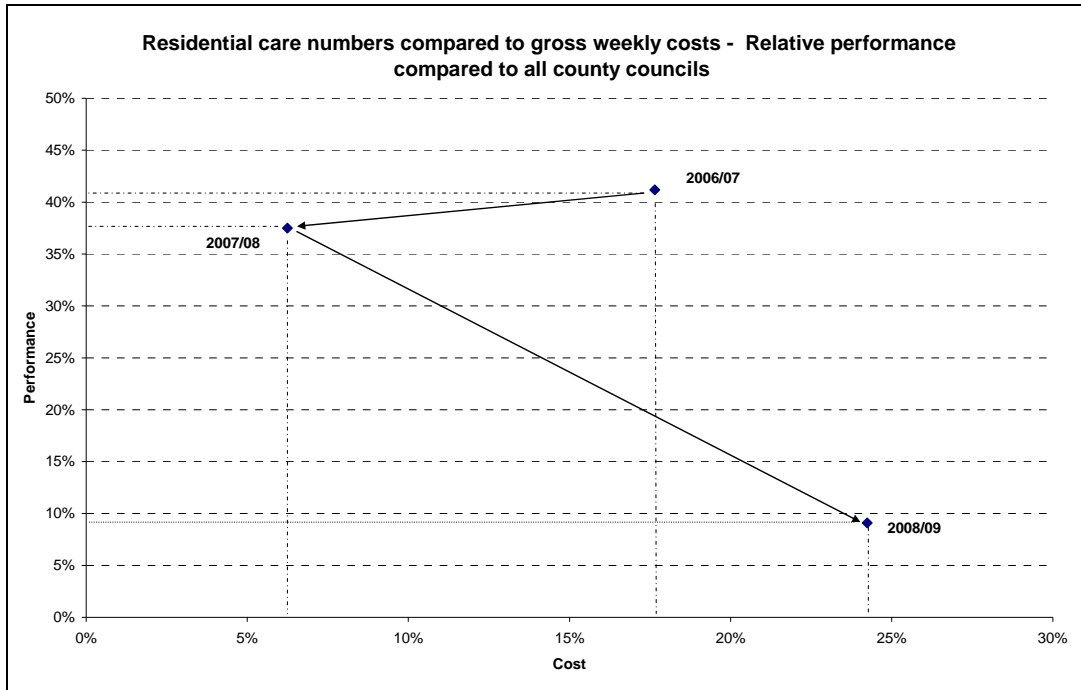
During 2008/09, 357 children had child protection plans that ceased, of which 31 had had that plan for two years or more. This equates to 8.7%. 464 children had new child protection plans started, of which 53 had previously had such a plan, equating to 11.4%. 99.7% (326/327) of child protection reviews took place on time during 2008/09. The remaining child's review was due in March 2009 but actually took place in April.



The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment (Nov 2008) identified that young people (aged 10 to 17) are at a proportionate higher risk of being victimised for a number of types of crime than the average population.

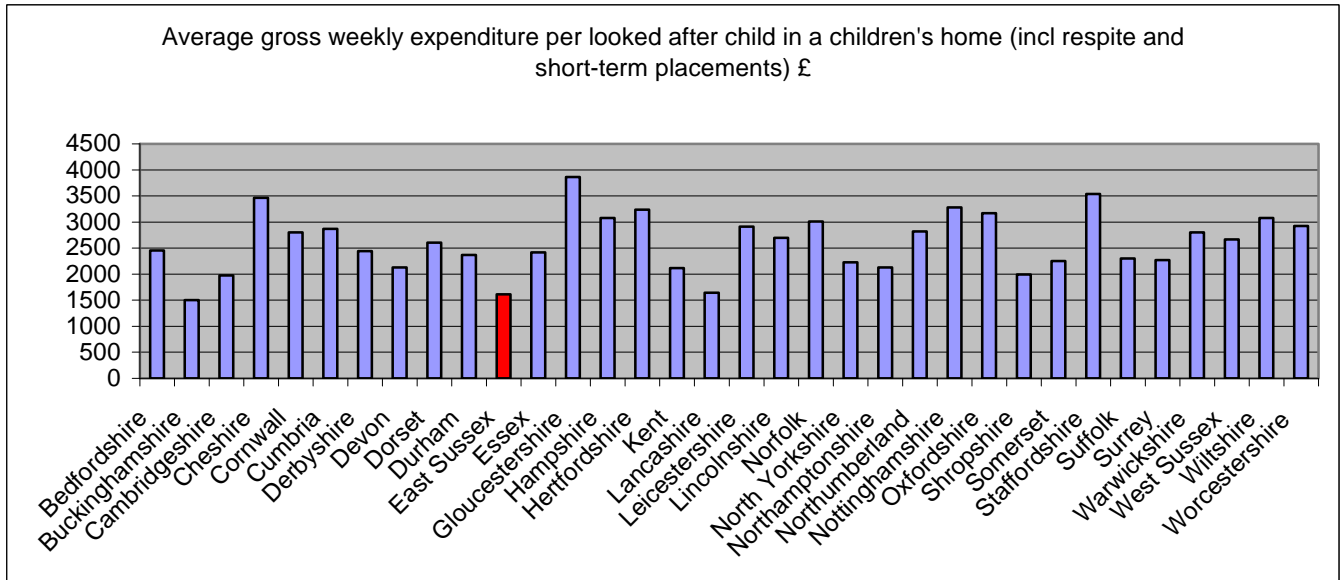
During 2008/09, 93.4% (399/427) of Looked After Children (LAC) cases were reviewed within the timescales required by the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 1991. 5.6% (26/461) of LAC had three or more placements during the year (Apr 08-Mar 09), which was an improvement on 8.1% for the previous year. 70.5% (136/193) LAC under 16 at 31 March 09, who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years, were either living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or had been are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together lasted for at least 2 years. This outturn is on a par with the previous year (70.9%) and shows that we are able to maintain stability of placement at times of increased activity. 62.5% (10/16) of LAC were adopted within 12 months of the decision that they should be placed for adoption. The majority of those adopted within these timescales were young babies and young children; we are aware that we need to look at ways of increasing the speed of adoptions for older and more difficult to place children.





The graphs above show that the percentage of LAC in residential care has fallen from the previous two years, with an average of 41 children in residential homes during 2008/9 compared to 60 in 2007/08. The amount we have spent on each child, including central service costs, has increased from £1,781 per week in 2007/08 to £2198.81 in 2008/9.

Nevertheless, our relative position in terms of expenditure compared to other County Councils has remained fairly low (see chart below). The most expensive Councils in 2008/09 were Gloucestershire and Staffordshire, spending £4,183 and £3,537 per child respectively. Despite our relatively low expenditure, services for Looked After Children were judged as Good by Ofsted in the 2007 Joint Area Review and so performance has not been adversely affected.



4.3 What are our Key Areas for Improvement?

- ***Safeguarding***

All Children's Trust partnerships across the country will be considering carefully the recommendations made by Lord Laming and the Government's response following the "Baby P" case in Haringey in 2008. In East Sussex, the statement on Safeguarding (Appendix One) highlights the key issues facing Children's Services and its partners.

5. Enjoy and Achieve

- ❖ (CS 9) Develop integrated services for children under 5 and their families through a network of children's centres and increase take up and quality of early years education
- ❖ (CS 10) Continue to raise educational achievement and aspirations at all key stages for children of all abilities, and reduce the attainment gap for children and young people from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds.

5.1 What are we trying to achieve?

We want all children and young people to enjoy their childhood and youth, and to develop the wide range of skills and understanding they need to make a successful contribution to a fast changing world. In particular, we want to see:

- Better play facilities for children, particularly in deprived areas;
- Higher take up of early years education and high quality provision for all;
- Improved opportunities for cultural and creative development for all children and young people;
- All children and young people achieving their potential at school, and experiencing a broad, stimulating curriculum/activities both at school and beyond;
- A reduction in persistent absence; and
- A reduction in the numbers of children and young people excluded from school (permanently or fixed term).

5.2 Where are we now?

In the 2008 APA, services to improve enjoyment and achievement of children and young people were graded as good.

We have worked to improve **play experiences** through close working with District and Borough councils and local children. The Play Pathfinder Project is seeking to improve and develop play opportunities for children and young people across East Sussex. This project will be investing almost £2.1m of capital funding to improve and develop 35 local play sites across the County, as well as 1 Adventure Play Park in Hastings Ore Valley.

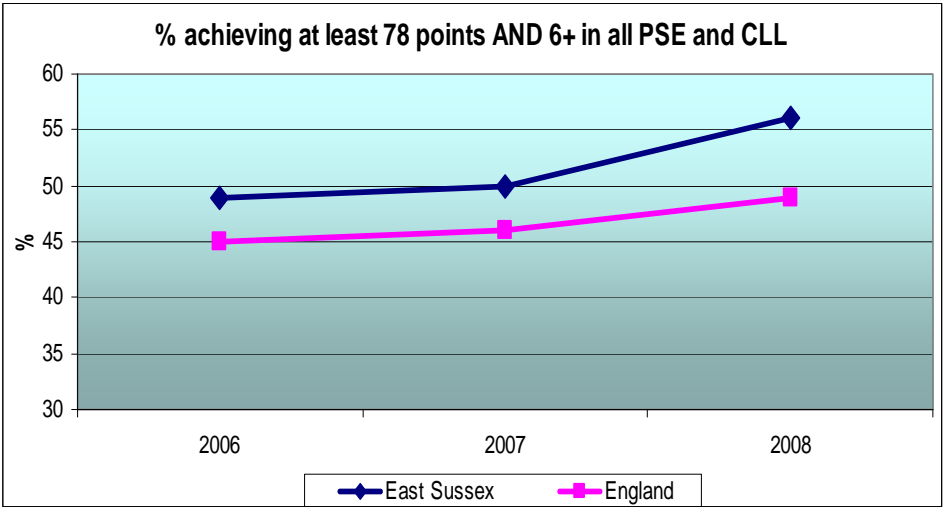
The Tellus 3 Survey in 2008 showed that only 44.4% of children regarded play facilities in their area to be satisfactory or good (NI 199). This is below the regional average (46.2%) and narrowly below the national average (44.7%). Places to go and things to do, together with development of the County Play Strategy, are particular priorities for the Children’s Trust in 2009/10.

We have been **promoting cultural opportunities** for children and young people through engagement with Creative Partnerships, which continues to run programmes involving East Sussex schools, and by encouraging the cultural sector (e.g. museums and art galleries) to engage with schools through the Culture Shared Programme.

We have worked to increase **take up of Early Years nursery education places** in our most deprived neighbourhoods through a mapping exercise between the Early Years Education Entitlement (EYEE) Headcount and the Children’s Index to identify pockets of children not taking up EYEE. Targeted outreach activities have been undertaken via the 28 operating Children’s Centres (NI 109). In addition, a new partnership effort began during the year to achieve a greater take up of formal childcare by low income working families (NI 118). This is measured through the uptake of the childcare element of working tax credit. At 15%, East Sussex take up is currently around 2% below the national average. Job Centre Plus and the District and Borough Councils have developed an action plan with the County Council to increase take up to at least the national average by 2011.

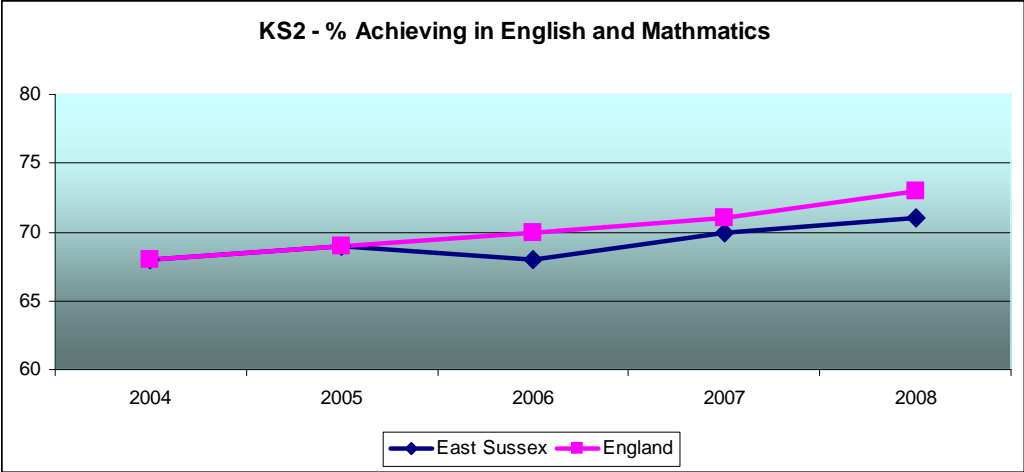
56% of children achieved at least 78 points across the **Early Years Foundation Stage** (NI 72), with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy; this is a significant increase of 6% from 2007. In addition, the average score per pupil was 7 points across all aspects of the Foundation Stage - an increase of 0.1% since 2007. East Sussex also compares well with the 50% statistical neighbour average and the 48.5% national average.

The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest at Foundation Stage was 31.6% (NI 92); while this represents a clear improvement of 0.6% over the previous year we remain committed to making a significant reduction in this gap in 2009/10.



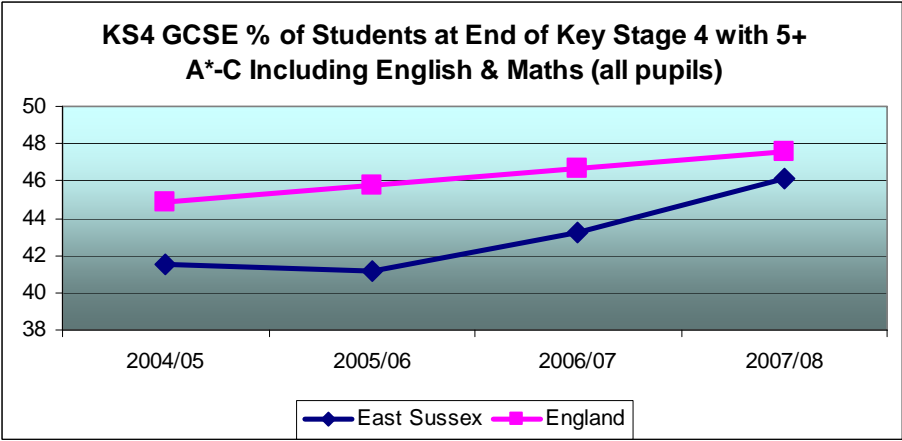
Results of the 2008 **Key Stage 2** tests for 11-year-olds in East Sussex show that 71% of children achieved at Level 4 or above in both English and mathematics at

Key Stage 2 (NI 73). While this is below the national average of 73%, it represents a 3% improvement over 2 years.



After a programme of individual monitoring and support, 45% of Looked After Children reached Level 4 in English at KS2 (NI 99), and 40% reached Level 4 in mathematics (NI 100).

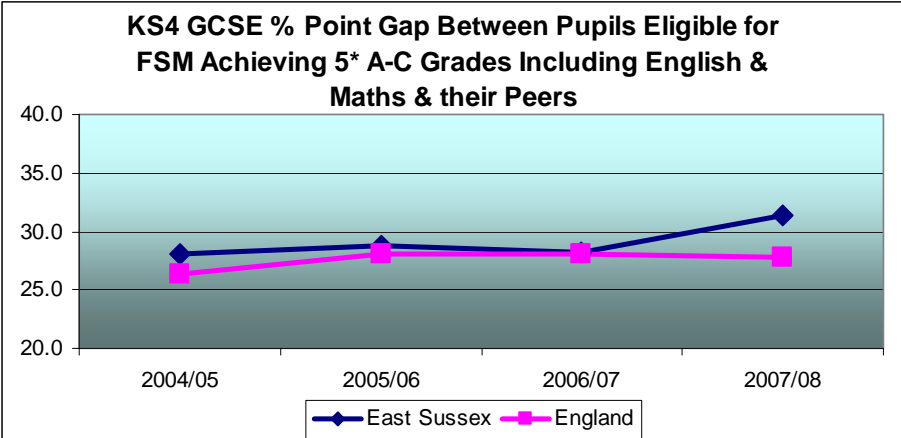
At 46.1%, the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A* - C grades at GCSE or equivalent, including English and mathematics (NI 75) was the highest ever in East Sussex and was above the national rate of improvement, narrowing the gap between the authority and the national figure (47.3%). However, the East Sussex attainment figure remains the lowest of our statistical neighbours, although the rate of progress was faster than all but one statistical neighbour.



All of the schools in the National Challenge predict that outcomes for 2009 will be above the floor target; a realistic prediction given that for those schools that undertook early entry examinations in November 2008, results are above early entry outcomes for the previous year. Predictions for all schools indicate a further increase next year.

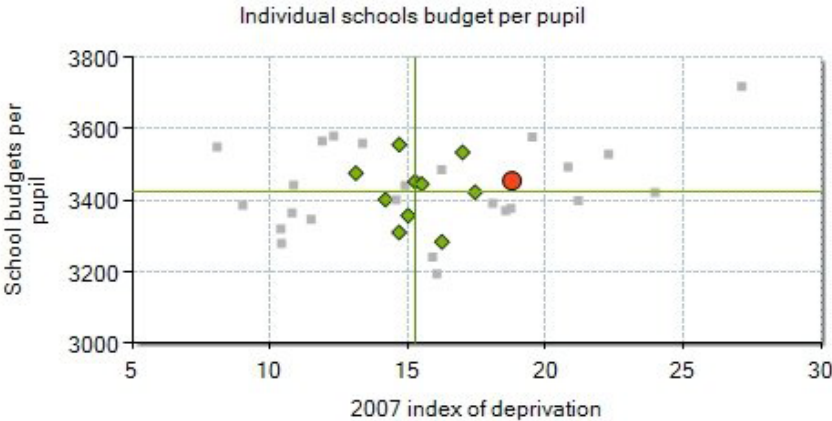
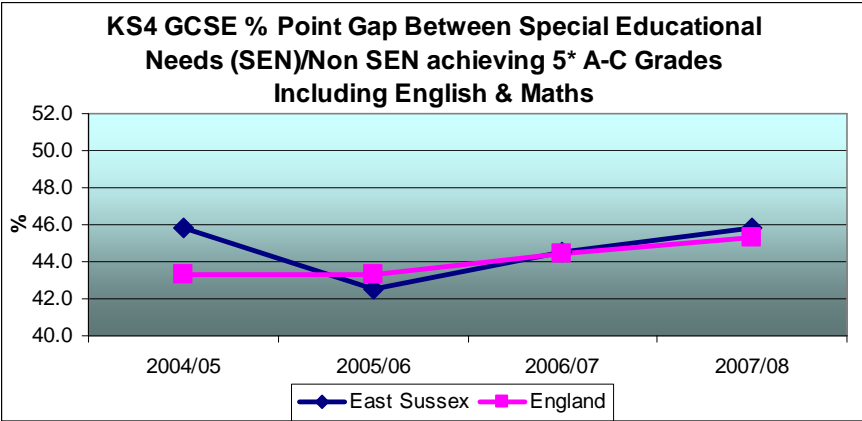
In the 2007/08 academic year, there were 4 schools where less than 30% of pupils achieved 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE (or equivalent) including English and mathematics (NI 78). This represented a reduction of 2 schools in the category since the 2006/07 academic year. In particular, the Federation of three Hastings schools in the 2007/08 academic year has started the process of improving attainment in one of the lowest attaining parts of the County. In the 2008 exams, the aggregate

performance of the Hastings Federation Schools was 20.1% for 5 A*-C GCSEs (including English and Mathematics) and 36.4% for 5 A*-C GCSEs. Early indications are that the Federation is making good progress on future attainment with the results for those students entered early for English and mathematics in 2009 for Hillcrest and The Grove (the two most underperforming schools) already exceeding the percentage of students achieving grade C or above in 2008.



At all Key Stages there were still marked differences in attainment of children and young people in **vulnerable groups**. 8.33% of Looked After Children achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics in the 2007/08 academic year (NI 101) and the achievement gap between pupils eligible for FSM and their peers achieving the expected level at KS 2 and 4 (NI 102) was 25% for English and 21% for mathematics; 31.3% achieved 5 A*-C GCSE including English and mathematics.

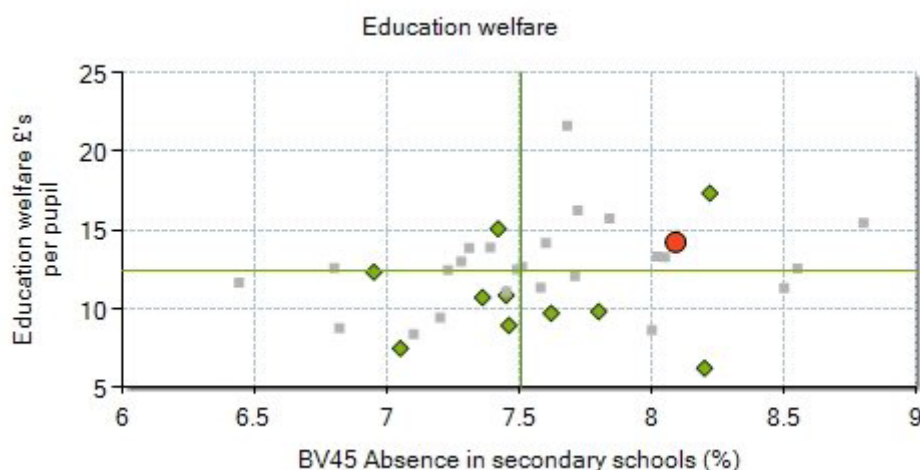
The SEN / non-SEN gap at Key Stage 4 achieving 5 or more A*- C GCSE (or equivalent) including English and mathematics (NI 105) was 46.2%.



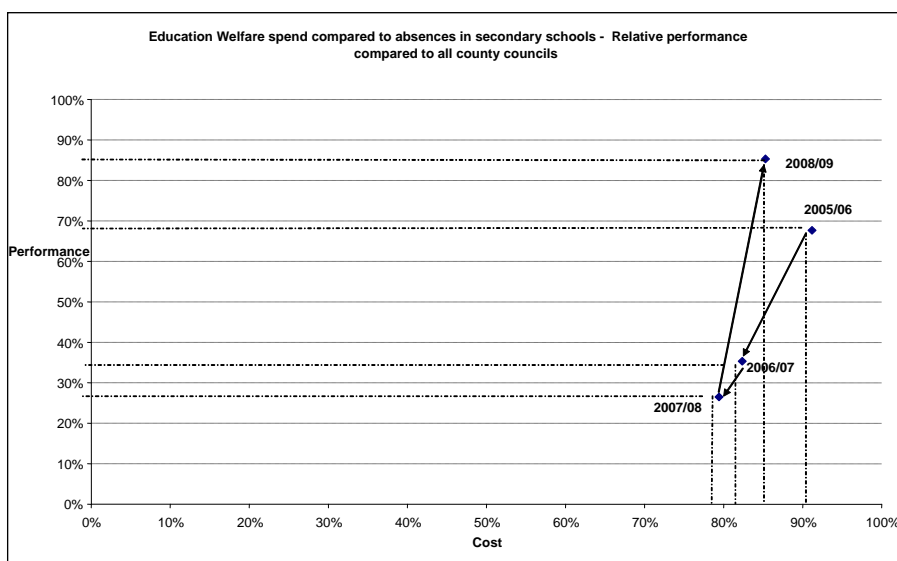
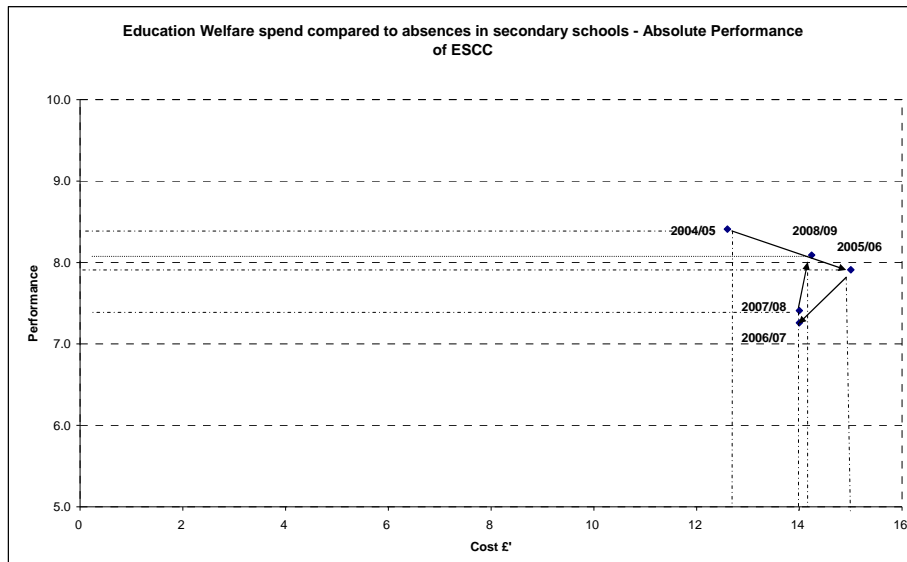
The chart above shows the relationship between budget per pupil and deprivation. Although it shows that East Sussex' budget per pupil is higher than statistical neighbours, it is important to note that the Dedicated Schools Grant (Schools Formula Spending Share) is weighted heavily towards councils that have high levels of deprivation. Thus, East Sussex's relative position in terms of deprivation explains its higher budgets

In East Sussex, there continue to be significant variations in individual school performance on **attendance**, both in primary and secondary schools. The latest attendance data (Term 3 of the 2008/09 academic year) shows overall secondary absence across the county to be 8.2% and overall primary absence to be 6.1%, although terms 3 and 4 traditionally reflect an increase in pupil absences due to seasonal illness. The secondary school persistent absence rate (NI 87) at term 3 was 5.8%. All secondary schools in the county now identify persistently absent pupils termly to ensure individual action planning and strategies are in place to support young people in their educational achievements.

The DCSF has a threshold of 7% for secondary school persistent absentees (those pupils missing 20% or more of the school year). At the start of the academic year 2008/9, East Sussex had 8 secondary schools identified as being above the threshold. At the end of term 1, they reported a collective total of 563 pupils persistently absent; however through targeted action that figure was down to 509 pupils by term 3. Although not targeted by the DSCF, we also identify persistently absent pupils in every primary school at the end of each term and support is then targeted to those schools.

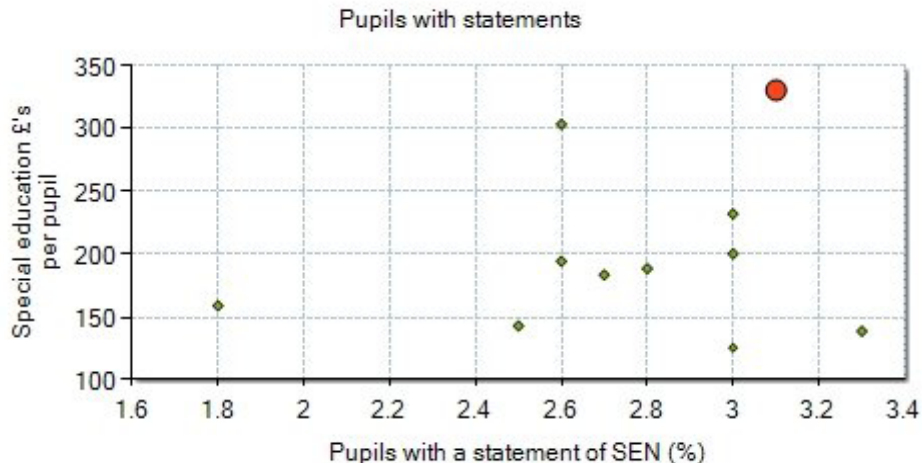


For the academic year 2007/08 (NI114), 0.09% of pupils (57) were permanently excluded and there were 3703 fixed term exclusions of less than 5 days, representing a decrease of 13% over the previous year. One of the contributing factors to the reductions in permanent exclusions was the increase in managed transfers (where pupils at risk of permanent exclusions are placed at another school); there were 52 over the course of the financial year 2008/9, an increase in 57.8% from the previous year.



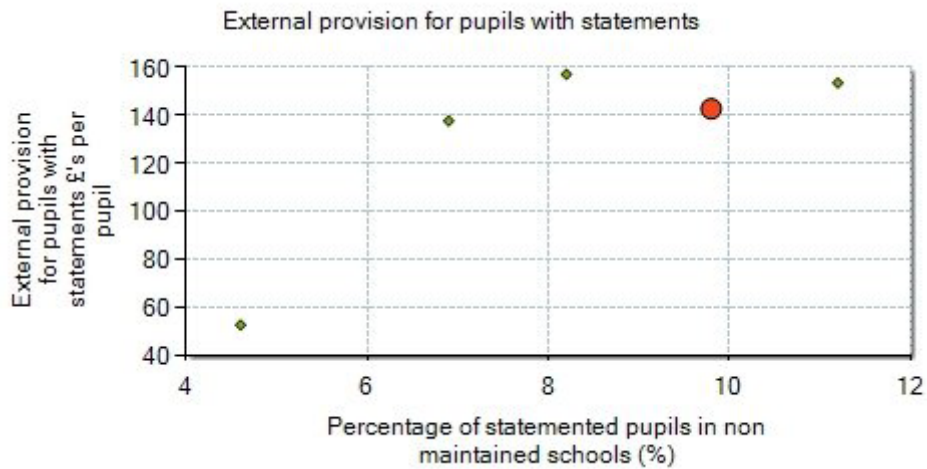
The graphs above show that our education welfare spend increased significantly between 2004/05 and 2005/06, while performance dropped. However, this trend has been reversed with a fall in expenditure to £14 per pupil in 2007/08, which has been maintained for the last financial year. At the same time, there was a rise in performance by the end of 2008/09. Our relative spend compared to other County Councils has also improved – we were the second most expensive in 2005/06 but are now the seventh most expensive

At all Key Stages there are still marked differences in attainment of children and young people in **vulnerable groups**, such as those who have special education needs. Reducing these gaps remains a priority.



The graph above shows expenditure per pupil with a statement of SEN for our statistical neighbour local authorities. Caution should be used when making comparisons with local authorities in other regions as previous analysis has shown that the East Sussex profile in relation to special needs is much more similar to our geographical neighbour authorities rather than our statistical neighbours.

In the south east region there is a high number of independent and non-maintained special schools (INMSS), many of which are national centres of excellence in their field. These schools attract families from across the country to move into the region, many into East Sussex. This means that East Sussex faces a much higher than average demand for external fee charging placements. The graph below compares East Sussex with its geographical neighbours.



The number of placements in INMSS has shown a gradual decline over recent years but the complexity of need of the children has increased due to medical advances and increases in autism, causing the average cost of a placement to rise. However, when considering value for money it is also important to consider the quality of the provision. Since January 2008, 99 East Sussex schools have been inspected by OFSTED. In 97% of these, the progress of children with SEN was judged to be at least satisfactory and in 70% the progress was good or outstanding.

5.3 What are our Key Areas for Improvement?

- ***Special Educational Needs***

The SEN Strategy includes a number of actions to seek to reduce placements in INMSS where appropriate. The key action has been to begin to establish a number of specially resourced facilities attached to mainstream schools. When the full network is in place and the facilities have been operational sufficiently long enough to achieve high levels of parental confidence, it will lead to a range of more appropriate local placements for young people with high functioning autism.

In order to monitor and ensure good value for money from placements in INMSS, the Department will continue to implement its comprehensive monitoring policy, working in close partnership with the network of other local authorities to challenge over-inflation fee increases if proposed by these schools. In the past this work has been shown to be effective in restraining unreasonable fee increases and has been accepted by the Treasury as allowable Gershon savings.

- ***Take up of Early Years nursery education places in our most deprived neighbourhoods***

To support analysis of the take-up of EYEE, a detailed research project will be completed during 2009/10 looking at the details behind the trends in take-up and Foundation Stage outcomes and also links to our most deprived communities. This is a joint project with the Early Years, Childcare and Extended Schools Services and the Planning, Performance and Information Management team.

Alongside this project new Outreach staff attached to the Family Information Service will expand contact with families in identified communities where EYEE take-up is low. They will work closely with Children's Centres, Health Visitors, parent information contacts and other community projects. The new flexible offer for EYEE in disadvantaged communities will start to be piloted from September 2009 - this pilot will increase the hours available and allow parents to better use these hours to meet the needs of their families. In addition a very small number (140) of 2 year olds in very vulnerable circumstances will be able to receive 10 hours free Early Years Education Entitlement.

- ***Primary education***

At **primary level**, strategies to secure continued improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining level 4 for English and mathematics are based on a universal, targeted and specific support offer, taking into account national, geographical, school and pupil group variance. Actions for all schools include a range of locally and nationally designed continuous professional development opportunities, clear messages and direction from the primary team and a drive to improve the quality of teaching. Specific actions that focus on improving literacy include the development of a cross phase 'Literacy for Life' strategy and full engagement in the national 'Every Child a Reader' (ECaR) strategy. To date, a consultant and a teaching centre have been agreed and the programme is being developed in a consortium with neighbouring authorities. The School Improvement Service is also recruiting and training leading teachers who will work in identified schools to develop teaching of mathematics and literacy through a coaching model.

Targeted support includes the continued implementation of the 'Making Good Progress' pilot, to support the development of assessment and single level testing in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. It also provides one-to-one tuition for pupils who are stuck or falling behind when assessed against prior attainment or who are looked after children. The pilot is in its second year and, due to its success, has been

extended for a further year. One strand of the pilot, one-to-one tuition is currently being rolled out in Key Stage 2 to schools that are not currently in the pilot. A national roll out for all schools is due in September 2009. East Sussex is a lead authority and is held in very high regard by the DCSF; it will share best practice with neighbouring authorities that have not been part of the pilot.

In order to address the low expectations of some headteachers, training has been delivered to school improvement partners (SIPs) and headteachers on target setting. Actions for all schools include support for middle level leaders to secure monitoring of data, coaching support to teachers in order to build sustainability, support for intervention strategies for pupils who are identified as under performing and support for curriculum provision at both key stages. Targeted support includes the provision of consultant headteachers to support schools through a coaching model and the appointment of two Senior Advisory Headteachers to work alongside or in place of headteachers.

Specific strategies for improvement include the commissioning of support for identified schools. 23 schools that are identified as 'Schools Requiring Additional Support' (SRAS) are in receipt of a support plan, with a bespoke package of support tailored to each school's needs. Annual support plans have been introduced to replace the 6-month model previously used. This facilitates better strategic planning for the school in deployment of resources to gain maximum impact. The plan is compiled in consultation with school leaders and usually includes the Chair of Governors and outside agencies. A 'residency' model of support is currently offered to 3 schools aimed at improving quality of teaching and learning. The project involves the modelling of planning and delivery for a small group of selected teachers with feedback and follow up for leaders during an intensive week.

- ***Secondary education***

At **secondary level** two executive headteachers have been appointed to the authority to lead two models of partnerships: the Hastings federation and the collaboration between The Bishop Bell and The Causeway. Both leaders are inspirational and have very high expectations, which are in turn being modelled for other headteachers in the authority. Training has been delivered to school improvement partners (SIPs) and headteachers on target setting and a new knowledge creation group, 'Good to Outstanding' has been set up to encourage headteachers to work together in understanding how to set and achieve high expectations.

Strategies to overcome recruitment and retention challenges include the appointment of directors of learning who operate across all three schools in the federation in Hastings, video conferencing for teacher training, sharing of staff in collaborations between schools, master classes led by an expert teacher, carousel teaching, joint teaching with consultants, the introduction of 'golden handcuffs' – a £10,000 offer to newly appointed teachers in National Challenge schools if they agree to stay for 3 years - and the offer of a Masters level qualification for all newly qualified teachers. The proposals to open two academies in Hastings and a new school in Bexhill are also expected to attract applicants for new positions.

Actions for all schools include support for middle level leaders to secure monitoring of data, coaching support to teachers in order to build sustainability, support for intervention strategies at Key Stage 4 for pupils who are identified as under

performing and support for curriculum provision at both key stages. Targeted support includes: the provision of a consultant head teacher and a mentor for each of the seven new headteachers; a commissioned 'residency model' of intensive support in order to audit provision for accurate teacher assessment in core subjects and to coach teachers in the use of assessment for learning in lessons and arrangements for formal and informal collaborations between schools.

Targeted support is also provided through the implementation of the National Challenge, which includes 9 of the 27 secondary schools that were below or at risk of falling below the 30% floor target for pupils gaining 5+ A*-C grades including English and mathematics. Each school has an accredited National Challenge Adviser who provides up to 20 days' support for the leadership team and negotiates an integrated services raising attainment plan (RAP). The National Challenge provides enhanced resources and funding to each school based on the level of risk. To date, the funding has resourced additional leadership posts, learning mentors, Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs), Easter revision classes, and additional English and mathematics tuition.

The 'Gaining Ground' initiative has identified three schools which have under performed historically and they will receive additional funding and additional School Improvement Partner allocation. Two of the schools have partner schools to assist in the development of collaborative school improvement strategies.

Specific strategies for schools include intensive support as determined through a support plan, negotiated with the head teacher and the School Improvement Service. Network meetings for subject leaders offer opportunities to share best practice.

6. Economic Wellbeing

- ❖ (CS 11) Increase the choices for vocational learning opportunities for children and young people aged 14-19 and reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training.

6.1 What are we trying to achieve?

We want to minimise dependence on benefits for families, by supporting parents and carers to work, thereby increasing their income. We also want all young people to stay in education, employment & training until they are at least 18 years old. When they leave school we want them to have the skills they need to prosper. In particular, we want to see:

- Significantly fewer children and young people living in poverty and all children and young people living in decent housing;
- All young people able to access a broader, personalised range of education and training opportunities until the age of 18, supported by good information, advice and guidance; able to achieve well and to manage their learning and personal development; and
- Many more employers engaging with and participating in the planning and provision of learning opportunities.

6.2 Where are we now?

In the 2008 APA, services to improve the economic wellbeing of children, young people and their families were graded as good.

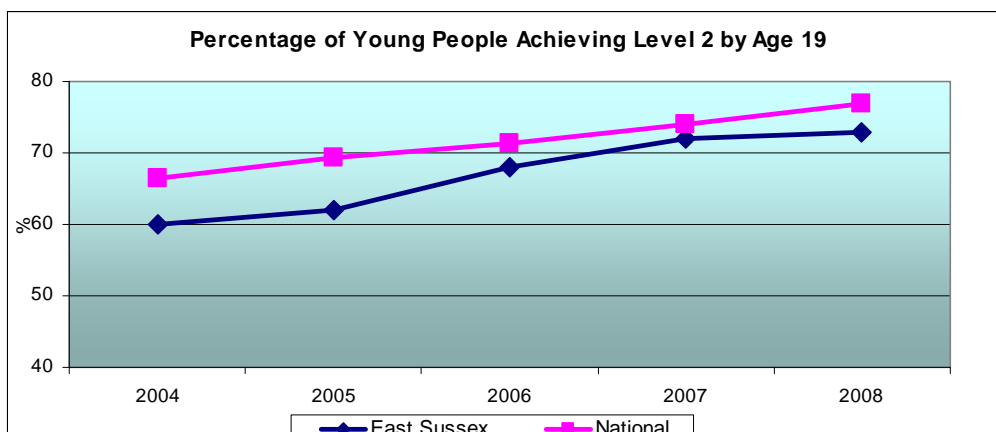
We have worked in partnership with the District and Borough Councils, through the new County Youth Homelessness strategy and the local Housing Strategies, to tackle child poverty and homelessness and recognise the different issues which exist across the boroughs.

The Child Poverty Bill was introduced to the House of Commons on 11 June 2009 and enshrines in legislation the commitment by the government to eradicate child poverty by 2020. Although in relative terms child poverty in East Sussex appears to be improving, the actual number of children living in low income households has risen by over 800 to more than 17,000 (18.5% of the age group. These children and young people are concentrated in the coastal towns of Hastings (29.7%) and Eastbourne (23.6%).

There has been a significant reduction in the number of young people accepted by local housing departments as homeless to 38 in 2008/09.



82.4% of care leavers had been found suitable accommodation (NI 147) as at the end of March 2009, although there were still two young people for whom suitable accommodation was being sought.



We have increased the range of choices for vocational and educational learning opportunities in order to encourage young people to stay in education, employment and training. Programmes included the 14-19 Plan, the Employer Engagement Strategy, the Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy, the new qualifications and curriculum pathways, the new Connexions contracts and the September Guarantee.

In the 2007/08 academic year, there was further improvement in the percentage of young people achieving Level 2 and 3 qualifications by the age of 19 (NIs 79 and 80).

The proportion of young people achieving Level 2 at 19 (equivalent to 5+A*-C grade GCSEs) rose from 72% in 2007 to 73% in 2008, narrowing the gap with the national figure which was 77% in 2008. For Level 3 in 2008, the figure was 47%. We know, however, that young people living in many of the coastal towns and in low income families were under represented in this group.

15% of Free School Meal (FSM) eligible learners progressed from Level 2 at 15 to Level 3 at 18, against 42% for non-FSM eligible learners (NI 81). This is a gap of 27% and provides a baseline for future planning. 16% of FSM eligible learners progressed from below Level 2 at 15 to Level 2, against 14% for non-FSM eligible learners (NI 82). 52% of FSM eligible learners were still below a Level 2 qualification in comparison to 22% of non-FSM eligible learners and this gap of 30% provide another baseline for planning in this area.

In addition to the core funding for Children's Services, the Schools Forum provided funding to address the 14-19 agenda, including the transfer of 16-19 funding from the LSC and implementing 14-19 diplomas.

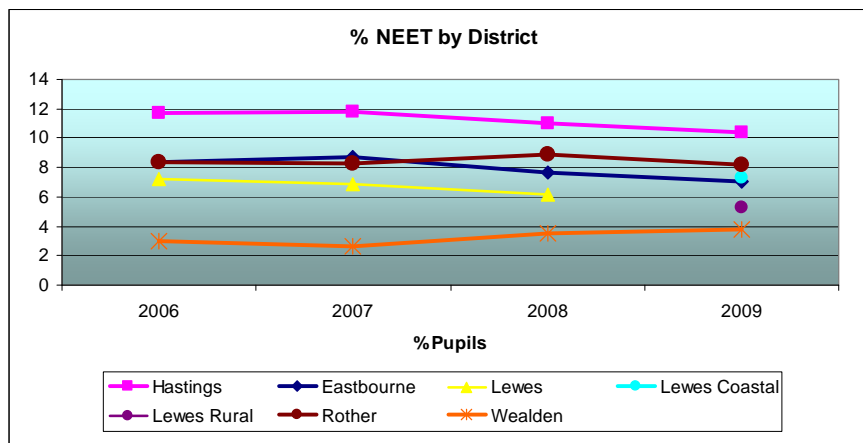
Indicative figures for March 2009 show 411 new learners aged 14-16 taking up diplomas (compared to 244 in Sept 2008) and 672 new learners post-16 (compared to 65 in Sept 2008) (NIS 90). We are aware there is still resistance in some schools to diploma provision and less interest amongst parents and communities for the new qualification. Distribution of 14-19 Targeted Capital Funding (TCF), which provides additional funding to support the provision of facilities for the delivery of 14-19 diplomas, has been planned in collaboration with Local Area Partnership Boards and an entitlement curriculum planning group has been initiated to develop a strategy to increase uptake of routes other than GCSE/GCE. A 14-19 Plan will be produced for distribution to schools and communities in Autumn 2009 to raise awareness of and interest in Diploma opportunities.

The September Guarantee was implemented successfully in 2008, with 78% of all 17 year olds receiving an offer of education or training (NI 91). These figures compare favourably with our geographical neighbours (West Sussex: 65% Brighton & Hove: 76%). As at January 2009, the percentage of 17 year olds in learning continued to remain above target, with 81.63% of all 17 year olds in learning.

The latest figures from the Education Deprivation domain rank show a growth of 5.7% in higher education applicants from high deprivation areas from 2004 to 2006 across Sussex (NI 106). This compares to a smaller increase of 3.2% in low deprivation areas. There was a significant drop (-10.6%) in 2006 of applicants from the lower Socio-Economic Groups (SEGs) compared to the previous year but there was also a -6.7% drop from higher SEGs in the same year, which suggests that this is attributable to the introduction of variable fees. Despite this drop, there has still been a positive growth of 1.1% in applicants from lower SEGs since 2003, at the same time as there has been a decline in applications from higher SEGs. The gap between the lower and higher SEGs is narrowing - it stood at 52.6% in 2006, compared to 54.8% in 2003.

We have implemented the Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy and pursued campaigns such as "You can do it" to raise aspirations. We have also engaged with many more employers to ensure their participation in the planning and provision of learning opportunities.

In 2008/09 the percentage of young people aged 16-18, who were **NEET** (not in education, employment or training) was 7.2%, a reduction from the 2007/08 level of 7.7%.



We know that young people who had not achieved Level 2 qualifications, those with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), teenage mothers, young offenders, those living in many of the coastal towns and in low income families are over represented in this group. The March 2009 adjusted NEET figures for sub-areas showed that Hastings continues to have the worst NEET problem (10.97%), followed by Rother (8.33%); the Lewes District coastal area (8.01%) and the Eastbourne Downs area (7.77%). Lewes District rural area and Wealden both have NEET levels below 5%. The percentages have fallen slightly since February, when it was identified that 16% fewer young people (400) than expected had entered employment without training, probably as a consequence of the economic downturn. The data suggests that some of those young people have been found alternative routes, such as workplace training, and analysis continues to better understand the patterns of joining and leaving. 70.6% (24/34) of care leavers were in employment, education or training in the period April 2008 to March 2009 (NI 148) and 70.4% of young offenders (NI 45).

4157 young people took up work placements in the 2007/08 academic year (75% of the cohort). This included 53 placements in ESCC. So far in the 2007/08 academic year, 98 placements accessing work experience have been taken up at ESCC and a co-ordinator has now been appointed to ensure vulnerable young people are well supported while on placement.

There were 4422 active employers on the VT Enterprise database during 2008, an increase of 26% on the previous year. This included employers offering work placements and undertaking work-related learning activities in schools and colleges. Resources for high quality placements have been shared with district councils, schools and the NHS; the pan-Sussex online employer management system database is also now being populated. This will produce much improved data on work with employers from September 2009.

In October 2008, validated Learning Skills Council data indicated that 99 learners were involved in a Young Apprentice programme across East Sussex. 11 were placed in the Hastings/Rother Local Area Partnership Board (LAPB) area, 45 in the Eastbourne/Hailsham Federation area, 10 in Lewes Rural, 22 on the Western Coastal strip and 11 in Wealden. Each LAPB has been commissioned to run further Youth Apprenticeships from September 2009, each supporting a total of 83 learners.

2006/08 pan-Sussex data showed that 65.3% of young people starting apprenticeships achieved at the end and 75.4% of learners completed the course.

6.3 What are our Key Areas for Improvement?

- ***Youth homelessness and wider housing issues***

In 2008/09, East Sussex as part of the Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT), developed a county-wide strategy for preventing and responding effectively to youth homelessness. In 2009/10 the implementation of the strategy will begin, a task which will require sustained leadership and commitment. Building on existing good practice as shown, for example, in the work of the Eastbourne Children's Centres with families in temporary accommodation, we will also explore ways of strengthening the support we provide across the Partnership to families experiencing difficulties in relation to housing.

- ***Child poverty***

Through partnership with the CYPT, we propose to draw together key actions relevant to tackling child poverty in order to establish an overview of how the issue is being addressed through the partnership and to consider any further actions which might be taken.

- ***Changes in responsibilities for post 16 education and training, and the extension of the participation age for young people***

In addition to expanding education and training opportunities for 14 year olds, we will work closely together through the CYPT and through other partnership arrangements to plan for the significant changes proposed to responsibilities for post 16 education and training, and for the extension of the participation age for young people.

- ***Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)***

The number of young people who are NEET continues to fall but, in light of the current economic climate, it is likely that the number of NEET will increase again. To address this the following actions and initiatives will be undertaken:

a) Increase opportunities

- Continue with the mix of post 16 educational opportunities for young people who have not achieved a level 2 qualification, together with wrap around support to improve retention.
- Expand provision of accredited educational opportunities for young parents across the whole county
- Pilot entry to learning support across the coastal strip that will provide bridging provision into formal learning for 16/17 year old NEETs.
- Provide volunteering opportunities for young people including those who are NEET.
- Continue to provide work placement opportunities in the public sector.

b) Remove barriers

- Implement the early leaver protocol across all post 16 providers.
- Continue with the operation of a Client Fund to support individual young people to purchase materials / equipment / activities that enable them to access EET.
- Introduce Progression Guidance document amongst all secondary schools and post 16 providers in order to improve coordination and collaboration of support for students moving from compulsory education to post 16 provision.

c) Develop capabilities

- Commission VT Enterprise to employ a Job Broker to proactively secure employment and apprenticeship opportunities for young people deemed ready for employment.
- Commission motivational workshops for young people who have been NEET for over three months.

d) Careful tracking

- Introduce RONI (Risk of NEET Indicator) tool in all secondary schools.
- Improve sharing of information between key stakeholders.

7. Make a Positive Contribution

- ❖ (CS 12) Provide positive activities for children and young people and increase opportunities for them to be involved in decisions that affect them.

7.1 What are we trying to achieve?

More young people than ever before are actively involved in supporting their communities as volunteers and in shaping the strategies and policies which affect them and their wider communities. We want to extend opportunities and encourage all young people to play a positive part in this way. In particular, we want to see:

- More children and young people encouraged to participate in decision making;
- More children and young people participating in positive activities, including volunteering;
- A reduction in the perception of anti-social behaviour and reduced numbers of young people receiving final warnings, reprimands or convictions;
- An improved perception of children and young people by others in their community, including between different groups of people; and
- Better access to activities by improving transport options.

7.2 Where are we now?

In the 2008 APA, services to enable children and young people to make a positive contribution were graded as outstanding.

Children and Young People in East Sussex have had many opportunities to **participate in decision making** at a strategic, local and individual level. All the partners of the Children's Trust take active steps to involve children and young people in decisions that affect them. Surveys undertaken in the past year include Tellus3, Safer Schools and the Health Related Behaviour Survey.

The Youth Cabinet have led a number of important campaigns and awareness raising projects, including:

- Stop Smoking Campaign – they produced a DVD which was sent to East Sussex schools with a questionnaire. There have been over 1,000 responses to the questionnaire which are being analysed and the findings will be used in developing services for young people.

- Speak Out! DVD - the Youth Cabinet went out to speak to young people from hard to reach groups and made a film about what they thought of life in East Sussex. As a result service managers from across the CYPT met the young people in order to respond to the issues they had raised and a number of projects have developed from these meetings.

The Youth Cabinet have also been consulted on the Children and Young People's Plan, the new Participation Strategy, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, East Sussex Crime Prevention Initiative and taken part in the Democracy Challenge where they joined with County Council members.

The Pupil Voice (for under 11 years) and the Learner Voice (11-19 years) are additional projects which are designed to help schools map current levels of pupils' participation. They have enabled schools to gain real evidence of school achievements and to clearly identify where there is room for improvement. The information gained is then able to inform wider consultations beyond the school councils regarding all aspects of school life and learning.

The East Sussex Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Participation Project has led to greater involvement of young people. It has included the creation of the 'Download' website on participation activity, quarterly telephone surveys – where families are asked specific questions on on-going projects. All feedback is then taken to the Participation Action Group and then onto the Senior Management Team; this approach has enabled children and young people to have a direct impact on the service provided.

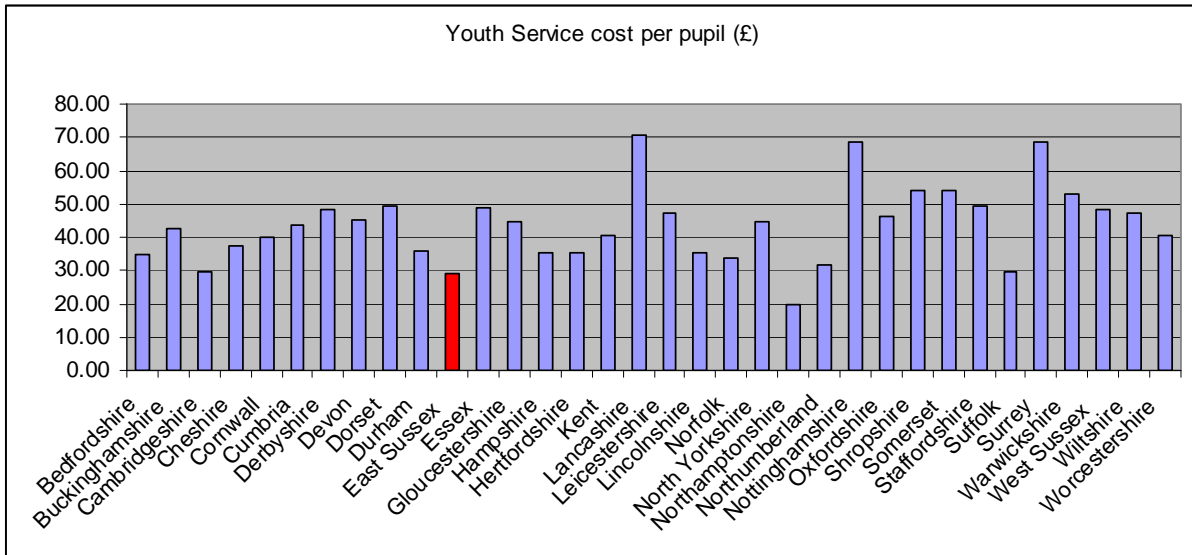
Further consultations were undertaken with young people to evaluate and challenge service delivery through an evaluation project that was taken forward with the Youth Development Service, including mystery shopping carried out by young people in 3 youth advisory settings.

The Disabled People's Participation Group has been developed in Partnership with Adult Social Care, the PCTs and the East Sussex Disability Association. It has attracted a large number of disabled parents and carers who are committed to informing service development.

During 2008/9, 319 Looked After Children communicated their views specifically for each of their statutory reviews, this is an increase of 12% on the previous year. Additionally the Children in Care Council meet regularly to discuss and have their views heard, during the last year they have been instrumental in the creation of the Children in Care pledge – which is a promise to all children and young people living in care in East Sussex setting out standards and expectations.

In the 2008 Tellus3 survey, 73% of children and young people reported **participating in positive activities** - this is 3.5% above both the regional and national averages and provides a baseline for NI 110 (Participation in positive activities).

An additional positive activities survey was also conducted by Connexions; for this three quarters (75.2%) of young people in year 11 in 2009 took part. Over half (52.4%) reported that they had taken part in some form of positive activity in the previous four weeks. Of the activities the young people were involved with, the most popular option was Sports Club or a Class (35.3%).



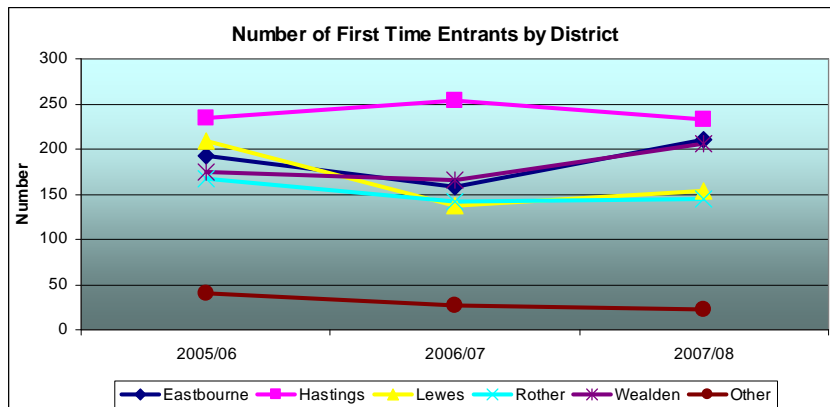
Annual expenditure on Youth Services remains one of the lowest among County Councils at £29 per pupil.

Agreement has also now been reached with partners to provide free access to Looked after Children at leisure facilities across the county.

A draft Children and Young People’s Volunteering Strategy was developed and will be put out for consultation in summer 2009.

We have, in addition, involved young people in a creative arts intergenerational project with older people from the University of the Third Age to help challenge negative perceptions held by both groups other and to promote intergenerational understanding. Building on this good work we have also bid for Generation Together funding which will support the achievement of many of our priorities around community cohesion and increase the number of young people involved in volunteering.

In 2008, a challenging baseline was developed against which to measure our future progress in reducing re-offending by young people. Provisional data for 2008/09 suggest that there has already been encouraging progress in reducing re-offending. There was also a significant fall in the number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 in 2008/09 which at 719 was 20% lower than the target for the year of 897.



34 young people were sentenced to custody in 2008/09, representing 4.2% of the total number of young people receiving a court conviction in the year.

64.5% of young offenders were actively engaged in suitable full-time education; training or employment by the end of their court order, an increase of just under 2% compared to the previous year, and 89% of young offenders had access to suitable accommodation at the end of their court order.

An analysis of the ethnic composition of children and young people in the youth justice system in 2008/09 showed that there was a slight over representation of mixed race young people but that all other minority ethnic groups were either under represented or proportionate to general population data.

7.3 What are our Key Areas of Improvement?

- ***Participation***

The Big Vote 2009 will elect a new Youth Cabinet and as in previous years, it will also co-opt members on to the Cabinet from some of our most vulnerable groups. The Children and Young People's Trust Participation Strategy is also in the process of being reported on and will be considered by the Children's and Young People's Trust in September 2009.

Statement on safeguarding

The member agencies of the East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board believe that all children living in or visiting the County have the right to: -

- Safety and security in a culture of high expectation, which provides protection from harm and exploitation and enables them to develop healthily to meet their full physical, intellectual and emotional potential.

In order for this to be realistic all member agencies are working to the standards within the Children Act 2004 to ensure that:-

- All those who work with children and young people know what to do if they are worried about possible harm.
- When concerns are reported, action is taken quickly and sensitively to help children and their families.
- Agencies that provide children and young people with services take steps to ensure they are safe and are comply with legal requirements.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires from agencies that there is: -

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare;
- A clear statement of the agency's responsibilities towards children available for all staff;
- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Service development that takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families;
- Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or (depending on the agency's primary functions) in contact with children and families;
- Safe recruitment procedures in place;
- Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- Effective Information sharing.

Within East Sussex these responsibilities are monitored by the East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB); this is made up of representatives from the senior levels of all organisations in the area involved in protecting or promoting the welfare of children. Its purpose is to work co-operatively together to safeguard children within East Sussex. This requires proactive intervention where children are abused, targeted work with children at risk of harm and preventive work within the community to develop a safe environment for children.

The key priorities of the East Sussex LSCB are: -

- To ensure that children within East Sussex are protected from harm.
- To co-ordinate agencies' activity to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- To ensure the effectiveness of agencies' activity to safeguard and promote the welfare of children through monitoring and review.

Accountability

The LSCB annual report is received by the Children's Trust, the East Sussex County Council Children's Services Scrutiny Committee and is also presented at the Primary Care Trusts' Professional Executive Committee and other LSCB member organisation's senior management boards.

Key issues addressed by the Board in 2008-9 include:

- Ensuring the voice of the child can be heard - A full advocacy service for all children started in April 2008 which provides advocacy services for looked after children and those with child protection plans.
- Maintaining and improving the quality of inter-agency child protection interventions – the following areas have been considered:
 - Monitoring the progress of the Common Assessment Framework and Contact Point;
 - A review of domestic abuse services and safeguarding provision;
 - Anti-bullying services in schools and the community.
- Ensuring that there is effective learning – this has included:
 - Undertaking two Serious case reviews;
 - Development of the Child Death Overview Panel;
 - Briefings across agencies on the lessons from Baby Peter.
- Ensuring a uniform approach to safeguarding and consistency of practice across Sussex – achieved via:
 - A review of the action plans following the self-audit undertaken by all agencies of their services against the standards in Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 completed in 2007;

- Developing a multi-agency file audit process to review quarterly referral and child protection conference processes;
 - Monitoring the progress of the Independent Safeguarding Authority and its implications for all agencies.
- Maintaining an effective functioning Local Safeguarding Children Board

The work of the LSCB sub groups has helped to achieve continuous improvement by maintaining and developing:

- Effective safeguarding procedures;
- Multi disciplinary training programmes;
- Data for and audits of safeguarding activity;
- A child safety action plan; and
- Good communication and collaboration between agencies and professionals.

The Planned Work of the LSCB for 2009/10 will include:

In addition to the ongoing activity to achieve continuous improvement, specific priority will be given to the following:

- Assisting in the development and improvement of safeguarding services for children experiencing domestic abuse;
- Reviewing the development of the Safeguarding with Intensive Family Treatment (SWIFT) service provision for parents with mental health;
- Implementing Laming report recommendations;
- The roll-out of the Vetting and Barring Scheme;
- Arrangements for missing children.