

Review of Outcomes for Children and Young People in Solihull

Summary, October 2008



Our Vision for Better Outcomes

The Children and Young People's Plan sets out a vision that Solihull will be "a place where all children and young people have an equal chance and achieve their full potential".

Success in delivering services for children and young people is measured in terms of outcomes – whether children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy life and achieve success, make a positive contribution to their local communities and benefit from economic well-being.

Recent inspections (Annual Performance Assessment 2007; Joint Area Review April 2008) have concluded that the overall effectiveness of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull is good, and is outstanding in the aspect of children and young people making a positive contribution.

The Review of Outcomes

Each year the Solihull Children and Young People's Trust publishes a self-assessment of the outcomes which children and young people achieve in Solihull. This is a summary of the Review of Outcomes for 2008.

The Review of Outcomes 2008 uses a variety of data and information sources, including consultations with children, young people and families, performance data, and local and national research to understand progress in improving the lives of children and young people in Solihull.

The Review draws in particular on the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ) and annual Tellus surveys of children and young people.

The Review of Outcomes looks across 44 key indicators at local trends, comparisons with other relevant places, impact on particular groups and key areas of service development.

Are children and young people in Solihull healthy?

While there are improvements in initiation rates for breastfeeding, the numbers of babies receiving breast milk at 6-8 weeks in Solihull appears to be decreasing, so a comprehensive breast-feeding strategy is in development.

One in every 5 children in Solihull is overweight or obese. Plans are in place to deliver weight management programmes, which include being more physically active.

The majority of children say that they are happy with their lives, but still comment on the need for support with their emotional well-being.

There is renewed improvement in the under 18-conception rate and chlamydia rates are beginning to decline.

While there has been significant progress in responding to young people's drug and alcohol use, the Tellus survey indicates that 11-15 year olds are more likely to have had an alcoholic drink than the national average, which is being investigated further as part of the needs analysis for the emerging Alcohol Strategy.

Are children and young people in Solihull safe?

The level of children subject to child protection plans is low in comparison to national averages, with low numbers of children remaining on child protection plans.

Bullying remains a significant issue for children and young people, and there is now a refreshed Anti Bullying Strategy, and new policy guidance for schools. However rates of bullying in Solihull are below national averages.

Concerns about personal safety rate highly in consultations with children and young people.

Local evidence shows that young people aged 10-15 are more likely than any other group to become a victim of crime and this is an issue which is also being considered by the Safer Communities Strategic Group of the Local Strategic Partnership.

The proportion of looked after children is rising, mainly attributable to rising numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, with Solihull now one of the most affected Councils.

The number of children who die in road traffic accidents remains low.

Are children and young people in Solihull enjoying and achieving?

At five, children in Solihull are achieving above national expectations in all six areas of learning, though children in north Solihull do less well, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and personal and social development.



There are good attendance rates at both primary and secondary school, and HRBQ data suggests that a high percentage of children of all ages enjoy school, though this reduces as pupils get older.

Overall attainment at primary school is very good, and the gap in attainment between north and south Solihull is closing rapidly at Key Stage 2 across all three core subjects, English, Maths and Science.

The gap in attainment at Key Stage Three has remained fairly constant over the last 5 years between pupils attending schools in North Solihull when compared to South Solihull.

493 young people (13-19 yrs) gained accreditation via Youth Service projects, and 719 young people gained recorded outcomes.

In 2007, 71% of secondary pupils reported that, in general, they were 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' satisfied with their life.

Are children and young people in Solihull making a positive contribution?

Consultation with children and young people is seen as a significant strength, with young people routinely involved in recruiting staff and quality assuring services.

Young people have been involved in commissioning sports and leisure activities.

There are high levels of participation of children in care in their statutory reviews, including unaccompanied asylum seeking young people.

The number of first time entrants to the youth justice system is significantly lower than the 2005-6 baseline.

Are children and young people in Solihull achieving economic well-being?

The majority of young people in Solihull aged 16-18 are in full time education, employment or training, and numbers of young people who are NEET is reducing.

The numbers of children living in Solihull families where no one is working has reduced and is lower than the national average, but this masks significant deprivation in North Solihull.

There are now areas of South Solihull which fall into the 40% nationally most deprived wards, notably in Bickenhill, Elmdon, Lyndon, Olton and Shirley.

Although Solihull is regarded as affluent, many children, young people and families live in circumstances of material deprivation, and this is likely to be further impacted by the economic downturn.

The percentage of care leavers at age 19 who live in suitable accommodation has improved.

There is evidence of sufficient childcare for those parents who want to work, however parents would like to see more choice in the types of childcare available in some areas of south Solihull and better provision for disabled children.



Crosscutting issues

15-19 year olds are now the largest group of young people in the Borough.

There is insufficient evidence of outcomes for children in localities beyond a north/ south split, which will be addressed for the next Review of Outcomes in 2009.

More evidence is required about the outcomes for particular groups of young people, including disabled children and young people, young carers, children in care and unaccompanied asylum seeking children, which is being addressed with the Revised Scorecard for the Children and Young People Plan.

Conclusions

The Review of Outcomes for 2008 is largely consistent with the evidence used in 2007 to inform the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan. There are, however, some changing issues to take account of:

Making improvements to healthy lifestyles for children and young people, considering breast feeding, obesity, alcohol and emotional well-being, remains an urgent issue. This provides a compelling case for a continued focus on a cross-cutting healthy lifestyles approach.

Children and young people are concerned about personal safety issues, particularly crime and anti-social behaviour, although rates of bullying are below the national average.

The number of children and young people who are Looked After by the Council is rising, particularly unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Educational achievement in Solihull continues to be very good although there is further to go to close the gap in achievement between north and south Solihull for teenagers.

The current economic downturn will have a significant impact on outcomes for children and young people which is expected to be seen in the Review of Outcomes 2009.

Solihull Children and Young People's Trust
PO Box 20, Council House, Solihull,
West Midlands B91 9QU

E-mail cyptrust@solihull.gov.uk
www.solihullonevoice.org

