

Part A - Introduction

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2008

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Areas for judgement	Being healthy	Staying safe	Enjoying and achieving	Making a positive contribution	Achieving economic well-being
The contribution of the council's services in maintaining and improving this outcome for children and young people.	3	3	3	3	3

The council's children's services	Grade
The contribution of the council's children's services in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	3

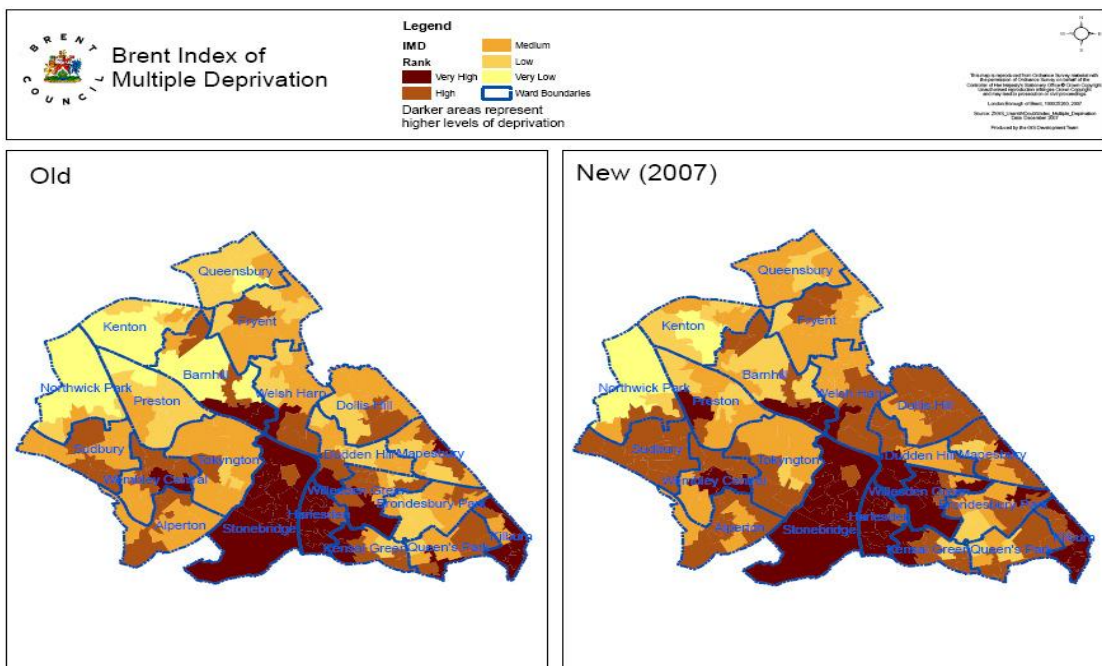
Capacity to improve	Grade
The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people	3

Consultation on this self assessment has been arranged through the structures of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board. We have consulted widely on the production of this document through meetings with key partner agencies from April to June 2008. Additionally consultation with Brent residents on a summary of our strengths and weaknesses was undertaken from May to June 2008.

Part B - Context

The Borough

- 1 Brent is an outer London Authority with a growing and dynamic population. Recent figures indicate that there are a significant number of people moving into the borough and creating new emerging communities, as well as significant numbers of transient people within the borough. ONS estimates for 2006 give our population as 271,400. However, independent research commissioned by the Council estimates the figure to be nearer 289,000 at March 2007 ([Population Document](#)). This growth is largely in the south of the borough and is predominantly young adults, often with pre-school or young children. According to this research the number of children and young people in the borough has risen by 8.7% (66,682 in 2005 to 72,472 in 2007). Brent has also seen an increase in the birth rate with the number of new births rising incrementally by 3% per annum. The largest increase in birth rates to date has been in 2007 (approx 8% on 2006 figures).
- 2 Brent has the second highest National Insurance registrations in the country at 15,600 in 2007 which supports the population growth in the borough. While most areas of the borough have either remained static or increased, there has been a bias towards the south and south east of Brent, which has experienced an 8-10% increase in population from 2005 to 2007. Nearly 8% of our population is classified as either refugee or asylum seekers.
- 3 Brent is one of two local authorities serving a population where the majority of people are from ethnic minorities. The borough is rich in diversity with 54.4% of our residents being from black or minority ethnic communities. As well as the longer established Indian, Black Caribbean, Black African and Irish communities there are also emerging Eastern European, Somali, Turkish and Hispanic communities. An increasing number of Brent's school population are of mixed heritage.
- 4 The index of educational disadvantage which is used by the DCSF to allocate the Dedicated School Grant places Brent with the 10% most disadvantaged Local Children Services Authorities. Brent's score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) has risen to 53 placing the borough within the 15% most deprived areas in the country. While the main locations of multiple deprivation is in the south of the borough, there are new pockets emerging in the north and west with more acute concentrations in the more deprived wards. The change in deprivation is most starkly illustrated in the map below.



- 5 The deprivation experienced within the borough is characterised by relatively high levels of long-term unemployment (24% of unemployed people are classified as long term unemployed compared to a London average of 15%), low household incomes, dependence on benefits and social housing. The prevalence of life limiting health conditions and health inequalities is also higher within these areas of the borough.
- 6 Children and young people are particularly affected by this deprivation with a third of Brent's children living in low income households, a quarter in social housing and a fifth in single-adult households. The proportion of our young people affected by deprivation is rising, with a disparity between the educational outcomes achieved by some BME children in comparison to the borough average.
- 7 Our transformation programme for children's social care is focused on providing early intervention and family support to prevent vulnerable children entering the care system. This is being delivered through a greater emphasis on integrated services and a common assessment process that puts in place holistic packages of support. The numbers of children entering the care system are already reducing and the programme is funded through a two year Invest to Save package which is raising the quality of care and intervention provided, as well as creating greater efficiency within the child care system. As part of this programme we are providing more in-borough foster places to enable continuity of care and additional educational support to ensure looked after children and young people are able to access training and employment opportunities.

Brent Council and Arrangements for Partnership Working

- 8 Brent Council's Corporate Strategy 2006-2010 ([Brent Corporate Strategy 2006-2010](#)) is structured around the three priority issues agreed with local partners in the Community Strategy 2006-2010 and aim to create:-
 - A Great Place
 - A Borough of Opportunity
 - An Inclusive Borough
- 9 The Council is rated as a three star CPA authority (2007) which is improving well with particular strengths in housing delivery, educational achievement and community cohesion. Our strong partnership working has enabled good outcomes in children's services. Achievements are underpinned by robust performance management both internally and across partnerships and a strong financial standing.
- 10 Brent has an established local strategic partnership 'Partners for Brent', which has a proven track record of delivering joint local objectives under both the PSA framework and LAA structures. The partnership is composed of an Executive Board and four strategic partnerships covering:-
 - Crime Prevention Strategy Group
 - Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership Board
 - Health and Social Care Partnership Board
 - Brent Sustainability Forum

The Members of the LSP Executive are:-

- Brent Primary Care Trust
- Brent Metropolitan Police Service
- College of North West London
- Brent Fire Service
- Brent Association for Voluntary Action
- Job Centre Plus

- North West London Hospitals Trust
- Learning and Skills Council
- The Employers Partnership
- Central and North West Foundation Trust (formerly Mental Health Trust)

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board (CYPSPB), a subgroup of the LSP, takes an active leadership role in setting the strategic direction for children's services. Its membership reflects the range of internal and external partners concerned with services for children and young people in the borough, specifically:

- Children and Families dept
- Housing & Community Care dept
- Environment & Culture dept
- Policy & Regeneration dept
- Brent Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB)
- Brent Primary Care Trust
- Brent Metropolitan Police Service
- College of North West London
- Brent Association for Voluntary Action (voluntary sector organisation)
- North West London Hospitals Trust
- Learning and Skills Council
- Central and North West Foundation Trust (formerly Mental Health Trust)
- Primary Schools
- Special Schools
- Secondary Schools
- Nursery Schools
- Male Development Service (voluntary sector organisation)
- Bang Edutainment (voluntary sector organisation)
- Lead member for Children and Families department
- Representatives of Brent Youth Parliament
- Lead member for Brent Youth Parliament

Governance arrangements of the Board are currently under review to embed key new structures such as joint commissioning and integrated services in line with expectations of Children's Trusts as set out in the Children's Plan (DCSF, 2008). The LSCB provides regular updates to the CYPSPB which enables senior leadership to keep abreast of safeguarding developments and issues.

11 Our LAA priorities, which were agreed by the CYPSPB, are designed to address needs and gaps identified within the evidence base for our LAA: [\(Evidence Base document\)](#)

1. Improving educational achievement at Key Stage 4 for BME groups
2. Reducing the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system
3. Stability of placements for looked after children
4. Reducing the rate of obesity in primary children
5. Educational achievement of looked after children
6. Improving young people's sexual health and reducing the teenage conception rate
7. Improving the emotional health of children
8. Services for disabled children

Part C - Analysis, Involvement and Impact

Progress from 2007 Annual Performance Assessment (APA)

- 12 Areas identified as requiring improvement following the last APA together with progress achieved are set out in the table below.

Improvement	Progress
Be Healthy	
Continued multi-agency attention to reduce teenage pregnancy rates particularly within disadvantaged groups	Although we are not on course yet to meet our target, we are broadly in line with the London average. We continue to work hard in a multi agency approach. Our increased multi agency commitment has resulted in a broader range of training opportunities for the workforce and wider provision around prevention. The National Support Team has worked successfully with Brent during 2007 to refine the focus of our approach to a more preventative one. On the recommendation of the National Support Team a new Teenage Pregnancy Executive Group has been established to closely monitor and evaluate the new action plan developed with a focus on prevention.
Stay Safe	
Continue to improve the rate of adoptions	We have improved on the number of children adopted or made subject to an Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and improved our re-referral rates. We continue to sustain the improvement in numbers of children adopted, with 11 children being adopted or made subjects of an SGO in the first two months of the year.
Ensure that the referral processes to the various services is clear and that the impact of refocusing on preventative services is monitored and evaluated.	Introduction of the "Brent Thresholds of Need" framework as part of the CAF implementation (Brent Integrated Working - Guidance for practitioner and managers) has supported partner agencies in the recognition of both children with additional needs and those who require safeguarding. Although the number of referrals to social care has continued to rise, there is evidence that the number of initial assessments is decreasing as social care now refers back to partner agencies and the Integrated Services Support Team for a common assessment for those who do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention. An evaluation of this service model has been conducted and is demonstrating good preventative outcomes for children, young people and their families. (Full Stage 2 Evaluation Report)

Improvement	Progress
Enjoy and Achieve	
Improve the achievement of black Caribbean and Somali children and young people	The Improving Outcomes Service Audit programme ensures regular analysis of data and support for improvement. High quality support and development opportunities for school staff have continued in the last year with the aim of improving outcomes for this group of children and young people. There have been improvements particularly at KS2 and KS4 this year.
Reduce exclusion rates from schools	There has been a reduction in secondary exclusions over the last two years.
Make a Positive Contribution	
Strengthen further the youth service to increase participation rates in activities.	We are on target to meet Youth Service participation targets of 25% for 2009.
Reduce the number of people who reoffend	Although the re offending rates remain high we have put in place a wide menu of interventions to improve outcomes in this area. Renewed partnership emphasis on this LAA priority area is being progressed.
Achieve Economic Well Being	
Widen the availability and breadth of opportunities for work based learning	The 14 to 19 Partnership continues to prioritise extending the opportunities for work-based learning and a council wide scheme is being planned.
Strengthen systems for tracking the progress and analysing the participation rates of vulnerable children, young people and those from minority ethnic groups.	Systems for tracking the participation rates of young people and analysing the participation rates of vulnerable young people as well as those from minority ethnic groups are now robust. This has been achieved through a range of activities and by Connexions personal advisers working together to maintain contact with young people.
Service Management	
Continue working with the PCT to minimise the impact of PCT budget reductions in children's services, ensuring preventative services are given a central focus.	PCT Turnaround did constrain delivery of preventative services in the short term. However, the PCT is now out of turnaround. Integrated service delivery and joint commissioning are being embedded at strategic and operational levels with good outcomes. The PCT is now giving due weight to preventative services.

BEING HEALTHY

- 13 We judge that the contribution of local services to improving children and young people's health continues to be good. Changes in the management and organisation of the PCT have led to a much closer working relationship and a more proactive joint approach. (See Service Management). A strong multi agency focus on teenage pregnancy rates is leading to improved outcomes and this work continues to be a priority for us, as does meeting the 2008 target for Healthy Schools status.

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles (Key Judgement 1.2)

- 14 The PCT has signalled headroom for growth and is committed to the development and implementation of a joint strategy for improving health outcomes for children and young people in Brent. The strategy being developed will focus on the following priority areas, which are key national and local priorities:

- Reconfiguration of substance misuse and sexual health services to focus on prevention and early intervention (LAA 6)
 - The health of looked after children
 - Improvements in oral health
 - Focused work to address the prevalence of childhood obesity (LAA 4)
 - Improving access to child and adolescent mental health services in universal settings, e.g. schools and children's centres (LAA 7)
 - Increasing the uptake of immunisations
 - Improving the rate of breastfeeding
 - Improving therapy services for disabled children and young people
- 14 Phase two of our Children's Centres development has resulted in a further seven centres designated in March 2008, bringing us to a total of twelve delivering the core offer. Two of these are located in local community hospitals and this collocation will mean improved integration of service delivery that enables improved access to health services for under fives.
- 15 The increase in birth rate (see paragraph 1) has created significant capacity issues at our local maternity units. To address this, plans to open a new midwifery led unit with the ability to offer obstetric medical support when required, is being planned for July 2008. The relocation and model of the new midwifery led unit will operate less restrictive access criteria which in turn will enable more women to choose a low medical intervention birth pathway.
- 16 Infant mortality rates show a downward trend and although they are above the national average they are below local comparators. Future developments include increased investment in health visiting and school nursing to improve further this outcome.
- 17 (CYPP 5a) We continue to adopt a proactive approach to reducing the numbers of teenage pregnancy conceptions. In response to the support by the national team, Brent Sexual Health and Teenage Pregnancy team have worked with a range of agencies to develop a wide range of prevention programmes. Of particular note have been the ongoing success of Teens and Toddlers, drop in sessions, and the results of our sex and relationship education (SRE) audit of secondary schools this year. We know that good quality SRE has an impact on teenage pregnancy rates, and the audit, completed with the full participation of our schools outlines much good practice. We now have plans in place to share successful approaches more widely and offer more out of school support to young people at risk of early sexual activity.
- 18 We are making very good progress with the implementation of the SEAL curriculum (CYPP 4e). To date 90% of primary schools have implemented the SEAL curriculum; almost half of the secondary schools have started engaging from September 2007. All secondary schools have Sex and Relationship policies and curriculum set within a PSHE framework. Seventy percent of schools have drugs policies and management of incident policies (plans to raise this to 100% in future are being progressed).
- 19 The numbers of young people accessing services for substance misuse is showing a strong upward trend. Equally the percentage of children and young people in treatment services as a proportion of the adult treatment population is showing a steady increase. We are still below the national and benchmark group average. The TellUs survey reflects that Brent young people are less likely to smoke, drink or take drugs than is the case nationally but the numbers who want information and advice are higher than the national average. As a result, three additional schools now run drop in sessions and procurement for additional advice and support provision is currently out to tender. All young people known to the Youth Offending Service receive an assessment for substance misuse. Where this proves positive, they are placed on programmes to address their behaviour which are either delivered within the service or through onward referral.

- 20 The Healthy Schools Partnership (CYPP 6e) Group collects data on schools and provides a rigorous quality assurance process for Brent schools self-validating as Healthy Schools. The process has confirmed schools' deep commitment to promoting the physical and mental wellbeing of their pupils and consideration for their wider school community.
- 21 So far, 41% (33) of schools have achieved Healthy Schools status and an additional 42% (34) of schools have formally registered as participating and working towards achieving Healthy Schools status. We have reached the December 07 target for participation and are likely to reach the 2008 target for participation. We are on track to meet or be very close to the December 08 target for Healthy Schools Status (63% against a target of 65%).
- 22 We have a forward-looking Food in Schools programme that we believe to be outstanding. All schools meet the two current standards and robust plans are in place for the third strand. We have trained over 450 staff, school meal support assistants and catering staff. A marketing campaign and intensive work in targeted schools has led to an increased uptake of school meals with averages in primary and secondary schools now 10% higher than the national picture. Over half of our schools have a comprehensive food and nutrition policy. We have completed monitoring visits in all schools and provided feedback.
- 23 In terms of PE and School Sport (*CYPP 1e and 6e*), the increased opportunities and partnership working are providing very positive social experiences for young people. Children are benefiting from finding pathways into sport and physical activity, which help to develop healthy lifestyles. The quality of performance in PE and School Sport has improved. At least two thirds of our pupils are working in line or above expectations across the four strands of the PE national curriculum.
- 24 From a very low base three years ago (41%) we now have 83% of 5 to 16 yr olds participating in 2 hours of PE and Sport per week. Although this is still just below the national average we are well on track to meet our 2008 PSA target (85%). Similarly, good progress has been made in relation to other key areas of PE and sport. For example, above a third of pupils have been involved in inter-school competitions during this academic year and over a quarter participated in one or more community sports, dance or multi-skill clubs with links to the school during the academic year. Additionally 10% of pupils were actively involved in sports volunteering and leadership.
- 25 The Sports Service has a LAA (2006-2008) target which includes improving take up of sport and leisure activities for looked after children and young people. Most sports activities are either free or very low cost at point of use (E.g. free swimming for all children in school holidays) and looked after children and young people are offered a booklet of discount vouchers (10 vouchers, £2 each) (*CYPP 4a*) which can be used to pay towards activities - they could use all ten at once if they want to use it towards something more expensive like the Gym.
- 26 Care leavers (*CYPP 6e*) are encouraged to sign up for the BActive card which gives discounted access for Brent care leavers, who are resident in Brent and are not in full time work.

Promoting Mental Health (Key Judgement 1.4)

- 27 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Brent are now fully comprehensive and compliant with all four elements of the CAMHS framework as defined in PAFCF A70. The changes in the indicator for 2008-11 are currently being addressed to deliver joint commissioning of early intervention support in universal settings e.g. Children's Centres and schools (*LAA 7*).

- 28 The waiting times for CAMHS provision are good in comparison with the national average and reflect a responsive service model. All new specialist cases are seen in less than 26 weeks, 100% of non specialist cases in fewer than 4 weeks in and 46% of non-specialist cases in fewer than 4 weeks.

Support For Looked After Children and Young People (Key Judgement 1.5)

- 29 There is a designated doctor and nurse for looked after children and young people and the LAC health team based in the PCT co-ordinates all health assessments including those for children placed out of borough. With the introduction of BAAF health forms in Brent, there appears to have been a drop in form completion in the last year. However, this is now improving significantly as use of the form is now embedded. Our performance over the past two months shows a significant improvement.
- 30 Health Assessments for looked after children and young people are holistic and take account of the child's age and understanding. They include a review of age appropriate lifestyle issues (e.g. healthy eating, exercise, PSHE, drugs and alcohol). Health plans are reviewed as part of the statutory review meeting.
- 31 Twelve young people attended a First Aid workshop run by St Johns Ambulance and organised by Brent Community Friends in February. The looked after children and young people nurse offers drop in sessions at the Leaving Care and UMHT offices. There is a designated CAMHS support for looked after children and young people and the Local Authority has purchased additional therapeutic input from CAMHS which is equivalent to 2 full time posts, to work directly with children in foster care and adoptive placements and to offer support to their carers.

Support for Children and Young People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (Key Judgement 1.6)

- 32 The Children with Disabilities team was previously located in the Social Care division, staffed by social workers and social work assistants, many of whom were agency employees. The scope of the previous team was the entire 0-19 age range. The new structure for integrated services for children with disabilities was put into place in October 2007 under a newly appointed Head of Integrated Services for SEN and Disability, located in the Achievement and Inclusion division. Three teams have been established for early years (0-5), middle years (6-13) and transitions (14-18) and almost all staff are now permanent employees. The teams are multi-agency and include staff from social care, education, Connexions (in Transitions team) and PCT (in Early Years and Transition teams) as well as key workers.
- 33 Following the restructuring of services the integrated early years team (0-5 yrs) is now co located with the PCT (Child Development Service) and is developing a team around the child approach. This enables early joined up assessment of need, which will result in targeted interventions and increased support. A health worker is attached to the team and works with the other professionals to ensure that services are coordinated in meeting the health needs of the child.
- 34 A community nurse is co-located with the transition team to ensure that the health needs of young people 14 to 19 years are addressed during their transition into adulthood. The post holder works closely with her health counterpart in adult services.
- 35 There is a specialist team within CAMHS, which focuses on children with complex learning disabilities and challenging behaviour. This team hold a monthly clinic with the workers in the integrated teams where they are able to consult about cases and seek advice. Good communication between the services, together with the regular clinical consultations ensure that the mental health needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are correctly assessed with timely support that is appropriate and well co-ordinated.

- 36 The full impact of the restructured service has not yet been evaluated. However there has been positive feedback from local voluntary groups, special schools and parent groups. The joined up working is beginning to impact on early planning and interventions for newly diagnosed children and for those young people who will require health interventions in adulthood.

STAYING SAFE

- 37 We judge our contribution to children and young people staying safe as good. The LSCB and its sub committees, in particular the work done by the E safety group, continue to be strength. Our Invest to Save initiatives are succeeding in increasing the quality and reducing the cost of placements for looked after children and young people. Work on thresholds as part of the Common Assessment Framework implementation is raising awareness about Child Protection and early recognition of children with additional needs.
- 38 In the recent adoption inspection we were graded as good overall, with the contribution to helping children to enjoy and achieve graded as outstanding.
- 39 Despite an increase in the number of child protection referrals and investigations, we have managed a small improvement in initial and core assessment timescales and initial conferences held within 15 days. We have continued to invest in preventative services and the number of looked after children and young people has fallen from 390 at the time of the last APA to 369 at the end of March 2008. We reduced expenditure on placements in the private and voluntary sector by £1.3 million. The number of reviews of looked after children that take place on time have continued to improve.
- 40 Further areas for development for us are to; achieve a significant improvement in assessment timescales; improve the number of first Child Protection conferences held within 15 days and achieve 100% of review Child Protection conferences held on time; and continue to reduce the number of looked after children through our Invest to Save programme.

Providing a Safe Environment (Key Judgement 2.2)

- 41 Personal development and well being overall are key strengths in our schools. Effective practice to tackle bullying has existed in Brent schools for many years. TellUs, other pupil surveys and Ofsted reports tell us that most children and young people feel safe in our schools. Bullying is rare and when it does occur, it is dealt with appropriately. Strategies used by schools include peer mentoring/buddying schemes, student anti-bullying councils and preventative work through the curriculum.
- 42 Tackling bullying remains a high priority for the council and a key objective of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP 6c). Schools report the positive impact of the Brent launch of National Anti-Bullying Week, of schools' work during anti-bullying week and the continued development of peer support schemes in both primary and secondary schools.
- 43 The Local Authority has taken a lead in highlighting the government's guidance on bullying: 'Safe to Learn' (CYPP 1d). In 2006, a conference was held on tackling racist bullying and, in November 2007, a conference on tackling homophobic bullying was held. Work to tackle racist bullying is ongoing and two secondary schools are currently piloting proactive approaches to homophobic bullying.
- 44 The Brent Secondary Student Anti-Bullying Council, formed in 2007, reports the positive impact of the council's work in their schools. The council is in the process of developing links with the Brent Youth Parliament ([Youth Parliament Annual Report to Scrutiny](#)) in order to increase its impact (CYPP 1c and d) in this regard.

- 45 We have worked with partner agencies to develop and support a range of activities in universal settings aimed at reducing the likelihood of young people becoming the victims of crime (CYPP 1c). This has included Theatre in Education approaches with tours of our secondary schools of productions dealing with knife crime and gun crime as well as workshops delivered to almost all year 6 pupils around the theme of personal safety, offering these pupils strategies to avoid victimisation. Work has also taken place via the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board, to tackle 'schoolboy robbery' by looking at safety on routes to and from school as well as assisting schools to 'design-out' crime by enhancing school security.
- 46 Brent has high levels of domestic violence and a significant number of child protection cases are linked to this. A strong well-led multi-agency approach in Brent ensures a co-ordinated community response (CYPP 5e). In the last year, a specialist domestic violence court is up and running, as are multi-agency risk assessment conferences (CYPP 1c).
- 47 A permanent adviser supports all Brent schools well with health and safety. Over 75% of schools have active union representatives that feed into corporate Health and Safety policy and planning on a regular basis. There is a rolling programme of monitoring visits. In addition, the Fire Authority has audited all schools (CYPP 1c).

Minimising Child Abuse and Neglect (Key Judgement 2.3)

- 48 There has been a significant increase in the amount of child protection work in Brent in the year up to end of March 08 (CYPP 6a and b). This includes a 77% increase in the number of section 47 investigations initiated (from 528 to 713 investigations), the number of initial child protection case conferences has increased by 61 and the numbers of children subject to child protection plans has risen from 124 to 169. There is no one explanation for this: Brent has a growing population of children; implementation of the common assessment framework may have raised awareness; a review of thresholds has made a contribution; and implementation of the London Child Protection procedures in respect of incidents of domestic violence has had a significant impact. In this context of increased demand we have made a small improvement in the number of initial and core assessments completed within timescales, have improved on the number of Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) held within 15 days, reduced the number of repeat referrals and have worked actively to ensure that children do not remain on the register longer than necessary. Although the improvement in initial assessments was less than we hoped, performance within the Referral and Assessment team improved to 85% in April and May. It has been recognised that additional resources are needed in the Referral and Assessment team to sustain this improvement and a small team of workers is currently being recruited to concentrate on less complex initial assessments.
- 49 The increase in demand has stretched our Case Conference team resources and there has been a 5% reduction in the number of Child Protection review conferences held on time. Sickness of the chair on two occasions contributed to this. To meet the increased demand and ensure our performance does not slip again we are recruiting a second permanent chair and have established a rota of fully trained emergency chairs.
- 50 The additional resource in the Referral and Assessment team coupled with improved systems for transferring cases between the Referral and Assessment and Children in Need teams will result in more substantial improvements in meeting timescales for core assessments this year.
- 51 We have effectively implemented the Public Law Outline (PLO) (CYPP 1f). The Freeman Family Centre, which opened in October 2007, now carries out high quality assessments of families with children who have become or are on the threshold of becoming subject to legal proceedings. It is hoped that when capacity allows the Centre will carry out assessments of parenting capacity for families with children subject to Child

Protection plans before the threshold of legal intervention is reached and will work with the expanded multi-disciplinary Crisis Intervention and Support team (CIST) to identify appropriate interventions.

- 52 Private fostering has been targeted by the Brent LSCB for training and communication across the agencies ([LSCB Training Programme](#)). We have continued to proactively raise awareness of private fostering and notifications by professionals are increasing. All notifications are investigated thoroughly and monitored in line with statutory guidance
- 53 Presentations about private fostering have been made to the LSCB and a range of professionals, most recently including designated teachers for Child Protection and to social care staff. We are planning to maintain this impetus and in particular awareness raising within the local voluntary sector. As a result some children have been removed from private fostering arrangements that were deemed to be unsuitable and placed in Local Authority care.
- 54 The safer employment sub group of the LSCB is actively contributing to ensuring robust employment policies across the council and it's partner agencies ([LSCB plan](#)).

Agencies Collaborate To Safeguard Children (KJ 2.4)

- 55 The Brent LSCB comprises senior representatives from the key statutory agencies, e.g. Police, PCT, Acute and Mental Health Hospitals. The Brent LSCB enjoys regular attendance and ownership from all the partner agencies (*see attached LSCB minutes*) and is now fully operational with a range of sub committees responsible for progressing the business plan. There are good links between the LSCB and the CYPSPB. Significant work has been undertaken on safer recruitment, prevention, policy and procedures, (the drafting and ownership) and E-Safety. Several members of the Board are active in the wider London developments of these areas.
- 56 The business plan and a learning and development programme are now in place. We have made significant improvements to the range, quality and delivery of multi- agency training resulting in a greater and wider take up by the children workforce. The learning and development sub group has produced regular training diaries to provide multi agency safeguarding training across a wide range of subjects (*see LSCB training programme*).
- 57 The Brent Youth Parliament have worked directly with the LSCB and have been active in E-Safety training and have given presentations within Brent and across London (*see Youth Parliament Annual Report*).
- 58 In April 2006 Brent LSCB formed a multi-agency E-Safety sub-committee to look at the risks posed to children and young people by their increased use of the internet and mobile technologies. Since then the group has undertaken significant work in disseminating information in the borough, providing training to children and young people, teachers and other professionals and driving policy and practice in this area. As it was one of the first LSCBs in the country to form such a group it has also been heavily involved with national organisations such as British Educational Communications Technology Agency (BECTA) and Child Exploration and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). It has worked closely with BECTA on producing their E-Safety toolkit for LSCBs. This included producing a number of case studies, which were included in the national guidance, and the Chair of our E-Safety sub-committee spoke in February at the National Conference, which launched the toolkit. This conference was attended by around 300 senior figures from across the country including Government Ministers. The sub-committee also played a lead role in the development of 'Us Online' an educational software package addressing responsible online citizenship, which is now available to all schools in London. The recently published Brent LSCB E-Safety Strategy 2008-2011 was launched at a pan-London conference in March. This was attended by the majority of London's LSCBs and the strategy ([Brent's E Safety Strategy](#)) was offered as a template to help them begin work on

their own strategies. The sub-committee is continuing to work with BECTA on developing a national training programme for LSCBs.

- 59 The serious case review sub committee meets to discuss any case highlighted by a partner agency on request and two serious case reviews have been initiated in the past year. Emerging findings and recommendations are shared across management teams and learning outcomes are embedded into practice.
- 60 The LA designated officer (LADO) is effectively monitoring and reviewing allegations against staff across the partner agencies. Reports are regularly monitored by the Brent LSCB and Director. A senior manager has also been identified to monitor the work. The LADO is a core member of the safeguarding in employment sub- group of the LSCB. A further function of this role is to deliver the safe recruitment training to managers across all agencies. A template for notification of allegations is now in operation. Information on allegations is reported regularly to the LSCB. We are currently reviewing how the process works to identify any learning that will result in improvement.
- 61 Now a member agency of Brent's LSCB, the NSPCC bring with them their experience and knowledge. They had begun work in Brent as part of a national project called "safe communities" (CYPP 1a). Work is being done to re-engage with this programme and increase take up in the range of voluntary agencies across Brent. The aim of the project is that all children will be able to play and learn in a safe environment by ensuring that all sectors working with children and young people have a safeguarding policy in place.
- 62 Brent LSCB recently ran a diversity conference entitled "Working with Religious and Cultural Practices to Safeguard Children" (CYPP 1d). The presenters on the day were drawn from across Brent. This was open to all professionals working with children in Brent and was very well attended by a range of people (over one hundred) from statutory, voluntary and faith groups. A key aim of the day was to raise awareness, identify the issues specific to Brent and plan the way forward. The NSPCC has been approached to assist with the evaluation of this conference to support delivery of further focused learning in this area.
- 63 We have implemented the Common Assessment Framework across Brent ([Integrated Working](#)). The overall impact has been to recognise earlier those children who may at a later stage be in need of safeguarding and there has been a real increase in the resources available to meet identified additional needs (CYPP 1d). Brent has twelve Integrated Services Support Officers (ISO's) who complete common assessments in schools, support all agencies in identifying children who may have additional needs and act as lead professionals. When a child's additional needs have been identified two Integrated Services Coordination Groups (ISCG) either signpost to appropriate preventative services or purchase such services from the private and voluntary sector.

Establishing the identity and whereabouts of all children and young people (Key Judgement 2.5)

- 64 There is a suite of policies on missing children providing guidance and direction to schools, social workers and partner agencies on how to proceed if a child is identified in this way. We take particular care in this area: we have good records and a good track record in establishing whereabouts.
- 65 Effective reporting and recording systems are in place for the Local Authority to obtain timely information from schools on pupils excluded permanently or for a fixed term. These have been updated and a new information pack supplied to schools following the new requirements in September 2007.

- 66 Exclusions officers work closely with other services and agencies to ensure they are made aware of any child or young person out of school. A post-exclusions officer tracks and monitors the progress of all pupils attending alternative provision and reports regularly to the excluded pupils' case management group.
- 67 Young carers are routinely identified by schools and social care and are referred to the Brent Young Carers Centre for advice and support. Self referrals are also accepted for those who identify themselves as young carers. Activities during school term and holidays are provided for groups or individual young carers (CYPP 6e and 1e). These can comprise one to one mentoring support and advice or specific youth activities. Additionally, young carers, supported by the Brent Carers Centre are able to access the Princess Royal Trust Grant for Young Carers. This can result in funded specialist activities or trips.

Support For Looked After Children and Young People (Key Judgements 2.6 & 2.7)

- 68 From April 07 to the end of March 08, there was a reduction of 34 looked after children and young people (8.5%), which is on course towards the department's target of 300 looked after children and young people by the end of March 2010. This brings us closer in line with our statistical neighbours. This has been achieved through our Invest to Save Programme and projects aimed at the development of a range of services to support families and to prevent children and young people becoming looked after.
- 69 The multi-disciplinary CIST has worked with 131 referrals since April 07 and have directly prevented twelve young people from becoming looked after. The team operate a rapid response service to avoid young people becoming accommodated in an emergency by providing a range of services including assertive outreach.
- 70 The work of the CIST and the additional provision made available to children with additional needs has highlighted a gap in services for children under 12 with complex needs. The success of the multi agency approach has resulted in a decision to expand the CIST to work with children under 12 subject to Child Protection plans or and with complex behavioural difficulties which indicate that they may reach the threshold of care without intensive intervention.
- 71 The Family Group Conference Service has received 56 referrals (96 children and young people) and has held 36 conferences (for 68 children and young people). The service has assisted in preventing 19 children and young people either from becoming looked after or assisted with their rehabilitation home or to kinship carers (CYPP 1f).
- 72 All looked after children and young people have a designated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). All looked after children and young people are reviewed regardless of where they live – for example we currently have children placed in Ireland and Jamaica, and the IRO travels to undertake reviews in the children's home. We ensure that children in secure accommodation are regularly reviewed in line with the secure criteria. Children in receipt of respite care (regular overnight stays away from home) are also reviewed every six months by an IRO.
- 73 IROs support children and young people to express concerns and issues about their care and treatment and ensure issues about standards of care and service are raised and addressed. IROs meet young people outside the review meeting to discuss any issues and ensure that their voice is heard. They also raise issues on behalf of young people when necessary.
- 74 The Brent Community Friends Club provides looked after young people with a safe environment where they can access peer and youth work support to discuss issues about being in care.

- 75 The Commissioning and Resources team, established in August 07, sources and commissions high quality, cost effective care for looked after children and young people requiring placements. The team also assists with creative services and packages for children and young people on the threshold of care. The team has directly diverted eight young people from residential care to foster care placements.
- 76 In line with the establishment of the Commissioning & Resources team, there has been further development of the Children's Placement Panel to ensure an overview of looked after children and young people resources; positive gate keeping and tracking and that services are available and being provided to young people on the edge of care.
- 77 Over the course of 2007/08, social care has achieved a reduction in its spend on Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector placements of almost £1.3m, which represents 8.5% reduction of budgetary spend. This has been achieved by a reduction in looked after children and young people numbers (see above); increasing the use of Brent placements; and clearer and more cost effective commissioning arrangements of PVI placements. This is enabling resources to become available for the development of preventative and additional family support services such as the expansion of the CIST.
- 78 During 2007/08, we successfully recruited to a new marketing post for fostering and adoption and this is located within the Commissioning & Resources team. Following this, the department has embarked on an ambitious recruitment campaign for both foster carers and adoptive parents underpinned by a recruitment and retention strategy and work plan for 2008/09. During the course of 2007/08, we have reduced our use of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers by 14.5%. We have set an ambitious target for 2008/09 to reduce this further by 25% and to increase the number of Brent foster placements (LAA 3).
- 79 We have launched our additional specialist fostering extra service, with targets to achieve 25 enhanced carers and also long-term foster carers for five identified children with extremely complex needs. This additional service which began in Sept 07, is now fully operational and is integrated into the marketing and recruitment campaign. We have also reduced our use of residential provision by 18%, by using appropriate foster placements for young people with challenging behaviour.
- 80 Prior to the use of any residential care placement or IFA fostering service/carers, full checks and vetting are undertaken by the Commissioning & Resources team. This involves full scrutiny of the latest Ofsted report which as a standard, focuses on the provider's ability and experience to meet the needs of children and young people in relation to health, education, ensuring their safety, enabling them to make positive contributions and assisting them to achieve economic well-being.
- 81 Residential care placements are only used once appropriate checks and vetting has been undertaken by the Commissioning & Resources team. In addition, wherever possible, placements are only used who are Pan London Contracted Providers. This ensures that they have an annual Pan London inspection, which is set above the national minimum care standards and regulations.
- 82 The department is a full member of Pan London and undertakes the annual monitoring inspections of residential care placements within the borough on behalf of Pan London. If improvement actions are then required, an action plan is agreed with the provider and this is monitored and reviewed. If the Commissioning & Resources team are required to use a residential provider for an emergency placement who has not been used nor inspected by the department previously, a commissioning monitoring visit and inspection is then undertaken within 28 days of the placement being made.
- 83 The assessment and review of Brent foster carers pays particular attention to their abilities to meet young people's cultural, religious and linguistic heritage needs. Requests to the Commissioning & Resources team for social care placements clearly identify the cultural, religious and linguistic heritage needs of

children and young people. There is a clear referral form which supports this process and enables consideration of these issues is taken in the matching process (CYPP 5f).

- 84 The department has developed an in-house contact service, which became operational in November 07 and this is integrated with the Commissioning & Resources team, so contact arrangements for the families of looked after children and young people can be planned before placements are made. The service has so far recruited 18 contact sessional workers and provides improved quality and consistency of contact for all looked after children and young people with their families as well as better value for money. The department is currently reviewing its contact policy in line with implementation of the PLO.

Support for Children and Young People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (Key Judgement 2.8)

- 85 The department has a family links scheme, which has a limited potential to develop an increased number of family respite breaks for children with disabilities (LAA 8). All children who are looked after and those that receive short breaks services are reviewed and monitored on a regular basis including those who are cared for out of borough. Monitoring is carried out by social care staff visiting family homes and by their attendance at review meetings.
- 86 There is additional monitoring of services for those that have been contracted out e.g. care at home. All Local Authority staff and those working in private and voluntary early years settings with children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have CRB checks. They also have access to multi agency child protection training where they are made aware of the Council's safe care policies and practices and are supported by experienced special needs advisory staff. All staff employed within the C&F dept including schools have access to specialist trained Child Protection advisors, health and safety officers and receive regular support and advice about safe care.
- 87 Brent manages two respite care residential units and they are regularly inspected by Ofsted. In response to the last Ofsted inspection which graded the Clements Close Unit as inadequate, over £30,000 will be spent in this financial year to modernise this facility to bring it up to acceptable standards. Both units have policies in place to ensure that children are safe and there are risk assessments for all children receiving care in the units. Staff have regular and updated training on care and restraints practices, safe medication and manual handling as appropriate to their client group.

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING

- 88 We judge that our overall contribution to this outcome is good. Our strengths include: GCSE results; pupil progress throughout the Key Stages; secondary attendance; and some educational improvements for ethnic minority groups.
- 89 As far as areas for development identified in the last APA are concerned, we note some improvements for Black Caribbean and Somali pupils, and the reduction in secondary exclusions over the last two years. Areas for future development include improving attainment in the foundation and primary stages; further reducing the rate of exclusions; and continuing the focus on improving educational outcomes for Black Caribbean and Somali pupils, and for looked after children and young people.

Early Years Provision (Key Judgement 3.2)

- 90 Early years provision shows continuing significant improvement in a number of areas (CYPP 2). There has been significant improvement in the proportion of PVI settings judged good or better by Ofsted (to July 06, 31%, to July 07 36%, to April 08, 50%). Up to April 2008, 100% were judged satisfactory or better.

- 91 In schools, there has been a significant improvement in the proportion of settings judged good or better (to July 2006 57%, to July 2007 64%, to April 2008 73%). The proportion of school settings judged satisfactory or better has remained broadly similar. (96% in 2006, 98% in 2007/08). Only one setting was judged inadequate, as of April 08.
- 92 Improving quality in both maintained and PVI early years settings has continued to be a priority for our work and internal monitoring of both sectors confirms this improving trend. Currently, 71% of PVI settings are rated as satisfactory or better by the SIS (compared with 64% in 2007). Sixty eight percent of school settings are currently rated satisfactory or better (69% in 2007 and 47% in 2006). Up to April 08, 26% of PVI settings have been rated good or better and 37% of school settings as good or better.
- 93 Attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage appears to have declined over the last three years and in 2007 was well below national averages. The proportion of children scoring 6 or more points in personal social and emotional development, and in communication language and literacy, was well below national averages. Similarly, the proportion of children scoring 78 or more points across all areas of learning was well below average. There continues to be a significant gap between the attainment of the lowest achieving 20% and the rest, reflecting the Outer London average. A number of factors contribute to these figures; the very high proportion of children in the Foundation Stage who are in the early stages of learning English; the high levels of deprivation in some parts of Brent; the turnover of practitioners in recent years; and most significantly, the accuracy of assessment.
- 94 However, we know that we shall see better results at the end of this academic year. As a result of intensive support for practitioners and clarification of criteria for success at 6 points or more, our monitoring tells us that there will be significant improvements in summer 2008. We are therefore on track for meeting our 2009 target.
- 95 A team of Early Years Advisory Teachers, three based centrally and five in Children's Centres, has continued to monitor quality and standards in all PVI settings, and to provide advice, support and training according to need. This support has had a positive impact on improving quality, despite high staff turnover in settings. Schools with Early Years provision have continued to receive support and challenge from specialist early years consultants (one FTE). Our records show that all settings have high regard for the support they receive. The work of these two teams is well aligned, leading to consistent advice being given on significant issues, observation and assessment, the organisation of the learning environment, and on aspects of learning.
- 96 The substantial Early Years training programme is highly regarded by PVI settings and schools. A significant amount of this training has been delivered within PVI settings this year, leading to more effective impact. The appointment of a specialist consultant for communication, language and literacy development has meant that schools are now receiving good leadership in the area of teaching phonics. The National Strategies continue to rate the leadership of the Local Authority on Early Years as good.

Standards and Progress Key Stage 1-4 (Key Judgement 3.3)

- 97 2007 results were disappointing in some aspects at KS1-3 but at KS4 results continued to be above national averages. We are proud that despite results being below average in some areas, progress measures right through the Key Stages continue to demonstrate the good or better progress made by Brent pupils ([Standards document](#)) (CYPP 3d and 3g).
- 98 At Key Stage 1, attainment in 2007 was below national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Results have shown an uneven but overall slightly downward trend from 2005-07. A notable

exception to this is the performance of boys at Level 3, which has improved in reading, writing and mathematics. The performance of boys in mathematics at Level 2B+ has also improved, contributing to an overall improvement in mathematics at this level.

- 99 At Key Stage 2, attainment was in line with the national average in English, just below the average for mathematics, and below in science. Attainment in writing, however, exceeded the national average. In addition, the level of improvement in both mathematics and science exceeded that achieved nationally. There is an upward trend in the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 in English and mathematics from 2005-07 with attainment at Level 5 in mathematics now in line with the national average. There has been significant improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in both English and mathematics, so that the figure is now only just below the national average. In addition, the proportion of pupils making two or more levels of progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was above national averages in both English and mathematics.
- 100 At Key Stage 3, attainment was below the national averages for English and science and just below in mathematics. This was largely attributable to substantial falls in specific schools. However, results for pupils achieving both English and mathematics at or above level 5 were one percentage point above the national average. The proportion of pupils making 2 levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 was above the national average. Brent's KS2-3 Contextual Value Added (CVA) score was 100.7, the highest in Outer London.
- 101 Attainment at Key Stage 4 is good. In relation to the national benchmark of 5 or more A* - C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, performance in Brent was above the London and national averages. Contextual value added measures from Key Stage 2 to 4 and Key Stage 3 to 4 indicate above average progress, and the proportion of students making two levels progress in English and mathematics was above both the London and national averages.
- 102 Raising the attainment of minority ethnic groups, particularly that of Black Caribbean and Somali pupils, remains a key focus of the work of the Local Authority (CYPP 3a). The Improving Outcomes Service Audit programme ensures regular analysis of data and support for improvement. High quality support and development opportunities for school staff have continued in the last year, including a well attended and very well received conference on raising the attainment of Somali Pupils. There have been improvements particularly at KS2 and KS4 this year, but there is still work to do.
- 103 At Key Stage 1, Asian Indian and White British pupils were the highest attaining groups and performed above the Brent averages, as was the case in previous years. However, the Black African (particularly Somali) and white other pupils generally performed below the Brent average, as did Asian Pakistani boys.
- 104 At Key Stage 2, Asian Indian and White British pupils consistently performed above the Brent average in all subjects. White Other pupils also achieved above average results in all subjects and were the highest performing group. This is a contrast with their position in Key Stage 1. Black African, Black Caribbean and Asian Pakistani pupils performed below the Brent average in all subjects, with Black African the lowest performing group. However, the gap between the performance of these groups, particularly Black Caribbean pupils, narrowed significantly in 2007. Over the last three years, results for Somali pupils have steadily improved, and results for Black Caribbean pupils have improved significantly.
- 105 At Key Stage 3, as in previous years, in 2007, Asian Indian pupils performed consistently well above the borough average. The performance of White Other pupils was at or just above the Brent average across all three subjects. Black African and Black Caribbean pupils continued to perform below the Brent average across all three subjects. Black Caribbean girls performed below the Brent average in mathematics and science and Black Caribbean boys performed below the Brent average in all subjects. Asian Pakistani girls

and boys also performed at or below the Brent average, with the exception of English where the performance of Asian Pakistani boys was higher than the Brent average. A three year trend for both Black Caribbean and Somali pupils shows some improvement.

- 106 At Key Stage 4, Asian Indian and Asian Pakistani pupils performed above the Brent and national averages. Black African and Black Caribbean pupils continue to perform below the Brent averages (LAA1). However, the percentage of Black Caribbean pupils achieving 5A*-Cs increased from 32% in 2005, to 42% in 2006 and to 49% in 2007. Somali pupils' 5A*-C results also improved from 34% in 2005, to 39% in 2006, to 43% in 2007. 5A*-C with English and mathematics results showed a one percentage point improvement for all pupils from 2006-7, a similar improvement for Black Caribbean pupils and a four percentage point improvement for Somali pupils.

Improving Schools (Key Judgement 3.3)

- 107 The majority of schools in Brent provide a quality of education which is at least satisfactory (CYPP 3c). A significant proportion of these schools achieve positive outcomes despite working in challenging circumstances such as high pupil mobility, high numbers of pupils with a history of disrupted or no previous education, and high levels of social and economic deprivation.
- 108 Between September 2005 and April 2008, 94% of schools (91% primary and 100% secondary) were judged satisfactory or better by Ofsted and 62% good or better. The proportion of good or better is higher for secondary schools than for primary schools (57% primary and 70% secondary).
- 109 Currently, there are two schools in special measures (and one with a notice to improve). HMI has reported satisfactory progress in relation to Key Issues for both schools. Whilst having any school in a category is undesirable, there has been a continued reduction in the number of schools in this category over time: from 9 by the end of 99/00, to 5 in 05/06, to 3 at present.
- 110 Personal development and well-being and care, guidance and support are significant strengths of Brent schools, with a high proportion rated good or better by Ofsted for this aspect: currently, 90 % up to April 08. However, whilst achievement and standards in many Brent schools are broadly satisfactory, we remain concerned about a significant minority of schools, particularly primary schools where attainment is too low and/or the rate of progress is too slow, given pupils' starting points. This picture is reflected not only in Ofsted reports (95% satisfactory or better for achievement and standards up to April 08 and 61% good or better) but also in 2007 performance data. Broadly, outcomes reflect the quality and effectiveness of school leadership.
- 111 The key priorities for the work of the School Improvement Service (SIS) since 2007 have therefore continued to be to:
- reduce further the number of schools in a category
 - increase the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted
 - improve the capacity of school leaders to raise standards and accelerate rates of progress for all pupils or specific groups of pupils in identified schools
- 112 Robust action taken since September 2007 has included:
- rigorous analysis of Brent performance data and the communication of the overall picture of achievement and standards in Brent to all headteachers and all school governors, with recommendations for action

- an intensified focus on supporting schools in improving progress-tracking procedures and in providing targeted interventions, and on the management and use of data at all levels in schools
- (in line with the Local Authority's Policy on Schools Causing Concern) rigorous action to secure improvement in schools in decline or at risk of decline, including the establishment of two soft federations (primary)
- the provision of more in-depth extended training and development opportunities for school leaders and aspiring school leaders to ensure the continuing supply of competent leaders
- the establishment of a strategic cross-service School Review Group of senior officers to monitor all schools' progress and contribute to intervention strategies
- the active involvement of the SIS in the development of locality working in Brent, with the long-term aim of securing whole community involvement in the provision of quality education across all schools within each locality.
- the establishment of a Primary Headteachers' Forum to promote educational debate and dissemination of excellence across all primary schools, to match the equivalent structure for secondary heads
- the refining and redefinition of criteria for categorising schools, as a basis for tackling the concept of 'satisfactory but could be better', ensuring that due weighting is given to standards and progress by SIPs in the process of categorising schools
- the provision of a clear, comprehensive, evaluative bi-annual report on the progress and performance for the governing body of each school
- the implementation (for primary) and development of the SIP programme, ensuring high quality monitoring, support and challenge for school leaders and the provision of excellent information for the Local Authority to inform review and further action (currently rated green by the National Strategies)
- the development of a system to ensure that all schools, not just identified schools, have from September 2008 a differentiated support plan, to ensure appropriate deployment of all resources of, or brokered by, the SIS and to facilitate the tracking of impact.
- a closer alignment of the specific objectives of the National Strategies with the broader school improvement agenda and the totality of the work of the SIS.

113 This activity has built further on the already well-established strengths of the SIS which include:

- a policy for categorising schools and for monitoring, support challenge and intervention which is well understood by schools and has continued to evolve
- a well-planned programme of visits to schools by SIPs/link advisers which has ensured continuing rigour, particularly for the annual review of standards and target-setting
- an expert workforce at the cutting edge of developments, whose work is highly valued by schools
- the rigorous implementation of National Strategies programmes tailored to match the needs of individual schools
- a wide-ranging programme of learning and development opportunities for school staff, offered both centrally and school-based, with a strong focus on deep learning through, for example, action research.

Children and Young People Are Enabled and Encouraged To Attend and Enjoy School (Key Judgement 3.4)

114 TellUs2 confirms that a higher proportion of Brent pupils enjoy school than is the case nationally and a high proportion intend continuing to university (CYPP 4f). Ofsted inspections continue to judge the attitudes and behaviour of children and young people in schools as at least good.

115 Attendance rates in secondary schools remains 1% above the national average. Attendance rates in primary schools rose by 0.5% in the year 2006-07 but remain 0.6% below the national average. Improving primary school attendance further continues to be a priority. To this end, in the last year we focused additional resources on persistent absence in schools causing concern, improved attendance action plans, and

provided clearer guidance on the management of some of the key obstacles to good attendance, e.g. 'Holidays and Extended Leave During Term Time' and 'The Procedure for Removing a Child's name from the Register'.

- 116 Feedback from schools highlights the positive impact of the Behaviour and Attendance team in helping primary and secondary schools promote excellent behaviour and attendance. Good impact is shown through feedback from schools about the support that is provided for senior leaders, individual teachers, targeted pupils and families, and for pupils at risk from permanent exclusion from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4.
- 117 Action taken in 2007-8 has included:
- A successful workshop on promoting excellent attendance
 - Partnership working with individual schools to improve behaviour and attendance
 - Work with five secondary schools on the Black Pupils' Achievement Project to raise the achievement of Black Caribbean and Black African pupils, and to reduce the exclusions of these groups
 - Setting up a Brent Secondary Student Anti-Bullying Council
 - A successful conference on tackling homophobic bullying
- 118 Priorities for 2008-09 include:
- Reducing the level of permanent exclusions, particularly of Black Caribbean pupils
 - Further improving attendance in primary schools and reducing persistent absence
 - Tackling bullying, in particular cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying
 - Promoting emotional health and well-being
- 119 Actions in response to these priorities includes:
- Joint working with the Improving Outcomes working group, and schools, to reduce the exclusions of Black Caribbean pupils
 - Work with the National Strategies, and target primary schools to reduce persistent absence in primary schools
 - Work with individual schools who model effective work to tackle cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying
 - The development of a SEAL Action Research Project with four secondary schools

Provision for those not Attending School (Key Judgement 3.5)

- 120 We have acted effectively to reduce secondary permanent exclusions from the last two years (*CYPP 3b*). There was a 13% reduction in secondary permanent exclusions in 2005/6 to 2006/7 and we are on track for further reductions in 2007/8. There are good partnership arrangements with head teachers and a commitment to retaining provision for fixed term exclusions of six days or more, which was developed through the Behaviour Improvement Programme.
- 121 We have been successful in achieving a reduction in the percentages of Black Caribbean exclusions from both primary and secondary schools. In 2006/7 Black Caribbean pupils represented 40% secondary school exclusions (49% in 2005/6). In 2006/7 Black Caribbean pupils represented 32% exclusions (52% in 2005/6).
- 122 Effective reporting and recording systems and procedures are in place to ensure that the Local Authority receives timely and appropriate information on all pupils excluded from school. These have all been updated following the new requirements coming into force in September 2007.

- 123 Secondary age pupils excluded for fixed-term periods of six days or more are referred to the Roundwood Right Track Centre, while pupils permanently excluded are referred initially to the newly-set up Ashley Gardens Reception Centre on day six prior to onward referral to alternative provision.
- 124 An Excluded Pupils Case Management Group, which includes head teacher representation, meets at three-weekly intervals to discuss the placement of permanently excluded pupils, to recommend Key Stage 3 re-integrations where appropriate, and to monitor ongoing cases. The Local Authority operates a supported re-integration agreement at Key Stage 3 with secondary schools.
- 125 In the past year, we have increased the capacity and quality of our alternative provision by the building of a new Key Stage 4 PRU and by the creation of two additional classrooms at our Tuition Service base, thereby increasing the opportunities for group tuition for those children unable to attend school for reasons other than exclusion.
- 126 The proportion of alternative provision of 20 hours or more per week has increased to 91.2% in the past four years (BVPI 159(d)) – the proportion of alternative education of 5 hours per week or less has reduced to 5.8% (BVPI 159(a)). We conduct an annual audit of provision and are able to give a clear account of cases where it has not been possible to implement full-time provision.
- 127 Connexions provide information advice and guidance services in the PRUs and the Freshstart programme. Connexions provides also support for this group of excluded young people to engage in and sustain learning or work through a 0.5 additional dedicated Personal Adviser post (CYPP 1a).

Support for Looked after Children and Young People (Key Judgement 3.7)

- 128 The Education team for looked after children and young people (EDLAC) provides advice and support to ensure all looked after children and young people have an appropriate school place. They support social workers to negotiate effectively with out of borough education providers and assess the effectiveness of school provision by monitoring the Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for all looked after children and young people. Liaison with out of borough authorities to ensure children are allocated an appropriate school place in line with their needs, including requesting statements of special education needs, is integral to the work of the team.
- 129 The PEP process has been effectively linked to the statutory review. The EDLAC team also holds regular seminars for staff on completing a good PEP and provides training opportunities for foster carers to promote the importance of education and the carers' involvement with this.
- 130 Close liaison with educational providers is maintained via the PEP process and links with designated teachers. Termly fora for Brent designated teachers are well attended and support partnership working and enable teachers and social workers to develop a better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.
- 131 We continue to strive to improve educational outcomes for our Looked After children and young people (LAA 5). There were 47 children in the cohort of whom 34 (72%) took the exams. Four achieved 5 A*-C GCSE's (including English and Maths), 22 achieved 5 A*-G GCSE's, 9 achieved at least 1 A*-G GCSE's and thirteen were not in mainstream education and therefore did not sit the GCSE exams. Three of the 13 were early stage EAL and will sit exams in 2008.
- 132 We are on target to reach our LAA stretch target to improve outcomes for 5A*-Gs. We have increased the numbers of young people sitting GCSE exams including, last year, supporting a pregnant teenager to return

to school to sit her exams (she achieved 5 A-G passes). We have increased provision of and involvement in booster classes and out of school activities. IROs encourage participation at reviews and ensure that each child is being encouraged to be involved in appropriate activities. The EDLAC team promotes involvement in activities for children living in or near Brent. For example, we have embarked on an exciting partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company comprising three workshops and a trip to Stratford on Avon to see a production. Twelve young people participated in this and the impact has been noticeable, with all the young people growing in confidence through the programme. A second programme is just starting and 16 young people have signed up so far.

- 133 Looked after children and young people are encouraged to sign up for courses with Brent Summer University Programme. We work closely with the local sports and leisure services to ensure that looked after children and young people and their carers have information about activities available locally and provide free access to them.
- 134 Brent Community Friends (our youth support group for looked after children and young people) are involved in a range of activities and have run a range of workshops, including cookery, fashion and design, sports, Spanish and filming, all of which encourage young people to develop wider individual interests.
- 135 Teaching support is provided in a range of ways to individual children to support their educational attainment. This support is available throughout the school career. Classroom support on a one to one or in small groups has been a successful approach in primary schools and for some children has helped prevent exclusion. All children in Year 6 are monitored and provided with appropriate support to help boost attainment levels and prepare for secondary school. The 2008 SATS and GCSE booster classes have attracted record levels of attendance in their first sessions. All young people in this cohort have had personal contact with an education caseworker, including visits made to out of borough placements and schools.
- 136 The PEP and statutory review processes provide formal opportunities to monitor attainment, attendance and cultural experiences on an individual basis. Personal achievements are recognised at the annual Celebration of Achievement event, which is well supported by senior officers and elected members.
- 137 The EDLAC team provides considerable support to children and schools where exclusion is a risk, both locally and for children placed out of borough. They have successfully prevented exclusions, or enabled the process to be managed in such a way as to support a positive outcome for the child.
- 138 Connexions deploys one personal adviser within the Leaving Care team to specifically support looked after young people. There is good progression of young people supported through this route.

Support for Children and Young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (Key Judgement 3.8)

- 139 The new integrated teams are ensuring that assessments of need are holistic and timely. Key workers form part of all the teams and with lead professionals they are providing better coordinated interventions and support. There is an increasing range of support services being developed as well as an increase in the take up of direct payments, (30 families), care at home (63 families) and leisure services (CYPP 3f). Short break provision in the form of residential respite care, care at home, direct payments, play scheme and extended school provision is available to all children with disabilities following assessment of need. These services will be reviewed in the autumn as part of Brent's Aiming High strategy for improving short break provision (LAA 8).

- 140 A youth worker and a development worker have been appointed to support and encourage a greater uptake of sport for disabled children and young people. Several new youth groups and sporting activities are now in place as a result of these initiatives. After school clubs and holiday play schemes provide opportunities for children with special needs to participate in a range of play activities and opportunities on a regular basis. Play workers organise indoor and outdoor activities, including trips to places of interest. Brent is well placed to begin to plan with parents and young people the opportunities provided by Aiming High short break funding to further develop opportunities that will support children and young people to improve their life chances.
- 141 Just over 2% of children and young people aged 0-19 have statements of SEN, which is slightly above the national average. There has been an increase in the number of statutory assessments of SEN undertaken in the past eighteen months despite thresholds remaining unchanged. There are increasing numbers of young children with complex needs requiring specialist support and some of the large numbers of new arrivals to the authority have significant needs (*see LAA evidence base*). Parent partnership arrangements are effective and the incidence of cases going to tribunal is low (1.91 per 10,000 school population as compared with 4.11 per 10,000 nationally).

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

- 142 Overall, we rate our contribution to this outcome as good. During the last year, the participation of young people in decision making has begun to show real impact. However, in common with most urban areas, we are struggling to reduce the numbers of young people who reoffend. Our main priorities for future development include reducing the numbers of young people who reoffend and those at risk of being first time entrants to the Youth Justice System (*LAA 2*).
- 143 We have successfully completed our strategy and plan for integrated youth support services. The delivery model was developed with the full involvement of a wide range of partners including schools, young people and the YOT. We are on track to commence implementation of our integrated youth support services by the end of 2008.

Children and Young People are Encouraged to Participate (Key Judgement 4.3)

- 144 Ofsted reports comment positively on the development of the pupil voice in schools. All schools have school councils or similar structures to reflect the pupil voice. Monitoring by the SIS confirms the good progress that many schools have made in giving due regard to pupil voice. There is ample evidence that many schools have taken action in response to pupils' views. Such action is recorded in School SEFs.
- 145 All secondary schools make provision for Citizenship either as a discrete subject or integrated across the curriculum. In primary schools, citizenship is usually included within a broad PSHE programme.
- 146 The Brent Youth Parliament, inaugurated in March 2007, is an effective mechanism for participation that impacts on service development and delivery (*CYPP 4a*) (*see Brent Youth Parliament Annual Report and [Progress on Brent Youth Parliament](#)*). The monthly sessions are well attended and much valued. The three task groups on crime and safety, health and well-being, and sport and leisure have benefited from specialist support from council officers and partner agencies. BYP members play a full part in key strategic planning such as the Targeted Youth Support project; the Local safeguarding board's E-Safety Sub Group; and The CYP Strategic Partnership Board (*CYPP 4a and b*). Positive impact of real joint working has so far has included: improvements in safety in and around schools; developing an E-Safety strategy recognised across London as good practice; BYP membership of a scrutiny task group for sexual health issues; the development of Hear by Right training; youth provision inspections by BYP members; and better advertising of activities for young people. These activities directly address issues raised in the TellUs2 survey around

improving personal safety and providing more organised activities. The youth service consult annually with young users of the service. Over two hundred young people were present at the consultation day in February 2008.

- 147 The youth service has trained 27 young grant makers who have responsibility for distributing funds for projects run by young people for young people. For example, in response to last year's concerns raised about sports opportunities, funding was provided to create new activities and deliver sports leader award training. In total, the number of beneficiaries from the 41 projects approved in the last year is 3489 young people (CYPP 1e).
- 148 Brent Youth Matters 2 is a service wide forum with membership from local youth projects. The group hold monthly surgeries where young people can debate issues of concern to them ("Speak Easy") and feedback to the service about areas of provision they would like to see improve. It has a programme of activities run for and behalf of young people (CYPP 4a and b). Members of this forum volunteer as peer motivators, voluntary youth workers and project owners of Youth Opportunity Fund programmes. Young people involved in the Duke of Edinburgh silver and gold schemes act as volunteers for bronze programmes. The Youth Opportunity Fund grant makers volunteer for this area of work which includes assessing proposals and making decisions about funding. Projects supported last year by grant makers included sensory safe equipment for young disabled people, a sailing project, the first youth descent of the Zanskar Gorge, and a football project for young travellers.
- 149 The Brent Youth Matters 2 Forum encourage citizenship and enable young people develop skills in governance. Peer Motivators engage with their peers and support tutors during the youth service's Summer University Programme. Participants of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme are engaged in volunteering as part of the community section of the Award.
- 150 The Training and Development Agency stated that Brent is the only London Borough to have had young people as full members of the 13-19 Integrated Youth Support Services Steering Group. Young people take part in Connexions panels making decisions on voluntary sector projects to be funded and sit on staff recruitment panels.
- 151 We are currently developing plans to ensure young people who attend Brent Youth Matters 2 are represented on each of the borough's wards that support neighbourhood working. This will provide an avenue for gaining proposals for projects and feedback on youth service provision in the ward. Recommendations will then be raised at the Youth Parliament by BYM2 members who are members of the Youth Parliament.

Action to Prevent Offending and Reduce Re-offending (Key Judgement 4.5)

- 152 Brent has provided two successful locality based Youth Inclusion Programmes over the year. The Church End/Roundwood YIP is supported via YJB funding and has a Senior and Junior arm; the success of the programme led to an extension of the approach into another of our deprived estates. Both programmes have helped to contribute to reducing anti-social behaviour on the relevant estates and to improving outcomes for the young people engaged with. The capacity of our Youth Inclusion and Support Panel (known locally as the Children's Support Panel or CSP) to identify children showing early signs of disaffection and/or engagement in anti-social behaviour has been enhanced by the increased use of the common assessment framework process to refer young people to the programme, The CSP has also continued to work alongside the Anti-Social Behaviour team to implement risk reduction strategies and to work with young people referred via this route. The CSP has also this year, revised the programme it runs on positive aspects of Black identity, now including an expanded focus on Black History.

- 153 One of the critical aims of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) is to prevent young people who enter the youth justice system from re-offending; key to ensuring this is re-integration into mainstream society – accessing services and engaging with the positive activities common to their peers. Education training and employment (ETE) are fundamental to this process and the YOS in Brent has achieved a very high level of engagement in these fields from young people supervised by us in the community. Almost 90% are involved in some form of ETE, although not always in mainstream provision. We have a dyslexia specialist amongst our education staff, able to offer screening and interventions as appropriate, as well as a Connexions personal adviser and learning mentor who works with over 16's.
- 154 All young people who become known to the YOS have had an assessment to identify the specific problems which may have contributed to their offending. As part of this process, young people are screened for substance misuse and those with identified needs receive the appropriate specialist assessment within five working days. Following on from the assessment, they are offered access to the early intervention and treatment services required within ten working days. We have a mental health worker sited within the YOS, seconded from CAMHS, with the ability to undertake specific mental health assessments and recommend onward referrals as appropriate. A programme of staff training on recognising and addressing the mental health needs of our clients is underway and robust protocols with CAMHS ensure that we are able to access services for our clients swiftly where necessary.
- 155 Young people who are supervised by the YOS on court ordered community sentences have been engaged in various activities which include reparation in the community and victim awareness work. From April to December of 2007 2,273 hours of reparative activity was undertaken in the community. For those young people leaving custodial sentences intensive support is offered in order to facilitate their resettlement in the community, including a voluntary programme which extends beyond the time when they are formally supervised by the YOS. The Resettlement and Aftercare Provision programme has recruited a large and enthusiastic group of community volunteers to act as mentors to young offenders on this programme.
- 156 Year on year increases in the numbers and proportion of Black heritage young people on the Youth Offending Register have been halted. The proportion of Black heritage young people on the register has decreased by 14% from 2007-8.
- 157 The YOS APA assessment by the YJB has noted that Brent has made steady progress against two of the datasets being analysed in the APA (NI 45 and NI 111) and is able to evidence appropriate strategic leadership from the YOS Management Board. The YOS assessment concurred that Brent has a solid infrastructure in place to strategically manage the Youth Crime Agenda, the capacity and capability to manage the identified risks and sustain positive outcomes for service users.

Support For Looked After Children and Young People (Key Judgement 4.6)

- 158 The IROs ensure that looked after children and young people reviews involve young people and carers to proactively ensure that they participate and contribute their views. In line with the establishment of the Commissioning & Resources team in 2007 (*see paragraph 75 – Stay Safe*), there has been further development of the Children's Placement Panel to ensure an overview of looked after children and young people and resources required. The panel has a positive gate keeping and tracking function to ensure that services are available and being provided where required, e.g education and schooling; therapy and counselling. The panel is able to assist with placements and planning at the various transition stages and ensure a focus and overview for cases which require complex or high risk care planning. The panel runs in parallel to care planning and the statutory reviewing process and agrees all financial decision making for looked after children and young people.

- 159 There are joint protocols in place between the YOS and looked after children and young people teams to ensure enhanced working around looked after young people who offend. Children and young people and their carers can access support and advocacy to make complaints – currently via the complaints officer, who will arrange independent advocacy for those who require it. Independent Visitors are commissioned for those young people who are eligible and would benefit.
- 160 Brent Community Friends Club, is consulted where appropriate in relation to policies, practice and procedures. Youth service consultation which includes Brent Community Friends Club takes place annually with young people in order to plan activities for the coming year.
- 161 Looked after young people are represented in the Youth Parliament and have been active in the Brent LSCB. Representatives meet with senior officers of the council to share their views about being in care. Discussion is in place to set up a “Children in Care Council” which will have a broader remit than Brent Community Friends. Five members of Brent Community Friends, a youth project for looked after young people, along with young people from Newham, Lambeth, Havering and Greenwich, were invited to attend the half-day consultation event to represent Brent on 22nd October 2007 at The Globe Theatre. The event focused on the Enjoying and Achieving outcome of *Every Child Matters*. Young people had the chance to share their views with each other, Lead Members, Directors of Children’s Services and representatives from key regional organisations.
- 162 Young people highlighted 3 main areas they would like to see addressed or included in the London Pledge and these were shared with other groups. Brent young people highlighted:
- The need to have placements that match the cultural background of the young person in order to improve relations and communication within the foster home;
 - The need for all young people to experience the benefits of higher and further education (e.g. Eton project);
 - The importance of having an opportunity to visit new foster placements before actually moving in
- 163 The Children and Families department is accountable to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Elected members contribute to the development of the department’s strategy through task groups and regularly requests reports on outcomes for looked after children and young people as part of its corporate parenting role.

Support for Children and Young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (Key Judgement 4.7)

- 164 The 14-19 team is piloting self-directed support for young people, which puts them in the driving seat in planning for their future (*CYPP 4b*). Developing consultation mechanisms for young people is a key priority for the service in 2008/09 and partnerships are currently being progressed with local and national voluntary groups to take this forward. Funding has already been agreed to work with young people to develop transition packs. Young people with disabilities are represented on Brent’s Youth Parliament.
- 165 The Connexions personal adviser is a key member of the transition team and works closely with young people to ensure that they are offered the advice and support to further their education and training after they leave school. The team work with adult services, training providers and voluntary groups to ensure that information is made available to parents and young people about post 16 opportunities. This is disseminated through individual discussion, school meetings and literature. A multi agency strategic group which will include representation from young people and carers is being developed to coordinate and plan services for young people aged 14+.

- 166 Brent Connexions has seconded one FTE Connexions personal adviser to the 14 to 19 Transition Team. In addition Connexions personal advisers provide advice for young people attending special schools and those in mainstream schools and colleges as well as to those who are in training provision or NEET. The LSC is funding Connexions through the London West Works Project to deliver an additional project to support young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into sustainable employment.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

- 167 Strong and successful partnership arrangements have continued this year, and we assess our contribution to the economic well-being of children and young people as good. We have sufficient accessible childcare places for our children. Particular strengths include the results at Level 2 and 3, and good participation rates in education, training or employment. There are low numbers of young people not in education, employment or training. Areas for further development include extending work-based learning opportunities and preparations for diploma delivery in 2009.

Preparing for Working Life (Key Judgement 5.2)

- 168 There is a broad range of opportunities within the curriculum (*CYPP 1a*). At Key Stage 5, college and school provision complement each other well to provide a broad choice for young people. All schools offer a choice of applied and practical courses from Key Stage 4. Brent 14 to 19 Partnership has continued to extend provision using a range of existing qualifications including BTECs and OCR Nationals. The partnership has continued and extended its shared provision after the increased flexibility programme direct funding ceased.
- 169 All schools have effective employer links through their specialist status and their use of the EBP. All schools have work-related and enterprise programmes at Key Stage 4 that are supported by employers. The College of North West London has strong links with employers. *"Its curriculum is closely aligned with its mission to provide learners with employment skills and opportunities. There are outstanding links with a wide range of local, regional and national employers."* (Ofsted 2007).
- 170 Within Brent two work-based learning providers offer Entry to Employment programmes. Apprenticeship programmes are delivered through the College of North West London's work-based provider (*CYPP 4d*). Success rates in work-based learning at the College have steadily improved. The overall success rate for apprenticeships in 2007 was 73% (LSC data). The rate of increase in young people completing an apprenticeship was above the national average in 2005/6 and much better than the rate in 2004/5. We are currently planning a council-wide apprenticeship scheme.
- 171 Overall there is good quality careers guidance and support, available for young people at all of Brent's providers (Ofsted reports). To ensure high quality clear and impartial careers education and guidance (CEG), Brent 14 to 19 Partnership established a CEG network for careers co-ordinators and Connexions personal advisers in 2006 (*CYPP 4b*). These staff have received training on schemes of work and resources for transition, in particular Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 which the partnership had identified as an area for development. Other training has included: diplomas; quality assurance including the new national Information, Advice and Guidance Standards and the Investors in Careers quality framework. Impartial information, advice and guidance on post 16 opportunities are provided for all young people. Brent Connexions brings together all providers of its services to ensure consistency between the Guidance Personal Advisors and Intensive Personal Advisors and to share best practice.
- 172 A highly successful Brent Careers Fair organised by Connexions was held in February 2007. Eight hundred young people and parents/carers attended. Connexions personal advisers are regular contributors to the Life FM 'Stop and Think' show, covering issues such as options and choices (*CYPP 4d*).

- 173 Choices booklets are produced and a copy for each year 11 student is delivered via schools. A comprehensive pan-London e-prospectus (Choice) is in place. The accuracy of Brent's information was graded green by the Choice management committee. The CEG network members have been trained to integrate the local area prospectus into CEG programmes.
- 174 Connexions personal advisers provide access to impartial information, advice and guidance in all schools, the College, alternative education sites, the Connexions Centre and through a range of outreach locations (CYPP 4b). The quality of Connexions delivery is monitored using the 'Key Steps to Quality' framework and all aspects are rated satisfactory or better.
- 175 The participation rates of vulnerable groups of young people are monitored including the percentage of care leavers in EET, the percentage of young people supervised by the YOT in EET, the percentage of teenage mothers in EET, the percentage of young people with learning difficulties and/or disability in EET and the percentage of BME heritage young people in EET. Targets are set and monitored by strategic groups, for example the Improving Outcomes group.
- 176 Black Caribbean young people now represent 25% of the total Brent 16-19 young people not in education, employment and training in comparison to 29% in 2006. However there is still work to do in reducing these numbers further.
- 177 Disadvantaged young people, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked after young people, at risk and underperforming young people are effectively targeted through information, advice and guidance, and where appropriate referred for intensive support.
- 178 Connexions has put in place specific personal adviser support to raise the participation and attainment of Black Caribbean, Mixed Heritage Caribbean and Somali young people, supporting those who are in the NEET group or at risk of becoming NEET (CYPP 3a). Strong preventative work with Somali young people is beginning to have some impact and the early stage of this work has been carefully evaluated. Personal advisers from the voluntary and community sectors working in locality based teams has proven a successful approach and we are now extending this model to all areas of the borough.
- 179 The participation rates of vulnerable groups of young people post 16 are monitored closely and support is in place through Connexions personal advisers working collaboratively across a range of settings.
- 180 In 2006-2007 Brent Connexions delivered 28,936 interventions including 14,153 one-to-one and other significant interventions. The CEG network has delivered training on tackling stereotyping. Participation in post-16 education and training at age 16 and age 17 is high, 83% compared to the national average of 76.1%.

The Co-Ordination, and Quality, of Education and Training (Key Judgement 5.3)

- 181 Courses offered are of good quality and students achieve very good results. The National Strategies Standards Meeting with Brent officers on 19 September 2007 confirmed that good progress is being made. Brent's % of 5 A*-C including English and mathematics is above the national average. The trend for this indicator is increasing faster than the national trend.
- 182 Achievement at Level 2 and Level 3 at 19 is above the national average. The Level 3 ALPS grade for 2007 was 2 (outstanding). The 2007 ALPS report shows that: 58% of subjects had value-added graded at least good compared to 52% in 2006 and 48% in 2005; 8% of subjects had less than satisfactory value-added compared to 12% in 2006 and 16% in 2005. This good performance is increasing progression opportunities to higher education, employment or further training (CYPP 4c).

- 183 47% of all learners taking A Levels are in the lower ability band. ALPS graded the value-added to this group as excellent. This indicates the inclusive approach of Brent's school sixth forms and the excellent support and teaching that they provide for less able learners.
- 184 The most recent Ofsted grades are:
- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| College | Good |
| Secondary schools | 2 outstanding, 9 good, 3 satisfactory |
| Work-based learning providers | 2 good, 1 satisfactory |
| Special schools | 1 outstanding, 2 good |
| Pupil referral unit | Outstanding |
- 185 Local Authority monitoring of provision confirms these findings. The 14 to 19 co-ordinator leads reviews of the quality of provision. We work with leadership teams to identify strengths and areas for development. Providers have agreed to share their expertise across the partnership. This has included support on delivery and resources, and observation of best practice. Providers are competent in assessing learning needs and using prior attainment data. Significant progress has been made adapting the curriculum to these needs.
- 186 Partnership working in Brent is strong. The 14 to 19 Partnership Structures were integrated into the Local Authority Children and Young People's Partnership structures in 2007. The 14 to 19 Strategic Steering Group includes representatives from key stakeholders, e.g. schools, colleges, Learning Skills Council, with representatives from this group being on the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board.
- 187 Partners have agreed a shared vision for 14 to 19 education and training in Brent. The vision includes collective responsibility for provision and outcomes. The five year strategic plan was unanimously endorsed by the 14 to 19 Strategic Forum. Operational plans are in place and evaluated twice a year. The 14 to 19 co-ordinator is effective in leading the implementation of the plan and the Steering Group effective in monitoring its implementation and ensuring decision-making and appropriate actions.
- 188 The partnership is working towards a consistent approach to solving issues related to joint provision. It has agreed to share data across providers. Schools have agreed to pay for additional Key Stage 4 courses at the college and at other providers in 2007. The cost of purchasing provision is transparent. Transport arrangements, common timetable blocks, learner welfare and administrative systems are in place for collaborative provision.
- 189 Preparations for the delivery of diploma provision continue to be a priority. The partnership made accurate self-assessments for the diploma gateway. Although unsuccessful in 2008, the process placed the partnership in a strong position for delivery from 2009. Vigorous discussions about the gateway feedback took place at the 14 to 19 groups that informed the successful application to deliver Creative and Media from 2009. The partnership has completed an audit of all providers' facilities for the delivery of the diploma lines of learning and agreed that common systems across the whole partnerships are necessary to successfully deliver diplomas. A conference will take place in July to finalise the lead providers for each diploma, the phasing in of lines for 2013 and the timetable blocks.
- 190 The planning for diplomas has drawn on the college's expertise, its Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) and the specialisms of all 14 secondary schools. This includes one specialist vocational school.
- 191 Information, advice and guidance and a range of support has been provided to young people who are in the NEET group or at risk of becoming NEET to support them in remaining or engaging in learning or work. As a result, the average adjusted 16-18 year old NEET figure for the three key months of November 2007–

January 2008 was 5.7%. This performance places Brent joint 12th of 33 London boroughs and in advance of our 2010 target of 6.5%.

- 192 Systems for tracking the participation rates of young people are strong. The January 2008 target figure of 6.8% for young people aged 16-18 whose activity was not known was exceeded at 5.9%. Focussing on specific geographical areas, the Connexions personal advisers work in teams going out into local communities to contact young people whose activity is not known and supporting them to re-engage with services and engage in EET. This work has been enhanced through additional funding via the LSC.
- 193 Brent contributes to a West London management information system and database (Core+) and the pan London LCCIS database which supports the tracking of young people's destinations and participation rates as they move across Borough boundaries.

Support for Looked after Children and Young People (Key Judgement 5.6)

- 194 IROs ensure pathway and transition plans are reviewed for this cohort. The Personal Education Plan for Year 10 and above asks specific questions about careers advice and planning (*CYPP 1a*). All relevant young people have an up to date Pathway Plan and an allocated Personal Adviser. 20% live outside the borough.
- 195 Ninety seven percent of all eligible Care Leavers have an up to date Pathway Plan which is reviewed as part of the Looked after Children's Review. This system provides a robust process for reviewing Pathway Plans with the additional benefit of monitoring by an IRO. Forty one percent of these young people have an allocated Personal Advisor in addition to a Qualified Social Worker (QSW). The decision as to which young people have both a QSW and a PA is made when specialist advice or knowledge is needed or at key transition points. Forty five percent of eligible young people are placed outside the borough. Through Brent's ambitious Invest to Save programme we expect a further increase in local in-house foster Care and semi-independent provision offering a broader range of suitable local provision.
- 196 Seventy nine percent of all former relevant care leavers have a Pathway Plan. This is a decrease of 9% from the previous year, as a relatively small number of older care leavers have not wanted a Pathway Plan and or have proved difficult to engage in reviewing their plans. The system for reviewing Pathway Plans with older care leavers is being reviewed and the more proactive stance successfully taken in the past will be re-instituted with young people who are proving difficult to engage. We forecast that by a more assertive approach we will match or increase the 2006/7 percentage in the next 3 months. Seventy nine percent of former relevant Care Leavers have an allocated personal adviser and whilst this is an improvement from 2006/7, we are considering how we can best meet the needs of care leavers over the age of 18 by establishing a dedicated provision within a newly created Looked After Children & Young People's Service which will be established in a forthcoming restructure.
- 197 Fifty five percent of former relevant care leavers live outside Brent. Whilst clearly older care leavers make a positive choice to move for education or employment we think that the increased range of semi-independent and foster carers will keep eligible and relevant care leavers in Brent where we can ensure they can access appropriate educational and housing opportunities. All Brent Care Leavers are viewed as high priority for social housing even if they are placed outside of Brent when under 18 years of age. However, other Local Authority housing departments do not always award the same priority for permanent housing. The proportion of former relevant young people are deemed to be in suitable accommodation is 79%. This is a slight decrease on last year's figures but we anticipate this will improve as the number of 16 and over care leavers placed in Brent increase.

- 198 The EDLAC team also runs a special work experience programme (Teenagers to Work) for young people, 16+ in addition to those offered through schools and colleges. Young people are placed in a range of different council departments – their choice may support checking out ideas for future careers, or simply give the opportunity to experience the world of work in a positive and non-threatening way. Feedback from last year was very positive.
- 199 Connexions deploys one personal adviser within the Leaving Care Team to work specifically to support this group of young people. There is good progression of young people supported through this route.
- 200 Information, Advice and Guidance about learning and work options is available through Connexions personal advisers in all schools and colleges and through the Connexions Centre. Information and support to apply for education and training placements is provided through Connexions.
- 201 As semi-independent provision for 16+ is not subject to regulation, the Commissioning Service has developed a specification for minimum standards for accommodation and support and this is agreed and signed up to by providers of such services. All properties are visited by the Commissioning Service prior to occupation, with full health and safety checks being obtained.
- 202 The department has successfully developed its Brent Shared House Scheme in partnership with Brent's Housing Resource Centre. This provides local and more accessible accommodation in private tenancies with floating support for 16 – 18 year old looked after young people (*CYPP 1b*). Packages of support are able to be varied, depending on the needs of the young person. In 07/08, four Shared Houses began, providing placements for 15 young people, with the same targets for an additional 4 houses and 16 placements in 08/09. In addition to the above, we have contracted with a specialist provision for four semi-independent placements for young people 16.5 – 18 years, with complex and additional needs, who need a much higher level of semi independent support and specialist intervention, e.g. young people with mental health needs.

Support for Children and Young People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disability (Key Judgement 5.7)

- 203 Our integrated approach ensures good quality advice and support is available to all young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 16–19.
- 204 In 2007 the 14 to 19 Partnership conducted research into the participation and progression of young people with complex learning disabilities and/or difficulties. This concluded that whilst participation in education and training 16-19 is high, progression post-19 is an issue. Providers are working together to improve progression opportunities.
- 205 The integrated transition team for young people 14 to 19 includes education and health workers work and provide holistic assessments, transition reviews and plans for all young people from Year 9 .The transition team use a person centred planning approach in producing transition plans and are piloting the use of self directive support with a number of young people. Funding has been secured to produce a transition pack with the active involvement of young people to support this process. Improving user participation is one of the priority areas for the service in 08/09 and discussions are in currently in progress with “Kids” to take this agenda forward.
- 206 The team members work closely with schools, colleges and families to ensure that all young people with learning disabilities and/or disabilities have access to advice and support as required .The Integrated service has strong links with Brent Carers Centre, Mencap, Brent into Work, Local FE colleges and Connexions where families and young people are signposted and supported in obtaining specialist advice

about benefit entitlement, work and post 16 opportunities. Direct payments are actively promoted and supported in Brent however they have not been popular with 16 and 17 year olds to manage their own care

SERVICE MANAGEMENT

207 We judge the contribution of services to delivering the five outcomes to be good. We continue to be an ambitious and forward looking Local Authority with a determination to provide the highest quality services. Leadership and management of services are strong and successful. As far as the area for development identified in the last APA, we have developed much better working relationships with the PCT. Our priorities for the future are outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan and reflected in the Local Area Agreement. The development of a joint child health strategy, based on shared priorities, will ensure continued focus on early intervention and prevention.

Ambition and Prioritisation (Key judgements 6.1 & 6.2)

208 Our vision is to provide high quality universal, targeted and specialist services that reflect the needs of the varying communities in Brent. Our key principles (reviewed following consultation in 2007) for improving outcomes for children and young people are:

- strengthen universal provision
- identify vulnerable children and families as early as possible
- increase resources available for early intervention
- enhance partnership working at locality level
- commission preventative services appropriate to the needs of local communities

209 Our plans for integrated services and locality based working are key to achieving our ambitions. We have made the decision to move towards a locality based multi-agency structure by 2010. The first stages of this have been evidenced in the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) roll out.

210 Our integrated services pilots, which tested out the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework in Kingsbury and Harlesden, have proven successful and the evaluation reports are very clear about what works and what doesn't. For example, one of the challenges highlighted in the recently published second stage independent evaluation (*see paragraph 2*) is the vast range of risk factors present within each family which can mask the key critical needs. Training is now underway to ensure staff can effectively assess the key risk indicators. We are now implementing the model across Brent and common assessments are being completed in the five localities. We have trained 450 front line staff and have held awareness raising sessions in the majority of schools involved in the pilots. We have carried out over two hundred common assessments, the majority referred by schools and have been able to offer culturally appropriate preventative services to over one hundred children identified through the CAF process as having additional needs. One of the most valuable developments through CAF has been that those children who had needs but did not meet the social care threshold for statutory intervention are now being provided with services that would not have been available to them in the past. On May 6th CAF was launched successfully borough-wide. The pilots have been successfully evaluated and the results shared widely.

211 We have also made significant progress in strengthening our specialist services. There have been significant developments in our integrated services delivery for children and young people with disabilities. Three multi-agency teams are now in place. All children and young people with complex needs now have a key worker assigned.

212 We continue our drive forward on improving outcomes for Black African and Black Caribbean children and young people and we are committed to continuing this work (*CYPP 2a/LAA 1*). Although there have been

some improved outcomes, there is still work to do in raising the attainment of Black Caribbean and Somali boys in particular, and Black Caribbean children and young people are still over-represented in school exclusions, on the Youth Offending Register and in youth unemployment figures.

Capacity to Improve (Key Judgement 6.3)

- 213 We continue to deepen our understanding of our changing and complex community and our partnerships are strong, profitable and effective. In the past year, we have refined our needs analyses and have made good progress with locality based mapping of need and demand. There is partnership support for our work and shared commitment to our vision. A strong partnership with schools has ensured our very good progress with extended services and co-operation for moving to locality based working. Each of the five localities will have a group of professionals analysing needs and setting priorities and using combined resources to address these. Schools are at the heart of this work and head teachers are playing key roles in the process.
- 214 We have established a high-level multi agency group to work through the practicalities and provide a strategic lead to implement our plans for integrated services in localities. The board, chaired by the Director, includes head teachers, colleagues from the PCT and senior councillors. We have agreement from partners to develop our extended schools clusters as partnership locality boards. This work has started this term and will continue to be a major piece of work for the next two years.
- 215 We have obtained the agreement of the Schools Forum to top slice the DSG to fund 10 Integrated Services Support Officers to support schools with CAF and this funding will increase in each of the next two years to £750,000 p.a.
- 216 The Children and Young Peoples' Strategic Partnership Board (CYSPB) has provided a strong lead, effective partnership working and incorporated direct participation from young people. The CYSPB has clear structural links with the Local Strategic Partnership: our Director is chair of the CYSPB and a member of the LSP, and the priorities for children and young people are championed at the very highest level. The three main priorities of the council have priorities for children and young people deeply embedded within them.
- 217 The CYSPB has been strengthened considerably this year. The new Borough Commander has played an active part; the new Chief Executive of the PCT is also a full active member; and schools have requested and been given increased membership. All this is evidence of the growing leadership role of the board. The CYSPB has been proactive in listening and responding to young people's concerns. There are many examples of this to cite, however we would single out one example. One of the key things young people have told us is that they are concerned about crime in and around school at arrival and leaving times. The Borough Commander has set up a special sub group of the partnership board, with head teacher involvement, to address these issues (CYPP 1c).
- 218 Over the last year, we have made real progress in our partnership with the PCT. Relationships with the PCT have improved substantially since last year (see *Being Healthy*). The Chief Executive of the PCT is now an active member of the CYSPB and the champion for obesity and nutrition (LAA 4). Two instrumental away days were held with the PCT which resulted in shared priorities with regard to children's health outcomes which will form the basis of a joint child health strategy supported by a joint commissioning framework as a key delivery mechanism.
- 219 The Brent LSCB continues to be a strength and to have the full involvement of all agencies, including the voluntary sector. Of particular note is the work of the E-Safety sub group, which has broken new ground

and is at the forefront of raising awareness about what is often an area of unrecognised risk to children and young people.

- 220 The reviewed Children and Young People's Plan is based on a strong and detailed assessment of need and the first priority: '*Creating the conditions in which children and young people thrive*' is a genuinely council wide priority (CYPP 1).
- 221 In the last eighteen months, under the auspices of a Transformation Board with cross council membership, we have been successfully implementing a strong corporate initiative: the Invest to Save programme in social care. This programme was developed after benchmarking best practice elsewhere and is designed to contain and then reduce expenditure on looked after children and young people by investing in nine services for children and young people on the threshold of care or being looked after. This is an ambitious project, which in its first year has reduced the number of looked after children and reduced expenditure on PVI placements by £1.3 million. All departments of the council are actively engaged in this work and progress is reported to The Chief Executive's monitoring group.
- 222 A second Invest to Save programme, focusing on children with autism, behavioural, emotional and social needs, including looked after children returning to the borough, has just come on stream. The focus will be on strengthening in-borough specialist provision.
- 223 We are ambitious for the best possible school provision for our complex population of children and young people. We are still positively managing the pressure on school places through casual admissions and a very proactive project with our secondary schools. For the future, academy plans continue apace (CYPP 3e).
- 224 Two new academies will help to fulfil our need for additional school places. The Wembley Academy has been brought forward and will open in Sept 08 in temporary accommodation with permanent building scheduled for Sept 2010.
- 225 Political leadership has been strong in the last year and an example of this is the strong progress on the academies plan. The focus has been on reducing the pressure on places and providing the best possible provision for children and young people. The leadership has been resolute and successfully argued the case in the context of considerable opposition from some quarters.
- 226 Good systems are in place to monitor, evaluate and review our progress. We intend delivering services that young people are telling us they want and making improvements to existing ones (see Positive Contribution). Young people now make a significant contribution to the planning and delivery of our services.
- 227 We have made good progress with developing systems to record and communicate the needs of individual children, young people and their families.
- 228 ContactPoint is currently in development and will be deployed in Brent in March 2009. We have delivered on every milestone in relation to this, which includes running three data sources through LDQT (Local Data Quality Tool) by 30th March 2008. We have agreed a high level training schedule and rollout plan as well as a Data Quality Strategy and Plan.
- 229 Our Social Care division uses Frameworki which is an electronic case management system that implements an electronic workflow model which supports the *Integrated Children's System (ICS)*. This replaces the existing paper files used for children's records and enables the case workers to record electronically and share accurate and relevant information in a timely manner for children and young people, parents and carers.

- 230 We have met all targets set out by the Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) for the implementation of ICS. There are currently 26 ICS exemplars and we have implemented every one of them within our workflow processes. This supports the development of plans, which include clear objectives and measurable outcomes for children with clear action plans for all agencies involved (Child Protection and looked after children and young people) with the child or young person. In addition we were one of only 40 local authorities nationally to meet the Phase 1 implementation deadline in December 2006 and we became Phase 1B compliant in May 2008. Brent is the first Frameworki customer to go live with Frameworki release 3 which is phase 1b compliant.
- 231 Establishing our Local Area Agreement 2008-11 has been a useful and practical partnership activity for us. Establishing joint priorities, targets, funding streams and commissioning opportunities with the PCT and other partners is evidence of good working relationships to the benefit of children and young people. The LAA demonstrates our ability to set clear priorities based on evidence (see Context).
- 232 We made good progress last year with LAA targets and are on track to meet 2009 targets. The second LAA is based on thorough analysis of local priorities. There are 23 indicators which include the statutory indicators, in the new LAA focusing on children and young people. The non statutory indicators focus on CAMHs services, support for disabled children, obesity, stability of placements for looked after children and young people, KS4 attainment for minority ethnic groups, first time entrants to the Youth Justice Service and teenage pregnancy. Also included, are indicators relating to violent crime, serious acquisitive crime and drug users in treatment. The strong council and partner commitment ensures that we have resources to commit to our priorities in the coming years.
- 233 We are committed to using resources well to focus on priorities and achieve best value for money. We have refined our commissioning processes by ensuring the appropriate commissioning approach for different service areas and initiatives as well as thorough and transparent processes that achieve value. Our capacity for commissioning is expanding in order to drive forward improved outcomes through robust commissioning processes. Commissioning ensures that local partners have adopted race equality schemes, regularly undertake impact assessments, and respond appropriately to the SEN and Disability Act 2001. This year we have decommissioned projects provided through Children's Fund and started a new bidding round. This ensures a close focus on priority rather than historic patterns of expenditure.
- 234 A major piece of work this year has been the review of the Dedicated Schools Grant formula to target deprivation and underachieving groups. This has been carried through with the full consultation and co-operation of schools. We know from our analysis that we needed to target resources at the most vulnerable in our community and this review has allowed us to do that. The review was thorough and has achieved widespread support for effective targeting of substantial growth funding.
- 235 The additional budget made available to implement the common assessment framework has been spent largely in the PVI sector with known local providers where we have developed services in partnership.
- 236 We have a strong history of making good use of funding streams to ensure delivery of our priorities. Currently, we are ensuring the best possible plans are in place to use the new resources available through BSF, PCP, Playbuilder, PAYP/YOF and My Place. With Playbuilder, implementation plans are currently being developed by a planning group involving representatives from parks, play, sports and policy and regeneration.
- 237 *Gross expenditure on services to children per capita aged under 18*
Expenditure has been broadly comparable to our statistical neighbours over recent years and the Council has invested significantly in Children's Social Care since 2007/08 with a £2m injection to deal with demand

pressures and a further £2m on an Invest to Save basis to primarily support earlier intervention and thus reduce placement costs. This is a very significant commitment from the Council given the overall challenging funding situation faced by the Council as a Local Authority that is and will be for some time on the funding floor for the Revenue Support Grant.

- 238 *Expenditure on family support services per capita aged under 18*
The Audit Commission profiles for this measure can be subject to wide variation due to differences in interpretation of the guidance for their compilation. The 2006/07 figures compiled for Brent in the PSS EX1 were completed on an incorrect basis due to misinterpretation of the relevant measures by officers at that time. The current estimate for 2007/08 calculated on a more accurate basis and more consistent to other Local Authorities shows a figure of 58.7. This is broadly in line with previous years (2005/06 and before). The Council has invested further resources into family support services in 2007/08 and 2008/09 and will continue to do so as placement expenditure reduces.
- 239 *Gross expenditure on children in need but not looked after, as a percentage of gross expenditure on all children's services.*
The Audit Commission profiles for this measure can be subject to wide variation due to differences in interpretation of the guidance for their compilation. The 2006/07 figures compiled for Brent in the PSS EX1 were completed on an incorrect basis due to misinterpretation of the relevant measures by officers at that time. The current estimate for 2007/08 calculated on a more accurate basis and more consistent to other Local Authorities shows a figure of 39%. This is broadly in line with previous years (2005/06 and before). The Council has invested further resources into family support in 2007/08 and 2008/09 and will continue to do so as the LAC placement expenditure has reduced.
- 240 *Gross expenditure on children looked after per capita aged under 18*
During 2006/07 the Council experienced a large increase in the numbers of LAC as the population increased and in line with the changing profile of needs within the Borough. The Council took measures quickly to get numbers of LAC children under control through greater investment in family support and preventative services resulting in a slight reduction in this measure from £326 in 2006/07 to an estimate for 2007/08 of £287.
- 241 *Average gross weekly expenditure per looked after child in foster care or in a children's home*
The estimated 2007/08 figure is broadly in line with previous years at £875 and reflects effective commissioning arrangements and a move to increase the number of "in-house" foster carers, resulting in an increase that is more or less in line with inflationary pressures.
- 242 *Percentage of primary schools with 25% or more surplus places*
Brent's measure is low and in line with similar boroughs and is expected to reduce further from 2007/08. In fact the Borough has a severe shortage of places at reception and is investing significantly to expand primary places to meet this demand.
- 243 *Percentage of secondary schools with 25% or more surplus places*
Brent's measure is low and in line with similar boroughs and is expected to reduce further from 2007/08. In previous years (2006/07) there had been surplus places in the South of the Borough which is reflected in the figures for this measure. For 2007/08 and future years, however, there are no surplus places in Year 7 and in fact the Borough has a severe shortage of places at year 7 and is investing significantly to expand secondary places to meet this demand.
- 244 *Percentage of social care staff directly employed posts for children and families vacant on 30 September*

This shows an increase for 2006/07 which is greater than similar boroughs. A number of measures have been put in place to ensure vacant posts are kept to a minimum. There has been a significant reduction in agency staff usage in social care.

- 245 *The percentage of residential child care workers who have achieved level 3 in the NVQ "Caring for Children and Young People"*
Brent's performance in this measure shows an improving trend and at 2006/07 which was slightly better than its statistical neighbours.

Performance Management (Key Judgement 6.4)

- 246 Performance management is strong. The newly formed data team will strengthen performance management systems and structures by tying more directly to outcomes. We continue to improve the access to, provision of and use of data to refine priorities. To improve our analysis of need, we have, this year, brought together our service planning, information and performance functions into a Performance and Planning team within the department. This will give us better quality management information to agree priorities and effectively deploy resources.
- 247 We now have in place six cross cutting service plans for the department. The Children and Young People's Plan progress against outcomes is monitored quarterly by the Director's management team and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board. Performance management is reported at quarterly intervals culminating in an annual report. Key indicators (vital signs) are monitored by the Lead Member at quarterly intervals as well.
- 248 A three year Children and Families Workforce Development Plan was launched in February 2008 which is delivering 19 workstreams. The Workforce Development Partnership will refocus on the Building Brighter Futures agenda and will concentrate on implementation of the Workforce Development Plan and Workforce Reform. An annual progress report on the plan will be taken to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board. We are looking at strengthening Workforce Development coordination by appointing to a new post. We are ensuring that workforce transformation is in line with the Workforce Development Plan and the Children and Young Peoples Plan by starting to approach change from a departmental, rather than service unit point of view. To this end we are taking a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of a range of transformations such as Integrated Working, Targeted Youth Support, Social Care and Transport in order to plan for future skills requirements, capacity building and new ways of working.
- 249 We are starting to work with our partners in the Police and PCT to look at ways of working together to build capacity in the Children's Workforce as well as share resources and work in a more joined up way. Recruitment and Retention and Learning and Development are geared towards future needs. Examples include moving towards more generic job descriptions, which focus on skills and developing staff in areas such as the Common Assessment Framework and the Common Core to prepare for current and future needs. HR management tools such as the Flexible Working Toolkit have been developed to support staff to move towards flexible locality and home based working. The school workforce modernisation is going well and all schools have complied with the national agreement. We offer a model of continuing professional development for Year 2 and 3 teachers and promote school based, action research development supported by coaching and mentoring. We also offer high quality support for NQT induction.
- 250 We have reduced the number of agency staff by filling permanent roles through investing in "growing our own", staff benefits; significant learning and development opportunities; recruiting from abroad; targeted recruitment campaigns; and the development of a bursary scheme. Staff report that they are given the opportunity to improve their skills and overall staff morale is improved.