



<b>Title of the Assessment:</b>	Children and Young People's Plan	<b>Date of Assessment</b>	20/01/2011
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<b>Equality Impact Assessors</b>	Katherine Peddie	<b>Version</b>	1.7

### 1) What are the objectives of the policy / strategy / plan?

The vision for children and young people in Central Bedfordshire is:

“We want every child in Central Bedfordshire to enjoy their childhood and have the best possible start in life. We want every child to do well at school, make friends and build strong relationships with their family. By the age of 19, as young adults we want every young person to have the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success, so that they are prepared to take their full place in society as a happy, healthy, contributing and confident citizen.”

This vision will be delivered by focusing on the following priorities and objectives:

#### **Priority 1: Helping children and young people achieve more and transforming our relationship with schools**

Objective 1: Transform teaching and learning and raise achievement for all learners including underachieving groups and children in vulnerable circumstances

Objective 2: Develop and promote children and young people's positive contribution to all communities across Central Bedfordshire so that they are able to influence the decisions that affect their lives and wellbeing

#### **Priority 2: Protecting children and keeping them safe**

Objective 3: Protect children and young people from harm by providing a co-ordinated and effective safeguarding process.

Objective 4: Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.

Objective 5: Reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour

#### **Priority 3: Reducing child poverty and the effects for those living in poverty and improve early intervention and prevention**

Objective 6: Maximise opportunities for families in poverty to access employment which will have the outcome of more families working and thus reducing levels of family and child poverty

Objective 7: Ensure families in poverty are accessing all available financial assistance so that non-working families move from worklessness into work in the meantime accessing appropriate benefits

Objective 8: To improve life chances of children and families by intervening early to prevent poor outcomes and raising educational achievements and aspirations with the outcome that children from poor households gain better qualifications to ensure their access to the labour market so that the cycle of intergenerational poverty is broken

Objective 9: Work with colleagues from all sectors and agencies to improve the environmental factors which exacerbate the effects of poverty and harness the resources of the third sector and services across the Council so that poor families

develop healthier lifestyles to prolong life expectancy and live in an improved environment

**Priority 4: Targeting the most deprived area and vulnerable groups to improve children's emotional and physical health.**

Objective 10: Focus on early intervention including children's mental health services, childhood obesity, drugs and alcohol and sexual health

Objective 11: Transform services for disabled children

**Cross cutting priority: Workforce development**

- To understand the current and future workforce needs relating to sectors supporting the above priorities.
- Continue to develop the knowledge and skills of all those working with children, young people and families.

**2) Levels of Awareness and Access:**

**Take-up rates – What methods do you use to monitor the characteristics of service-users?**

The characteristics of service users are determined through a number of performance management systems from within the local authority and within the partner agencies. The key tool used in determining the priorities was the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). In addition, equalities screening tool from the Equalities and Diversities Manager was used to look at national trends in equalities to ensure that key issues had been addressed locally.

Some of the performance tools show characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or belief or whether the child is eligible for free school meals (as an indicator for child poverty). This is not used consistently at present across all of the indicators and whilst Delivery Group Leads are keen to develop analysis and understanding based on the wider characteristics of service users, this is still in its infancy.

**Are some groups under or over represented compared to census data for Bedfordshire?**

Whilst outcomes for children in Central Bedfordshire are generally good, there is evidence to suggest that within four key geographical areas of Central Bedfordshire outcomes are not so good. High performance in some areas mean that when the figures are averaged out for the authority, low performance can be masked. For example, the most vulnerable schools within these four priority areas are also schools that have not achieved Healthy Schools status, Within these areas there is a higher incidence of teenage pregnancy, higher levels of smoking within pregnancy, lower examination results, higher instances of school exclusions, lower take-up of diplomas etc. However, the average performance for each of these indicators is good. Therefore a monitoring within these 4 priority areas is critical to understanding the needs of the most vulnerable communities or the ability to 'drill down' into the performance is needed by each of the outcome groups.

**Why is this?**

There is a marked difference in uptake of services from middle class white families across Central Bedfordshire in comparison to those who are on lower incomes, single parent families or from vulnerable groups.

### **What steps could you take to improve levels of awareness or access to services?**

One of the priorities is to reduce child poverty and improve early intervention and prevention which should address the needs of these vulnerable groups, but it is imperative that the data is analysed. It is also imperative that ward level data is obtained regularly from the Luton and Dunstable Hospital and surrounding hospitals as it is very difficult to make any meaningful comparisons at present between the inequities between Bedford Hospital and Luton and Dunstable Hospital (as the Bedford PCT is not the primary commissioner for the Luton and Dunstable Hospital they have difficulties in obtaining the data in a format which is meaningful i.e. postcode level data).

The consultation exercise on the CYPP involved over 4,000 children and young people out of a total population of just over 63,000 children and attached great importance to the value of what children were actually saying their priorities were in their local areas.

Qualitative and quantitative data was obtained from this consultation which was further analysed by gender, demographical area, schools and ethnicity. There was relative consistency in the views of children and young people in terms of the priorities.

### **3) Understanding the needs of local communities:** (issues relating to disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, and sexual orientation)

As per question 2, much of the data that is available on the individual needs of the communities is not used consistently and high averages across the local authority could mask issues within the 4 priority geographical areas where there is a higher incidence of deprivation and poor outcomes.

Very little data, if any, is collected in relation to sexual orientation and gender reassignment. This has to be identified as a potentially vulnerable group about whom little is known in the context of Central Bedfordshire.

### **What methods will you use to find out whether this policy will take into account the needs of all sections of the community?**

Screening documents were produced for the Children and Young People's Plan which helped in informing the selection of the priorities in 2009. This included national research and each of the delivery sub groups was issued with a copy of the relevant section of the JSNA. This refreshed plan for 2011-2014 has retained many of the original priorities.

Future service user feedback surveys, the Tell Us survey and the analysis of surveys undertaken within all agencies should be forwarded to the JSNA Project Officer in the PCT who will ensure that the findings are fed into future iterations of the plan. This



will ensure that when looking at the priorities in future that the most up to date information is available.

National Research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local Research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
*Consultation with Service Users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	*Consultation with Community / Voluntary Sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
*Consultation with Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	Customer Feedback	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Analysis of service outcomes for different groups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inspection Reports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statutory Equality Guidance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>

## National Data

### Age

There is little national data in relation to age, however it should be acknowledged that teenage parents and their children are more likely to live in poverty.

There is also an understanding that in relation to Mental Health provision, there appears to be an inequality in provision for young people between 16 and 18 who may be inappropriately placed in adult provision, or in the worst case scenarios not receive help at all.

### Disability

Eight out of ten children with learning disabilities have been bullied at school and six out of ten have been physically hurt.

Disabled children and those with visible medical conditions can be twice as likely as their peers to become targets for bullying behaviour.

Disabled young people are at particularly high risk of being NEET between the ages of 16 and 19.

21% of disabled people aged 16-24 have no qualifications, compared with 5% of non-disabled people of the same age.

Disabled students account for only about one in 20 undergraduates.

People with mental health conditions or learning disabilities have very low employment rates.

For pupils with SEN (both without a statement and those with a statement of SEN), 15.4 percent achieved a good level of development. This compares to 55.5 percent for those pupils with no identified SEN.

## Gender

Girls outperformed boys in 11 of the 13 scales of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Boys are four times as likely as girls to be identified as having a behavioural, emotional and social difficulty and are nine times as likely as girls to be identified with autistic spectrum disorder. Only 18% of poor white British boys achieve 5 or more GCSE passes.

Girls outperformed boys at Key Stage 4 - 54.4 percent of girls achieved 5 or more A\*-C grade GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics compared to 47.1 percent of boys (Source: DfE 2008/2009 data)).

The gender differences (a female advantage of more than 10%) are for subjects in the humanities, the arts and languages.

Boys account for 80% of permanent exclusions and 75% of fixed term exclusions.

More young men than young women are NEET. 12% of male 16-18 year olds compared with 10% of girls.

Girls are achieving better results than boys but they are still being steered towards choices that lead to low paid, low status jobs. Women graduates are paid less from the very beginning of their careers – the median salary of full-time first degree male graduates, three years after graduation is £1k higher than that of equivalent female graduates and a higher proportion of men are in higher paid work – 40% of men compared with 26% of women.

National research suggests that less able boys are virtually unemployable because they lack interest, drive, enthusiasm and social skills. The single group most likely to be shut out of higher education in future decades is white boys from poor backgrounds. In some urban universities they are in a small minority.

## Race

A higher proportion of pupils from Irish, Indian, Mixed White and Asian and White British ethnic backgrounds achieved a good level of development when compared to all pupils.

53.5 percent of pupils whose first language is English achieve a good level of development, compared with 41.9 of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Just 77% of 3 & 4 year old ethnic minority children use early years provision, compared to nearly 87% of white children

The highest achieving ethnic groups at KS4 (2008/2009) were:

- Chinese pupils – 71.6 percent of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-C grade GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics

- Indian pupils – 67.0 percent of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-C grade GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics
- Mixed White and Asian pupils – 62.3 percent of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-C grade GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics.

The lowest attaining groups at KS4 were Traveller of Irish Heritage pupils and Gypsy/Roma pupils, where respectively 9.2 and 9.1 percent of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-C grade GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics. For both ethnic groups this is an increase from 2008. Care should be taken in making comparisons due to the low number of eligible pupils from these ethnic groups.

Other than the ethnic groups with very small number of pupils, the lowest achieving were Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Other Black and pupils from a Mixed White and Black Caribbean background. However the gaps between these groups and the attainment of all pupils have decreased since 2006.

### **Exclusion:**

The risk of permanent exclusion is much higher for pupils from some ethnic minority groups, especially Traveller of Irish Heritage pupils. The most up to date information from the DfE (2008/09) shows that there were 24 (21.82% - The number of fixed period exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils by phase, (excluding dually registered pupils) in January 2009) fixed term exclusions of children from Traveller of Irish Heritage background and 10 (9.90%) from Gypsy/Roma background (this is for children in the whole of Bedfordshire (prior to disaggregation)).

Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils, Black Caribbean pupils and Black Other pupils have a much higher rate of exclusion than average. Families have an “overwhelming perception” that unfair and inconsistent behaviour management in school is a significant problem. The most up to date information from the DfE (2008/09) shows that there were 75 (6.98% - The number of fixed period exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils by phase, (excluding dually registered pupils) in January 2009) fixed term exclusions of children of children from Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils, 60 (4.22%) Black pupils and 29 (5.09%) Caribbean pupils. Whilst these figures were below the regional average in 2008/09, these figures should continue to be monitored.

**A significant minority of primary and secondary schools fail to assess the impact of exclusion practices on ethnic minority pupils**

The life expectancy of Gypsies and Travellers is 10 years lower than the national average

Gypsy and Irish Traveller mothers are 20 times more likely than mothers in the rest of the population to have experienced the death of a child.

The evidence base on ethnicity suggests that young people from some ethnic minority groups may also be at greater risk of being NEET.

The differences in attainment are reflected in the NEET rates. Amongst 16-19 year olds in 2005: 13% of African-Caribbean people were NEET compared with 8% 'White British' and 4% of those of Indian heritage.

Black students are the least likely to enter higher education via the traditional A-level route: They tend to be 'mature' students i.e. aged over 21, to enter with vocational rather than academic qualifications and are at higher risk of dropping out without completing their degree.

Ethnic minority students are significantly less likely to gain a first in their final degree classification.

Gypsies and Irish Travellers can face barriers to employment due to low literacy levels.

Black African and Bangladeshi men can also experience significant employment penalties.

People from ethnic minority backgrounds are nearly a fifth less likely to find work.

White British students, both boys and girls, are more likely than young people from other backgrounds to persist in low achievement: if they start school in the lowest categories of achievement they are more likely than others to be still there at the end of secondary school.

Black and Minority Ethnic pupils are generally under-represented on the national register for Gifted and Talented pupils.

Gypsy and Traveller learners are over-represented in permanent and fixed period exclusions pre-16. Travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy or Roma pupils are over-represented among many categories of SEN. "The vast majority of Traveller pupils linger on the periphery of the education system" (Ofsted). Many are not registered at secondary school.

#### **Racist Incidents / Hate Crime:**

In 2008-09, there were 40 permanent and 7,370 fixed period exclusions nationally **from schools for racist abuse**. There were no recorded permanent exclusions in Bedfordshire for the reason of racist abuse

Gypsy and Traveller children experience racist abuse on a daily basis (e.g "dirty pikey") at school and in other settings, from children and adults in the settled community, making them reluctant to attend.

Teachers would like more training on dealing with racist incidents

#### **Children in Need / Looked After Children:**

Some Ethnic Minority families are less likely to understand the role of Social Services, often because of language barriers. They are less likely to receive practical support such as day care, holiday schemes. Assessments are less likely to consider the child's needs (including ethnicity, religion and language), family and environmental issues and parental capacity.

Often extended family support systems and friends are not sufficiently considered. Racial harassment is often not seen as a child protection issue or as a factor in neighbours maliciously reporting concerns.

Social Services workers were found to have differing levels of knowledge of BME families.

**Children from Ethnic Minority communities are:**

- more likely to enter care under the age of 5,
- less likely to remain in contact with their birth family
- less likely to receive psychological support
- more likely to be placed inappropriately (with strategies for foster care not recognising the changing characteristics of BME communities)
- more likely to experience placement change and to be placed out of county
- likely to have lower educational attainment and to experience higher rates of exclusion
- less likely to go on to further education / training
- less likely to secure employment,
- likely to find it harder to fit back in with their original community,
- less likely to experience positive role models whilst in care.

**Religion**

Nationally there is a body of research into spirit possession and witchcraft in relation to Child Protection. Research commissioned by the DfES (2006) reviewed child abuse cases that had occurred since January 2000. Thirty-eight cases involving 47 children were found to be relevant and sufficiently documented. This is in comparison to 26,400 children on child protection registers in England at 31st March 2006.

**National Research:**

- research shows that, in all measures of GCSE attainment, Hindu boys and girls perform most highly on average:
- Hindu girls achieve almost 2 GCSE grades A\*-C more than Christian girls, and over 2 GCSE grades A\*-C more than Muslim girls.
- Girls tend to do better than boys for all religious groups, and the gender gap is similar across religious groups.
- With 8 passes each, Indian Hindu and Indian Sikh girls have one more pass at A\*-C than Indian Muslim girls, and two more than Pakistani Muslim girls (who achieve 6 passes). This difference is slightly more pronounced in the case of boys.
- Within Christians, it is Black African girls who have the highest number of GCSE/GNVQ passes at A\*-C on average (7 passes) while, for boys, it is White Christians who outperform others with 6 passes

**Sexual Orientation**

(Source Department of Health)

Many young people know they are lesbian, gay or bisexual by the age of 11 or 12, or have feelings of being different.<sup>1</sup> However, some do not come out to someone else

until they are 15 or 16. This period (11–16 years old) has been described as the **isolation years** and is the most crucial for targeting support and information.

National research indicates that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered young people are more likely to experience bullying and social exclusion with 6/10 experience homophobic bullying and half of these contemplate killing themselves as a result. One third of young lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender young people have self harmed.

Lesbian and gay young people are more likely to leave school at 16, despite achieving 6 GCSEs at Grade C.

Experiences of homophobic bullying, as well as not having someone to talk to, can have an impact on young LGB people's mental health.

Young LGB people are at risk of violence and victimisation. They are more likely to face verbal abuse, isolation, teasing and physical assault both in schools and on the streets:<sup>12</sup>

– 78% of those under the age of 18 had experienced verbal abuse;<sup>13</sup>

– 23% had been attacked by other pupils.<sup>13</sup>

Young gay men are becoming sexually active from the age of 14 and may not be aware of health risks from unprotected sex. They may also not have the assertiveness to practise safer sex by using a condom

## Child Poverty

Children who grow up in poverty are less likely to get qualifications or go on to higher education and are more likely to become young parents. People with low levels of educational achievement can expect to be less employable, therefore poorer, therefore less healthy and probably less likely to participate in civic activity. The kinds of people who are less likely to be employed are also more likely to be involved in crime, to have shorter life-spans and to have less fulfilling family lives. Whole families can be locked into cycles of deprivation.

In 2008/09 54.2 percent of pupils not eligible for free schools meals achieved 5 or more A\* - C GCSEs including English and mathematics, compared to 26.6 percent for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Within this figure 19.0% of White British boys eligible for free school meals achieved 5 or more A\*-C grade GCSEs or equivalent including English and Mathematics. For Black Caribbean boys 22.4% achieved 5 or more A\*-C grade GCSEs or equivalent including English and Mathematics. Nationally the attainment gap for Black Caribbean boys eligible for free school meals is improving whilst the attainment of White British boys eligible for free school meals is deteriorating.

18% of poor white British boys achieve 5 or more GCSE passes.

Teenage parents and their children are at increased risk of living in poverty.

People from more deprived backgrounds miss out on the opportunity to obtain a university degree because they are persistently less likely to enter higher education:

- Only 9% of graduates come from the poorest families compared to 46% of graduates coming from the richest families
- Of the 18 and 19 year olds enrolled in higher education in 2004/05, only 28% came from lower socio-economic groups and just 14% from 'low-participation neighbourhoods'.

Babies with professional or managerial parents develop better and faster than those whose parents are in unskilled or semi-skilled manual occupations. By age 6, low-achieving children from more advantaged homes will out-perform initially high-achieving children from less advantaged homes.

Poverty is strongly associated with low achievement and significantly more so for white British pupils.

#### **4) Meeting the needs of local communities:**

##### **Provide details of issues that have been identified.**

E.g. Low awareness of services, barriers to access, differing levels of service usage, people experiencing different outcomes

##### **Age**

There are 65 teenage parents in Central Bedfordshire and 25% of those are in learning.

64.3% of teenage parents are NEET.

##### **Disability**

One of the objectives within the plan is to transform services for children with disabilities. Key actions include:

- Ensuring the delivery of the programme, in particular the transformation of short break services.
- Ensuring the strategic objectives of Better Care, Better lives are implemented.
- Improving data available on numbers of disabled children and types of disability.
- Continuing the roll out of the programme for disabled children 0-5 years.
- Delivering the Transition Improvement Plan to provide a smooth transition into adulthood.
- Ensuring parents, disabled children and young people are fully involved in the shaping and delivery of services.

Within the figures for NEET, there is no clear data relating to children with Disabilities, however LDD and SEN is collected.

##### **Gender**

81.3% of girls and 78.8% of boys have completed compulsory education post 16 and are still attending a place of learning. However 6.2% of girls and 5.3% of boys are NEET (Source: Central Bedfordshire Performance Data July 2010).

##### **Race**



The population by ethnic origin, 2007

	Central Bedfordshire	England
White British	89%	83.6%
Not ‘White British’	11.0%	16.4%

(source: ONS, Population estimates by ethnic group mid-2007 (experimental)).

More than 97% of pupils of compulsory school age in Central Bedfordshire speak English as a first language. However, more than 60 different first languages are recorded among the remaining children.

(Source: Pupil level annual school census data for Central Bedfordshire. Next update 2011)

In terms of school absence, Central Bedfordshire’s figures suggest that this is better than the national average and with the exception of pupils of Black Origin, better than the regional averages too.

22.2% of ‘Any other Black Background’, 11.4% ‘Any other ethnic group’ and 11.1% of ‘White and Black African’ young people are recorded as NEET. These figures must be treated with some caution however because of the low figures involved and a large percentage of the cohort whose ethnicity is unrecorded or not given. However, it is evident from the figures that if young people are from a black background, they are more likely to be NEET in Central Bedfordshire than young people from other ethnicities.

**Religion**

Much of the youth club type provision in Dunstable for young people is run by church groups. Whilst this in itself is no bad thing, it may serve to alienate some children and young people, particularly those of other religious or no religious persuasion or young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender who may not feel able to go to a church group. Further work would need to be done to establish that these young people are able to access similar provision within their localities.

**Transgender:**

Local Bedfordshire research into transgender issues highlighted that many felt isolated, particularly when they were younger and thought they were the only one. Many knew that something was different about them from as early as 5 years, these feelings intensified in puberty. Often they said they were accused of being gay and bullied because of their weaknesses and felt that there is a need to educate children about diversity at primary school level, teaching young children not to stereotype and to respect differences.

**Sexual Orientation**

The Anti-Bullying Survey 2010 conducted in Central Bedfordshire highlighted that consistent with national data, sexist sexual or homophobic bullying was an issue for some children and that these issues should be further addressed within anti-bullying strategies.



### Child Poverty

Reducing child poverty is a key priority in the Children and Young People’s Plan. Three of Central Bedfordshire lower super output areas (LSOAs) are in the top 10% most deprived regionally and a further six are in the top 20% most deprived regionally. None of Central Bedfordshire’s 154 LSOAs is in the top 20% nationally.

The three LSOAs in the 0-10% most deprived in the East of England are:

- Houghton Regis 602 (Parkside)
- Dunstable Downs 594 (Downside)
- Houghton Regis 601 (Parkside)

The six LSOAs in the 10-20% most deprived in the East of England are:

- Houghton Regis 618 (Tithe Farm)
- Houghton Regis 619 (Tithe Farm)
- Northfields 596
- Leighton Linlade Central 609
- Flitwick East 400
- Sandy 433

(Source: DCLG, Indices of Deprivation, 2007)

<b>Education, skills &amp; training domain</b>	<b>Crime and disorder domain</b>	<b>Barriers to housing and services domain</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houghton Regis 618</li> <li>• Houghton Regis 601</li> <li>• Houghton Regis 619</li> <li>• Plantation 609</li> <li>• Sandy 433</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houghton Regis 602</li> <li>• Houghton Regis 601</li> <li>• Dunstable Downs 570</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maulden &amp; Houghton Conquest 410</li> <li>• South West Bedfordshire 587</li> <li>• South West Bedfordshire / Toddington 587</li> </ul>

### Schools level data

In comparing upper schools against the local, regional and national averages for 2008/09, 4 schools stood out as underperforming (although it was evident that some of these were showing improvements). These schools were all located in the areas of highest deprivation in the authority. Manshead Upper, Northfields Upper (which was closed and re-opened in January 2009 as All Saints Academy), Sandy Upper and Stratton Upper.

Manshead Upper School (Dunstable) recorded a high proportion of children with SEN being supported by a statement, on School Action Plus or School Action. Only 43% were making the expected level of progress with English and 54% with maths between KS2-KS4. A higher than average overall absence (8.2%) and persistent absence (6.7%). Attainment in the year on year comparisons at KS4 showed a decline in 2009 to 37% of pupils gaining A\*- C (and equivalent) including English and maths GCSEs from 44% the previous 2 years.

Northfields Upper (Houghton Regis) was closed in 2008 and re-opened as All Saints Academy in 2009 and therefore no data is available as yet, however the attainment of pupils at Northfields was less than half of the national average for all schools.

Sandy Upper School (Sandy) has shown a marked improvement since 2008 with an increase of 13% of pupils gaining A\*- C (and equivalent) including English and maths GCSEs from 33% in 2008 to 46% in 2009. Only 55% were making the expected level of progress with English and 49% with maths between KS2-KS4. A higher than average overall absence (8.7%) and persistent absence (8.9%).

Stratton Community College (Biggleswade) has shown an improvement since 2006 in the % of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieving 5+A\*-C (and equivalent) including English and maths GCSEs from 36% in 2006 to 53% in 2009. There is a higher than average overall absence (7.6%) and persistent absence rate (6.2%) however this is only just above the national averages of 7.3% and 5.9% respectively. 66% were making the expected level of progress with English and 60% with maths between KS2-KS4.

Vandyke Upper School (Leighton Buzzard) has shown a 9% decline in % of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieving 5+A\*-C (and equivalent) including English and maths GCSEs from 47% in 2006 to 38% in 2009. 46% were making the expected level of progress with English and 52% with maths between KS2-KS4. However absence rates were below the national and regional averages with 6.3% overall absence and 2.1% persistent absence (this being the lowest rate of persistent absence in the local authority area).

A number of middle schools are significantly above national average in terms of overall absence and persistent absence levels, these include, Brewers Hill (Dunstable), Brooklands (Leighton Buzzard), Edward Peake (Biggleswade), Kings Houghton (Dunstable), Leighton Middle (Leighton Buzzard), Mill Vale (Dunstable), Priory Middle (Dunstable), Sandye Place (Sandy) and Streetfield (Dunstable). All of these schools feed into the upper schools listed above.

#### **Provide details of improvements that have been identified?–**

E.g. increased awareness / training amongst staff, improved publicity, changes in eligibility criteria, adoption of out reach approaches etc.

Whilst frontline staff have a basic awareness of some of the issues, there is a need to complete equality impact assessments across the operational frontline service delivery teams and to undertake training so that all staff understand the barriers to services experienced by some members of staff.

In terms of school performance, there is a clear correlation between the schools with lower levels of absenteeism and those with better results at KS4. This is particularly notable around the schools in areas of highest deprivation, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Sandy, Biggleswade and Leighton Buzzard. Work should be targeted to schools in these areas.

## 5) Promoting Equality of Opportunity –

### How will the policy help improve the outcomes experienced by different people?

E.g. Helping to ensure that people have positive life opportunities,  
Increasing access to services / employment,  
Building better relations between different groups of people  
Increasing participation in public life

The plan is designed to focus the work of those in the Children's sector on improving outcomes for the most vulnerable. Within each of the priorities in the plan there is some specific focus on certain equality strands and some increased activity around children who are most vulnerable.

### Do you have any data available which demonstrates this?

Quarterly performance reports are produced which highlight performance against key indicators are brought to the subgroups to attach commentary. These are then fed into the Children's Trust Board and with the Commissioning Group. Data is collected in various formats around the Children's Trust, however there is not one clear central collection of data which is broken down into the equality strands.

### Are there examples of good practice that can be built on?

All of the priorities have different initiatives attached to enable the most vulnerable to participate and improve outcomes.

There are a number of initiatives in place in Central Bedfordshire that help the most vulnerable including the parenting support, Children's Centres, the Children in Care Council which feeds directly into the Corporate Parenting Panel, Time Out card for Young Carers, Show Racism the Red Card amongst others.

## 6.) Conclusions and Action

### What are the main conclusions from the assessment?

There is a lot of national data available around equalities which was used to support the development of the Children and Young People's Plan, however there is limited data available locally to assist with determining the priorities locally in relation to reducing inequalities.

The main conclusions from the assessment are that whilst activity is underway to address equalities issues, a more consistent way of reporting the data whilst reflecting the equalities priorities needs to be firmly established across the partner agencies. Data is available, however it is fragmented and no one consistent format is used within the Trust.

There are a number of hard to reach groups that have been identified as part of the ongoing work of the Consultation, Participation and Engagement Network to ensure that they are targeted in any consultation work. These include:

- Children in disadvantaged areas

- Young Carers
- Children in receipt of free school meals
- Children with SEN with a statement
- Children with SEN whose needs are met by School Action / School Action Plus
- Disabled Children
- Children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage
- Children from ethnic minorities (within this heading specific groups can be targeted for specific consultations)
- Excluded Children
- Children of Offenders
- Children at risk of offending
- Teenage Parents
- Children in receipt of CAMHS service
- Privately Fostered children
- Children subject of a child in need plan
- Children subject of a child protection plan
- Looked After Children
- Children in alternative forms of education
- Children of services personnel
- Children and young people in custody
- Refugees and unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people
- Children with learning difficulties / disabilities
- Children with substance / alcohol misuse
- Homeless young people

#### **4.2) What are the priority recommendations and actions?**

There is a need to ensure that data is collected systematically to include equalities information needed to enable the partners of the Trust to 'drill down' and see equalities data at ward level. It is good practice that the performance information is taken to the Board and to the Commissioning Group. However, this has to be meaningful data to enable the board to form their priorities and to this end ward level data is needed for the Commissioning Group in order for them to be able to Commission and Decommission effectively.

There is a further need to ensure that frontline service delivery teams undertake equality impact assessments / equality audits within their respective areas so that they can proactively make service improvements.

#### **4.3) What changes will be made to address any adverse impacts that have been identified?**

By identifying hard to reach groups to consult with, it is more likely that primary evidence can be gathered to feed back into the JSNA and therefore inform targeted work for these groups.

#### **4.4) Are there any budgetary implications?**

The budget / resource envelope is determined by the Children's Trust to meet the priorities within the plan and to target those areas which need the most support.



<b>4.5) Actions to be Taken:</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Priority (high / medium low)</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>
Ensure that data is collected systematically to include equalities information needed to enable the Trust Board to ‘drill down’ and see equalities data at ward level.		<b>High</b>	
Establish a system for undertaking Equality Impact Assessments / Audits for operational frontline service delivery teams as soon as possible.		<b>Medium</b>	
The Children and Young People’s Plan should be more specific and identify how success is measured in relation to equalities for each of the performance measures it sets.		<b>Medium</b>	

**5.1) What methods have been used to gain feedback on the main issues raised in the assessment?**

Checks have been made with:

- Head of Policy and Strategy – Children Services
- The Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) for comment and decision around further scrutiny

**- The Central Bedfordshire Equalities Forum on 30 September 2010 –**

**Comments:**

1) Gender Equality / Occupational Segregation. The Forum highlighted the positive role that the Connexions service has played in supporting young people to consider a variety of career opportunities.

2) Concern was expressed by a member of the Forum about the negative connotation in the EIA that religious organisations might not be able to provide appropriate youth provision for Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) young people. The focus of many church led youth groups is to provide a range of activities and support. Other members of the Forum felt that this issue did need to be considered further.

3) The Forum agreed that the EIA was comprehensive and highlighted the needs of a variety of vulnerable groups. There would be a need to ensure that the revised plan addressed these issues and set out the specific actions that would be taken to support these groups.

4) Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) issues - the links with the homelessness strategy should be highlighted. Confirmation was given that teams across Children services did consider the needs of LGB and other groups of parents.

5) The review of Special schools was highlighted and the need to consider the impacts carefully.



6) Home to school transport – concern was expressed that some taxis are not suitable for older children and that the drivers are not providing parents with assistance on disembarking.

7) The need to address Hate Crime against different groups of young people was highlighted.