

**Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan
2009-2011**

Annual Report: March 2011

Introduction

This is the second review of the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2011.

Our progress so far

Progress - getting the building blocks in place

In the second year of the development of the Children's Trust, partners have concentrated on embedding the working arrangements and further developing partnership working in a number of areas. These have included:

- Reviewing the membership of the Children's Trust Board and inviting a range of new members. Those attending now include representatives from schools, Diocesan Boards of Education, the Youth Offending Service, Central Bedfordshire College, the Youth Parliament and the Fire Service.
- Partners committing to continue to work as a Children's Trust and agreeing a refreshed Children and Young People's Plan.
- An Ofsted Assessment which highlighted the good progress made in establishing strategic partnerships and in identifying priorities to improve outcomes for all children, young people and their families. The Assessment also noted that the Children and Young People's Plan was a good analysis of the strengths of local provision, with clear actions for further improvement and ambitious targets.
- Partners on the Commissioning Group working together to review the commission for the Pupil Referral Unit and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in order to identify priorities for the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan.
- Consulting with over 4,000 young people to understand their priorities for the new Children and Young People's plan.
- Developing a Child Poverty Strategy: From poverty to prosperity.
- The Workforce Development Strategic Group agreeing learning and development needs in order to support the delivery of the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan.

Challenges during the year

- Keeping abreast of new guidance and national policy frameworks and addressing the implications for partnership working and service delivery.
- The difficult national economic context and the subsequent loss of Area Based Grant funding for the fourth quarter which had an impact on a range of partnership projects and partnership working.
- Capacity to maintain existing services, joint working and performance through a period of change and restructuring.

An overview of progress

Be Healthy

What were our priorities in year 2?

1. Ensure a healthy start to life – including early access to antenatal care, reducing smoking and improving nutrition in pregnancy, promoting breastfeeding and increasing immunisation and vaccinations.
2. Ensure children and young people are able to make responsible decisions in relation to drugs, alcohol and sexual health.
3. Promote, protect and treat the mental and emotional health of children and young people.
4. Support children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles including reducing smoking and childhood obesity and increasing physical activity and healthy eating.
5. Transform services for disabled children.

What difference have we made?

During 2010/11 we have:

- Increased breastfeeding rates across Central Bedfordshire.
- Continued to reduce the number of women smoking in pregnancy – achieving rates below the 15% target.
- Over-achieved the target for the number of women who access maternity services within 12 weeks and 6 days.
- Provisionally achieved our Chlamydia target to screen 35% of 15-24 year olds in 2010/11 – according to early indications.
- Improved the effectiveness of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services achieving 16 out of 16 in the Self Assessment.
- Achieved a significant increase in the uptake of immunisations across all ages.
- Over-achieved participation rates for the National Childhood Measurement Programme at both Year R and Year 6.
- Increased the number of schools achieving Healthy Schools Status from 77% to 94%.
- Increased the range and number of short break places being provided to children with disabilities from 320 to 624.

Making progress on the priorities

Priority 1

Good progress has been made on the priority to ensure a **healthy start to life**.

- The number of women **accessing maternity services in early pregnancy** (by 12 weeks 6 days) has continued to increase and the target has been exceeded in the first two quarters. Projected estimates indicate this level of performance will be maintained for Q3 and Q4.
- **Smoking in pregnancy** – rates have continued to fall and the target to achieve less than 15% of women smoking in pregnancy has been achieved
- **Coverage of feeding status at 6-8 weeks** has exceeded the target in all quarters as a result of the implementation of improved recording and routine reconciliation of child health records.

Although the target has not been met in the following areas good progress has been made to improve performance compared to previous years:

- **Breastfeeding rates** – Following the achievement of UNICEF baby friendly Status Stage 1 Accreditation by Bedfordshire Community Health Services in July 2010, the launch of 8 Baby Brasseries in Children's Centres across Central Bedfordshire and a total of 28 peer supporters trained across Bedfordshire we have achieved consistently higher rates of women starting and continuing to breastfeed. Lower initiation rates have been identified for women delivering at Luton and Dunstable Hospital and links have been made with the midwifery department to work to improve the support given on the ward postnatally and we expect to see ongoing improvements next year. As part of the Healthy Child Programme an antenatal visit by a Health Visit is also planned to be offered to all mothers.
- A significant increase in the uptake of **childhood immunisations** was achieved in Central Bedfordshire. This has been in part due to the work undertaken to improve data quality and GP performance in 2010/11. Although not all targets were achieved there are increased efforts to improve immunisation coverage to the recommended levels and our main focus for 2011/12 is to target hard to reach/vulnerable groups and children not registered with GP practices. We anticipate seeing further gains in the year 2011/12.

Priority 2

Good progress has been made on delivering the priority **to ensure children and young people are able to make responsible decisions in relation to drugs, alcohol and sexual health**. This includes:

- **Chlamydia Screening** – Provisional data indicates that the increased target to screen 35% of 15-24 year olds in 2010/11 has been met.
- **Substance misuse** – Although the NI115 indicator is no longer reported good progress has been made around drug treatment for young people – the number of young people leaving treatment in a planned way remains well above 70%. Family focused services have been reviewed and revised following a pilot and it is anticipated that 100% of young people from Central Bedfordshire will report reduced drug and alcohol use following support.

Whilst the target for teenage pregnancy has not been met there has been a steady decrease in the conception rates for those under the age of 18 and the provisional 2009 Under-18 conception rate in Central Bedfordshire is significantly lower than the national rate in England. The provisional 2009 annual data shows a reduction of 12.6 % since the 1998 baseline with a rate of 32.5 per 1000 females under 18. There is, however, a need to continue to ensure that the overall declining rate in Central Bedfordshire does not mask some high ward rates. A key strand of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy for Central Bedfordshire, therefore, is to continue to prioritise targeted work in 'hotspot' wards and amongst vulnerable groups of young people who are at an increased risk of teenage pregnancy. These include looked after children and those leaving care, youth offenders, young people with risky behaviours such as drugs and alcohol misuse. The links to deprivation and poverty are inextricable with each of the hotspot wards falling within the 20% most deprived in the Local Authority area.

Priority 3

Good progress has been made this year and the target to **promote, protect and treat the mental and emotional health of children and young people**.

Achievements include:

- Meeting the national CAMHS targets scoring 16 out of 16.
- The introduction of a new Home Treatment Scheme in September 2010 which led to a reduction (by over a third) of inpatient activity which had previously seen a significant increase.
- New NHS funded Early Intervention Service developed.
- Parenting support programmes have been delivered and an interim evaluation highlighted high overall completion rates of 83% compared to the national average of 73%.

Priority 4

Work to deliver the priority to **support children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles, including reducing smoking and childhood obesity and increasing physical activity and healthy eating** is making good progress, although there was some underperformance in progress made against the obesity targets.

- **Reducing smoking** – All but one Upper School in Central Bedfordshire have received training to provide in-house Stop Smoking Support to young people and training has also been delivered to local colleges. Data for all age groups that access NHS support is collected on the Stop Smoking Service Database, therefore enabling the ongoing monitoring of both the activity and quality of the interventions that are provided.
- **Healthy Schools** – 126 schools (94%) in Central Bedfordshire have achieved Healthy Schools Status of which 63 (50%) have maintained their status via the Annual Review. Schools will receive further information and presentation opportunities regarding the way forward for the programme, reflecting a more locally driven need, this will take place in the summer term 2011.
- Overall progress is mixed for **childhood obesity**. We have over-achieved height and weight measurement participation targets for Year R and Year 6. Childhood obesity in Year 6 has decreased from 16.0% in 2008/09 to 14.3% in 2009/10. However in Year R levels have increased from 7.3% in 2008/09 to 8.5% in 2009/10. Given the wide range of values at 95% confidence none of these changes are statistically significant and it is likely we will need a number of years' data to accurately predict trends.

Additional Beezee Bodies programmes for childhood obesity management are in place to make up for the temporary postponement of MEND (as a consequence of uncertainties within the Sports and Leisure team). In addition school based programmes such as Making the Most of Me, which seek to improve healthy eating and physical activity awareness and participation, have been successfully delivered to 4 lower schools in Central Bedfordshire to all their Year 4 pupils focusing on Physical Activity and Good Food Education. A review of the programme is underway to consider follow on work for the next academic year.

The childhood obesity work programme is being reviewed and through its prioritisation process additional funding has been identified by NHS Bedfordshire for obesity.

Priority 5

Our priority to **transform services for disabled children** has met all of the timescales required by Together for Disabled Children. There has been a significant increase in the range and number of short break places. These have been provided by in house services and a number of voluntary organisations. The options available have ranged from social club placements and play schemes to a performance of Romeo and Juliet and a circus performance for a group of children with complex needs. The additional places have been accessed by children with a wide range of abilities and disabilities.

There has been an increase in the number of parents accessing a direct payment from 44 in 2009/10 to 75 in 2010/11.

Disability awareness training has been delivered to 180 staff in play, leisure and youth services to improve access opportunities for disabled children and young people. A programme to train more workers in extended schools and childcare settings and increase access to universal provision is in place.

Additional staffing has been provided to promote additional Family Link places and additional Occupational Therapist hours have been provided to support disabled children's access to short break services. This has enabled the service to reduce the waiting times and provide equipment in a timely way.

A joint Children and Adult Services transition post has been agreed to further improve the transition process. A joint bid with Luton was submitted under the Innovation and Outcomes programme for transition for funding. The bid was successful and the funding was used to design a single assessment for disabled young people in transition and to develop a lead professional pack for transition workers.

The single assessment and the lead professional pack are now being implemented in Central Bedfordshire Council in partnership with Health colleagues.

An effective and constructive parent forum is in place. They have assisted in rewriting eligibility criteria, training staff in disability awareness, running a parent conference and supporting delivery groups and workshops. Further Government funding has been agreed to support parent participation until 2014/15.

A successful Disabled Children's Access to Child Care (DCATCH) project was completed in 2010/11. As a result of the findings specialist child care facilities are in the process of being set up which will assist parents of disabled children in returning to work, education and training. The specialist facilities will offer support to children in moving to mainstream provision.

Stay Safe

What were our priorities in year 2?

6. Protect children and young people from harm by providing a co-ordinated and effective safeguarding process.
7. Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.
8. Reduce the incidence of and impact of bullying on children and young people.

What difference have we made?

- 95.7% of initial assessments have been completed within seven working days of referral. This exceeded the local target and is significantly better than the annual average performance both nationally and for comparator Authorities (NI 59).
- Only 5.7% of children looked after at 31 March had three or more placements during the year. This was good performance that was well below the target of 9.2% and better than national and comparator authorities (NI 62).
- The target of 100% of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year has been achieved (NI 67). This demonstrates clear, robust oversight of children and young people's plans to secure their safety and well being.
- Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (CBSCB) is now established and works to an agreed partnership business plan. Action plans relating to the Child J Serious Case review have been implemented and completed, demonstrating positive impact upon service delivery and frontline practice.
- The Domestic Abuse partnership continues to align Domestic Abuse activity between services focused on adults and on children and joint training is in place.
- The Cyber Mentors scheme has been commissioned. This builds on the school based mentoring scheme and can be accessed by young people through a Social Network style portal.
- A Think Family event has engaged partners with this key aspect of early intervention and prevention and a focus on linking with adult services is being taken forward 2011 – 12.
- The Children in Care Council and Corporate Parenting Panels are well established and the year end reports demonstrated positive achievements for the service and young people. A clear work plan inclusive of Children in Care council involvement is set for 2011 – 12.

Progress on the priorities

Overall progress in this outcome area is good and the Stay Safe Delivery Group completed the activities set within individual area action plans.

Performance in protecting vulnerable children and young people is good. Key indicators measuring assessment timeliness, stability and review have remained on target to year end 2011. Despite additional numbers of social workers, increased pressures on Children's Social Care frontline social work teams have impacted on our ability to achieve our target for the ratio of referrals to initial assessments (NI68). 30% more initial assessments have been completed this year, totalling 1574. The

planned replacement of the Integrated Children's System client database, with improved recording practices should help to resolve these issues in future.

In order to **continue protecting children and young people from harm by providing a co-ordinated and effective safeguarding process**, processes for identifying and responding to children whose safety is, or is likely to be, compromised are in place at each level of intervention; universal, targeted and specialist. In order to ensure that these continue to be compliant with regulation and operationally fit for purpose the following action is being taken:

- The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures are continually reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with the latest revision of the statutory guidance, as they are produced.
- Web based procedures have been made available which allow easier access and cross referencing to guidance for practitioners.
- The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has been reviewed and revised alongside a revised referral form to Children's Social Care.

These processes provide the framework within which professionals and agencies respond to concerns about children and young people. The activity is underpinned by a comprehensive and well regarded range of training. The Performance Management and Audit group of the LSCB and the Council regularly audit casework to ensure its quality.

A separate Local Safeguarding Children Board for Central Bedfordshire (CBSCB) came into being on 1 April 2010 in line with the plan.

Revised protocols and procedures in respect of information sharing and responding to domestic abuse have been reviewed on a multi agency basis and in conjunction with the Domestic Abuse Partnership, and adopted by the Safeguarding Children Board. Research and best practice are being integrated into multi-disciplinary domestic abuse training programmes offered by the Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Safeguarding Children Board. A programme of training to individual teams and services by the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Co-ordinator has been implemented and is ongoing.

Funding has been made available to review and refresh the Safe and Sound education package for schools and youth services. A successful event to launch the pack was held in March 2011.

A review looking at the options in respect of extending and re-commissioning the Freedom Project has been undertaken. This programme works with women who have suffered domestic abuse. By autumn 2011 responsibility for the co-ordination of the Freedom programme will sit within the Parenting Team. In conjunction with the Domestic Abuse Co-coordinator, work is being undertaken to identify areas of high need to ensure that future delivery is targeted along with a focus on delivery in refuges. Awareness and facilitation training around Freedom will also be undertaken. Preliminary work to explore the possibilities of co-locating key practitioners to more effectively respond to domestic abuse referrals has also begun.

The priority to **reduce the incidence and impact of bullying on children and young people** is being progressed through the developing framework of local delivery. The resource pack for schools and the Train the Trainer programme have been delivered to support sustainability and development of anti-bullying strategies in schools is ongoing. Members of the Youth Parliament have also been active in leading on an Anti-Bullying campaign.

Work on the cross cutting priority to improve **prevention, early identification and intervention** continues and the implementation of the CAF procedures have been overhauled leading to streamlined processes, making it easier for professionals to access early interventions. The Parenting Team has continued to offer early interventions and is working hard to embed Think Family, with a particular emphasis on Adult Services and much closer working relationship with drug, alcohol and mental health services. Early intervention has continued to be delivered through Children's Centres and work continues through early years settings to ensure that early interventions are made as soon as possible. The offer of new free places for 57 deprived two year olds has supported this group locally to access services more quickly.

The Care Matters Action Plan has been implemented and provided a good framework to ensure corporate parenting responsibilities are met.

The Regional Improvement and Efficiency partnership (RIEP) safeguarding programme (ESP) is being implemented and continues to support the implementation of the Newly Qualified Social Worker programme.

Enjoy and Achieve

What were our priorities in year 2

9. Transform teaching and learning and raise achievement for all learners particularly underachieving groups and children in vulnerable circumstances.
10. Improve engagement and enjoyment for all children and young people.

What difference have we made?

- Continued to develop the skills of the workforce through the training schools network;
- Improved the capacity of schools to support themselves and each other;
- Carried out a review of provision in Dunstable & Houghton Regis as part of the commitment to implementing the Education Vision to transform learning;
- Improved targeted early intervention and identification programmes for vulnerable groups through one to one tuition;
- Worked with schools to improve inclusion, early identification of, and early intervention with, children at risk of exclusion and re-commissioned PRU provision;
- Provided professional challenge to schools to carry out robust self evaluation to support improvement and ensure a close correlation between Ofsted judgements and Self Evaluation Forms;
- Increased the proportion of inspections judged to be outstanding;
- Improved the percentage of pupils achieving 5A*-C including English and Mathematics.

Progress on the priorities

Good progress is being made on delivering the following priorities:

- Transforming teaching and learning and strengthening leadership to ensure that every school and early years' setting is at least good. During the year 11 schools have been judged to be outstanding, bringing the total number of Outstanding inspections to 63 - an increase of seven from last year.
- Improving progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Implementing the Improving Schools Programme at Key Stage 2. Middle schools involved improved their outcomes, with the overall average percentage of pupils attaining Level 4+ in English and Mathematics increasing from 64% to 67%.
- Improving the attainment of vulnerable groups. Most pupils at risk of not achieving level 4+ who received 1-1 Tuition achieved Level 4+ in English and/or Mathematics.
- Raising standards at Key Stage 4; 54.2% of students at Key Stage 4 achieved 5A*-C including English and mathematics. This represents an improvement of 4% compared with 2009. These figures place Central Bedfordshire above the national average and improving faster than the national rate of improvement.
- Improving the climate for learning in schools and improving the emotional health and well-being of young people through the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme.
- Reducing the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions.

- Reducing the number of schools with high levels of persistent absence.
- Reviewing support for excluded children and those at risk of exclusion through re-commissioning PRU provision.

Challenges remain in the following areas:

- Raising attainment at Key Stage 2. 2010 results were static with 73% of pupils achieving level 2 in English and mathematics.
- Closing the 4.4% gap between Central Bedfordshire and its statistical neighbours for performance at Key Stage 4.
- Improving A level performance.

Make a positive contribution

What were our priorities in year 2?

11. Develop and promote children and young people's positive contribution to communities across Central Bedfordshire and increase opportunities for them to play an active part in influencing the decisions that affect their lives and well-being.
12. Reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour.
13. Promote and provide activities and information for all children and young people and their families, ensuring that the hard to reach and those with disabilities can take part in mainstream activity.

What difference have we made?

- Young inspectors have been involved in 18 inspections and most recommendations have been implemented - key areas inspected and improved include Plan B, Leighton Buzzard Youth Centre, Sandy and Biggleswade Youth Centre, the Countryside Access service that looks after Stock Grove Park and Dunstable Downs and the TACTIC Centre in Leighton Buzzard.
- 64 young people have been elected to the first Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament – 134 candidates took part and 12,025 young people voted.
- The Youth Parliament has led on a number of campaigns including: Gun and Knife Crime, Anti Bullying campaign, Things to do campaign, Save Youth Support Services.
- Over 100 young people were involved in Local Democracy Week events and events were held in three special schools.
- Over 4,000 children and young people were involved in setting priorities for the revised Children and Young People's Plan.

Progress on the priorities

The priority to **develop and promote children and young people's positive contribution to communities** is progressing well and the Youth Parliament is now in place and has been actively involved in a number of local campaigns, including a campaign and petition to support youth services. The members of the Youth Parliament have also been actively involved in responding to consultations from the following organisations- Greensands Trust, Police Authority, Bedfordshire Link, MY Journey, Central Bedfordshire Council's Budget and the Children's and Young Peoples plan.

In addition the Youth MPs regularly attend Children's Trust Board meetings and have attended Link Health Board meetings. A number of events have also taken place which encourage positive contribution and these include a successful gun and knife crime event in Dunstable, a Party in the Park at Leighton Linlade and Friday evening and weekend activities at the Sandy Youth Café. **The Family and Youth Information Service** is now live and information on activities is available to children, young people and their families.

Performance on the priority to **reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour** has shown a mixed picture. Data shows that targets for the number of young people receiving custodial sentences and re-offending rates are both on track. However the number of First Time Entrants has been variable. Although Central Bedfordshire will show an overall reduction of 38.55 %, the rate in Quarter 4 shows a rise in numbers. This may be a result of the lower baseline in the corresponding quarter of 2009/10, set by the introduction of restorative disposals.

Achieve economic well-being

What were our priorities in year 2?

14. Develop a locality approach in reducing the number young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and targeting those areas with the highest NEET levels.
15. Work with employers, colleges and schools to increase the range and quality of local training, volunteering and job opportunities.
16. Inspire our most vulnerable young people to raise their aspirations and provide integrated support particularly to care leavers, young offenders, young carers, young people with physical and learning disabilities, gypsy and traveller children and teenage parents.

What difference have we made?

- Reduced the level of young people not in education, employment or training at a time of recession and high youth unemployment through focused joint working in localities.
- Developed the new Apprenticeship Programmes.
- Apprenticeship take up against last year's performance shows significant growth of 27%.
- Success rates for Apprenticeships completing is in line with national rates at 73%.
- Delivered a strong programme of enterprise support across the area.
- Developing a targeted offer of work related learning with the Education Business Partnership – built on demand from learners/schools.
- Introduced the Future Jobs Fund and supported this with a Work and Skills Plan to address the progression routes, target interventions and reduce family worklessness.
- Specific promotion and capital support to assist schools introducing the new Diploma.

Progress on the priorities

Overall the joint work in raising levels of economic well being for young people has been challenging this year and has resulted in mixed results against the priorities. The impact of the recession during the year has had an impact on the opportunities open to young people to progress into employment. The 18-24 age group witnessed an increase of 650 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance from March 2008 to March 2010. This is a 119% increase. Between March 2010 and March 2011, the number fell by 60. Although this is a move in the right direction, unemployment amongst young people remains disproportionately high; in March 2011, the claimant count for all ages was 2.5%. For those aged between 18 and 24, the rate was 5.9%. In turn this increased the difficulty in many programmes to access appropriate work placements and the need to re-profile the outcome for a number of key contracts issued to our partners who deliver. The impact has also driven considerable pressure onto colleges and other post-16 providers as young people choose not to leave education at a time when resources are not immediately increased and lag the demand.

The **priority has been to reduce NEET** from 6.1% in 2007/8, to 5.8% in 2008/9, 5.6% by 2009/10 and then to 5% for 2010/11. This target has been achieved. Since October 2010 the local NEET percentage has been falling and in March 2011, the Central Bedfordshire NEET (adjusted) percentage for 16-18 year olds was 4.1% (240

individuals). This is currently lower than the Regional and National averages. The local percentage for those 'In Learning' is higher than the Regional and National averages at 87.6%. The fourth quarter results are expanded in the table below:

NEET	16 year olds	17 year olds	18 year olds	16-18 year olds
January	3.4%	4.0%	5.6%	4.5%
February	3.4%	4.0%	5.5%	4.5%
March	2.9%	3.8%	5.2%	4.1%

The last round of the European Social Fund (ESF) supported a number of projects aimed at NEET and pre-NEETS (with 326 participants by February 2011), and the Prospectus for the latest ESF round has £335,000 available for 14-18 year old young people (NEETs) in Central Bedfordshire. Funding from the Economic Participation programme complemented Integrated Youth Support Services funding to support four training schemes with a focus on encouraging and supporting young people into apprenticeships, further training or employment. Thirty seven young people are being supported through these schemes.

A key issue for this work looking forward is the introduction of the raising of the compulsory leaving age to 18 (phased for 17 year olds in 2013 and for 18 year olds in 2015) and the development of the vocational curriculum for the 14-19 cohort.

The **priority to work with employers, colleges and schools to increase the range and quality of local training, volunteering and job opportunities** has seen a significant amount of activity, although no clear target has been set. The overall rating against the individual activities is good with a number of positive outcomes from the additional provision provided through enterprise, apprenticeships, work experience, Future Job Fund opportunities, information, advice and guidance, additional learning opportunities and workforce development with school staff.

The 14-19 Commissioning Team have recently tendered for activity in 2011/12, including specific support for young people who are NEET.

The broad priority to **inspire and raise aspirations of the most vulnerable people** has not made the progress anticipated and greater clarity is required about the integrated programmes needed in key areas such as Special Education Needs, young carers and increasing levels of teenage parents, in order to deliver outcomes. However 100% of statemented students from year 9 have a quality transition plan in place. A Learning for Living and Work Strategy has been implemented for Learners with Learning Difficulties and /or Disabilities (LLDD). Further joint working between youth services and services leading on looked after children and young people has been undertaken to support the targeting of activity for vulnerable young people, particularly those in the NEET group. In future this work will be developed further through the Child Poverty Strategy as there is a priority to 'develop a culture for learning based on high aspirations for all'.

The cross cutting priority to **reduce Child Poverty** is making good progress and we are on time to deliver against key milestones. A Child Poverty Family Intervention Project (FIP) has been continuing and in recognition of the importance of skills and employment in moving families out of poverty, the FIP team were awarded funding from the Economic Participation programme. This funded the secondment of an outreach worker from Bedfordshire Adult Skills and Community Learning to work

alongside Key Workers to offer advice and support around skills and employability. In the light of the legislative duties outlined in the Child Poverty Act 2010, a Child Poverty Strategy for Central Bedfordshire has been developed and approved. A draft Child Poverty Needs Assessment has also been produced.

Work is underway on the development of an All Age Skills Strategy for Central Bedfordshire, which will identify the skills priorities for the area and will address how these priorities will be met. Workshops to discuss the Strategy have already taken place and further workshops are scheduled to occur in June and July. A number of focus groups are also to be held, including sessions with students in years 10 and 11, and 12, sessions with NEET and post-NEETs and a session with businesses to discuss apprenticeships. Also being explored are focus groups with those who traditionally under-perform, for example young people in or leaving care, and gypsy and travellers.