

# Joint Area Review Update no 6



## Key Messages from this newsletter

Initial Feedback • Self Assessments • JAR Fieldwork Fortnight • Health Inequalities

## Anthony May's key message



I look forward to the fieldwork phase of the Joint Area Review. I believe that this inspection presents us with an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the quality of our work with children, young people and their

families, and our ambitions for their futures.

Our partnership has much to be proud of: we deliver a comprehensive range of services and have already done a great deal to integrate these in pursuit of improved outcomes. In the run up to the JAR, we have been honest in our self assessment, balancing our undoubted strengths with the identification of areas that need further attention. We've also used the preparation phase to review our current Children and Young People's

Plan and this has given us the platform we need to identify our future priorities, particularly as we move to our second three-year plan (due to be published in 2009).

Fieldwork fortnight offers a unique opportunity to showcase our partnership and benchmark our progress against national expectations. I know that many of you will be directly involved, and many more will be supporting in another way. I know also that many of you will have contributed to the preparations for the inspection. I would like to thank you all: preparing for the JAR has been a fantastic demonstration of the commitment and dedication of our staff and we have learned a lot in the process. I have no doubt that we will continue to learn as the inspection runs its course and you can rest assured that we will use this learning to make further improvements.

Anthony May

# Joint Area Review

# Feedback from analysis week

At the end of Analysis Week, the JAR inspectors provided initial feedback. Clearly it's early days, but overall, the inspectors were impressed with our preparations for the inspection, which they found helpful. Encouragingly, the inspectors' comments tended to reflect our self assessments.

## Case Files

The inspectors examined the case file sample and said that they have no serious concerns at this stage. There is evidence that children are protected and appropriate action is taken where necessary.

Other broader issues around quality assurance, the continuation of services from early intervention and prevention to targeted and specialised services will be explored during the fieldwork part of the inspection.

## Safeguarding

The inspectors also made some positive comments about the protection of children and young people although there will be a much more detailed examination of safeguarding during the fieldwork weeks.

## Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

The comments received in relation to looked after children are similar to those made in respect to the case files and also applied to children with learning difficulties and with disabilities (LDD).

The inspectors are keen to know more about how our SEN and Inclusion Policy and how the review of SEN provision will shape future provision.

The inspectors will also want to learn more about the different elements of our partnership working in relation to LDD, particularly play services, early years, children centres and how we are developing integrated commissioning to improve services.

The inspectors also want to see evidence of how we support young people with transitions at age 16 plus.

## Health Inequalities and 14-19

In relation to health inequalities, inspectors have indicated that they will examine how our provision is targeted according to need, how we work in partnership to reduce inequalities and how our CAMHS services are deployed.

Feedback regarding the 14-19 line of enquiry has been constructive with the good service provision being noted for 16-18 year olds. The inspectors are keen to explore this in more detail, particularly partnership work, work based learning and opportunities for those aged 19 plus, and our links with employers.

More generally, the inspectors will want to know more during the fieldwork fortnight about how we make best use of our resources to meet our priorities, how our relationship with schools is developing and how children and young people's engagement is impacting on improving outcomes.

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## JAR fieldwork

The JAR fieldwork fortnight takes place from 12th May to 23rd May. During this period the inspectors will interview a number of managers, operational staff, councillors, colleagues from partner agencies and children and young people. A schedule for the fieldwork has been devised and will be on the partnership website from 9th May.

[www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nottscyppartnership](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nottscyppartnership)

The timetable for the fortnight will be linked to the key lines of inquiry, and we will try to address issues raised in the feedback from the inspectors following the analysis week.

Colleagues who will be interviewed or will be part of a focus group have been contacted. Support is being provided by managers and the JAR project team.

If you are involved please make sure that you read the appropriate Self Assessments.

# Fostering feedback

The Fostering Service was inspected by Ofsted in January 2008. The Service has been rated as satisfactory (the provision it makes is sound).

The following is a summary of the inspectors' findings:

- The service is well managed with clear lines of accountability and a low staff turnover, which promotes stability and continuity of service delivery.
- Young people are generally well matched to foster placements, which provide safe care and promote their development. Young people are well supported by their foster carers to access appropriate health care, to achieve academically, to engage in sporting activities and to retain contact with friends and families.
- Foster carers are well supported by their supervising social workers and there is evidence of some good working partnerships between them, which promote positive outcomes for young people.
- The electronic recording system, Framework, has some shortfalls which need to be addressed.
- Foster carers do not always receive appropriate health information in respect of young people placed with them.
- Payments to foster carers are not always made promptly.
- Transport arrangements, for some young people, are not safe or appropriate.
- Personnel files are not retained in a standardised format and do not always demonstrate that essential checks have been carried out.

## Self Assessments online

The self assessments will be of interest to all staff working with children and young people in Nottinghamshire. They cover all the key and additional lines of inquiry plus 15 additional self assessments we have produced on significant issues that contribute to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people. All the self assessments are on the public website at [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/jointareareview](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/jointareareview). They are also on the Council's intranet <http://intranet.nottscc.gov.uk/jardocumentation.htm>

## Adoption Service Ofsted Inspection April 2008

The inspection rated the overall quality of the service as good.

They summarised their findings as follows:

'The agency is very good at recruiting appropriate adopters for the children who require families and making good matches. The preparation, assessment and approval of adopters is thorough and they are provided with good and full information about children's histories through the well-established practice of life appreciation days. The adoption panel provides robust scrutiny of the work of the agency.

Support to adopters is outstanding. Adopted children can access all appropriate services with the same priority as looked after children, including those provided through education, the youth services and health provisions. The Support After Adoption team undertakes direct work

including psychotherapy and there is a wide range of activities for adopted children to utilise.

Adopters are given comprehensive welfare rights advice, have access to training, resources, support groups, social events and newsletters.

The service to birth parents is also outstanding and there is a life-long commitment to all involved in the adoption triangle. Birth parents are involved in planning, they contribute to maintaining the child's heritage through a pro-active and robust letterbox system, have access to support group and are given advice, support and understanding when trying to contact adopted adults.'

The management of the agency is good and staff are well supported in providing a good service to children, birth parents, adopters and adopted adults through good managerial support, supervision and training opportunities.'

## Joint Area Review

# Youth Offending Service Inspection

The Lead Inspector for the Youth Offending Service Inspection has given indicative feedback - her findings will be confirmed at the end of the second fieldwork week. The inspector found strengths in the Service's work with children at risk of offending, parenting and education, training and employment. A range of areas for development have been highlighted, including work with children and young people in courts and work with children and young people in the community. During the second

fieldwork week, further work will be undertaken in respect of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and the Service's work in respect of anti-social behaviour.

The inspection has been a tough test for the Service and although the indicative findings are yet to be validated, we have already begun formulating our response to the issues raised so far.

## Youth Inspection initial feedback

The initial feedback from the Enhanced Youth Inspection has been largely positive, with the inspectors recognising the

backing that the County Council offers to young people through its high levels of funding for the Youth Service. Equally, the inspectors have recognised the Service's strong capital investment in new facilities for young people.

In terms of outcomes for young people, the strength of the Service's performance in achieving accredited learning

outcomes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has also been acknowledged, as has work with young people with disabilities. Overall, however, the inspectors' key judgements will be made as a result of the forthcoming fieldwork week, where up to 20 face-to-face youth work sessions across the County will be visited and graded.

## Are you being interviewed individually or as part of a focus group?

If the JAR inspectors want to speak with you, then be prepared to provide details of work you are doing to improve outcomes for children and young people. This includes how they relate to Every Child Matters outcomes and key performance indicators.

Be clear about the nature of your area of service, how it relates to other aspects of children's services and how it is impacting on children and young people. Try to provide tangible examples, where

possible, and be honest about any challenges faced by your area of service and how they are being tackled. Think of examples of how children's and parents' participation has contributed to your area of service and how you have worked effectively with partner agencies.

If you are contacted and asked to see an inspector unexpectedly, then please inform a member of the JAR team in the first instance.

# Joint Area Review

# Health Inequalities

One of our two additional lines of inquiry for the JAR is the effectiveness of the partners' strategy in countering the impact of deprivation on health outcomes for children and young people (with particular reference to Mansfield, Ashfield and Bassetlaw)

Key successes in this area are:

- Development of an integrated service and strategy plan for all tiers of emotional health and well being/CAMHS.
- Roll out of district emotional health and well being teams following the Targeted Youth Service approach.
- In Mansfield, a targeted approach to reducing levels of tobacco use through school based community development project.
- A roll out of the Unicef Baby Friendly Breast Feeding programme across the county to increase breast feeding especially in areas of inequality.
- A comprehensive programme of work around the sexual health needs of young people has included recruitment of a young men's sexual health worker, focused SRE targeted work in areas of high teenage pregnancy and with young people of more complex needs.

We recognise that we continue to have some challenges and the inspectors wish to explore further:

- We need to improve data capture of interventions and support commissioning of programmes that have a positive outcome.
- We need to invest in and prioritise work with vulnerable groups including young people looked after, young people with a disability, travellers, young offenders, young parents and unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people.

## *And finally - thank you*

We are grateful to all of our colleagues who have contributed to the preparations for the JAR to date, and for your continued support during the fieldwork stage.

## Key Dates in 2008

Please note. These dates have been updated and may be subject to further changes.

- January** Briefing pack issued by Ofsted requesting a list of 100 'cases' of vulnerable children and young people.
- 3 March** Setup meeting for senior officers/ members with the Lead Inspector for confirmation of the key lines of enquiry for the inspection.
- 31 March** Submission of CYP review and Enhanced Youth Inspection self assessment.
- 16 - 23 April** Analysis Week. Inspectors onsite to review documents and case files. At the end of the week the JAR team will confirm the programme for their fieldwork inspection.
- 12 - 23 May** Fieldwork Weeks – inspectors undertake a range of evidence gathering activities around Nottinghamshire.
- 30 June** Draft Report sent to Director of Children's services who then has 10 days to make written comments.
- 4 July** Meetings with Director of Children's Services and members of the Partnership to discuss findings.
- 6 August** JAR findings form part of pre-publication report sent to Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire County Council.
- 9 September** Report is public and published on web sites. Action plan needed within 70 days.

### JAR Team members:

Les Cowling	Project Lead
Alison Bromberg & Sarah Craven	Co-ordination and Project Management
Sue Dryden	Health Lead
Carol Angharad & Simon Ray	Case files
Ty Yousaf	Documentation
Emma Jenkinson	Administration
Michèle McIntosh	Communications

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