

# QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Children & Young People  
**SERVICE:** Specialist Services  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 4 to year-end 31 March 2008.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Specialist Services Department fourth quarter period up to year end 31 March 2008. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period, which will be made available in due course, has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment.

The way in which traffic lights symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Appendix 8

## 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### 2.1 Court Service Consultation

A consultation paper from Her Majesty's Court Service was circulated outlining proposals to increase court fees paid by Authorities for childcare and adoption proceedings. The effect of these proposals is to transfer the costs in the Public Sector. There are clear statutory duties on local authorities to protect the interest of children and it would be unlawful to avoid taking court proceedings for financial reasons where this was considered to be the appropriate step.

The proposals specifically intend to increase fees for childcare proceedings (which are usually lengthy and expensive) to reflect costs of up to £4,825 per case and introduce a simple incremental system so that less complex cases requiring fewer hearings would pay less. Adoption fees would also increase to the region of £400. The current costs are £150 per case. It is intended that this approach will provide greater accountability for providing court services. It also seeks to discourage unnecessary or premature use of care proceedings, encourage better case preparation, improve case management and provide fast-track court processes for appropriate cases. Whilst the transfer will increase local authority costs and reduce spending by Her Majesty's Court Service, the change has been reflected in the Comprehensive Spending Review and

built into public spending totals with effect from April 2008. However as Halton's settlement was much lower this year there is no additional funding to meet these new costs.

The average number of court cases per year is 12, which would normally cost approximately £1800. The costs under the new provisions would be £48,000 if we paid the average of £4000 per case. The new charges come into effect on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. Discussion is being held within Specialist Services to identify how these new costs will be met.

## **2.2 Changes to Specialist Services Duty Social Worker Arrangements.**

To reflect the delivery of services across the Runcorn and Widnes footprint, the current duty social worker service based in Runcorn will now be duplicated in Widnes, providing a dedicated Widnes based duty service. This will reduce the need for new Widnes referrals, currently managed by the Runcorn based service, from having to transfer the referral to Widnes. These changes will provide better continuity and ensure a more efficient response and will come into effect in May 2008.

## **2.3 Revised Children in Care Strategy**

Executive Board endorsed a revised strategy for Children in Care, which is also the Council's response to the Government's Care Matters Agenda and the Children and Young Persons Bill. The strategy will now be implemented by the Multi Agency Partnership Board of the Children in Care Mini Trust.

## **2.4 Halton Safeguarding Children Board**

It has been agreed that HSCB via its Executive Board will take the strategic lead in relation to anti-bullying strategy and will update the Safer Halton Partnership/Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership at regular intervals.

The recently launched HSCB and Alliance Board Toolkit for Identifying Levels of Need reflects the new ways of working to meet the needs of the more vulnerable children and young people. The discussion at the HSCB Development Day focussed on the cohort of children in Level 3b. It is of note that nationally this Group of children feature predominantly in serious case reviews. HSCB is to establish a service framework using the current system for monitoring child protection activity as a model. This clarifies HSCB's role in taking on the strategic lead responsibility for the cohort of children covered by Level 3b.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

#### 3.1 Integrated Children System (ICS) Phase 1c

In early summer the DCSF will publish the business requirements for phase 1c of ICS. These developments will require further amendments and revisions to be made to the current ICS system. The effect of these changes will further enhance practice and improve outcomes for children when planning and reviewing their care and support arrangements. Alongside these developments will run the project to upgrade our Carefirst system that includes a fully integrated ICS system.




#### 3.2 Halton Safeguarding Children Board

HSCB to continue to promote community awareness and ownership of safeguarding. Links have been made with the Youth Parliament and the Parent & Carers Forum. The successfully piloted Safeguarding Training for Parents to be rolled out more widely via children's centres. This is evidence of direct engagement with the community around the wider safeguarding agenda.

#### 3.3 Joint Area Review

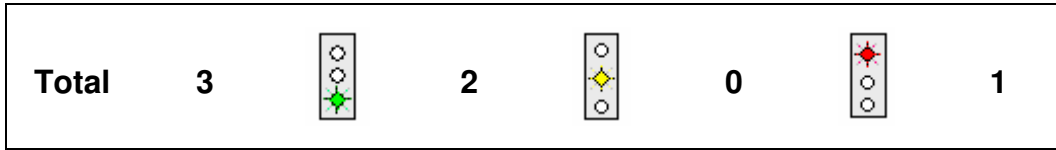
The fieldwork stage of Halton's Joint Area Review started on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March and will finish on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April with initial feedback received at the end of the fieldwork. The initial draft report from the inspectors will be received on the 15<sup>th</sup> May followed by a further meeting with the Lead Inspector to enable comments and challenge from the authority. The final report will be published on the Ofsted website on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July. A JAR action plan will be developed to ensure areas for development are progressed and also to share examples of good practice that come up through the inspection.

### 4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>2</b>
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Of the three key objectives for the service, one has been met. Milestones have not been completely achieved on the remaining two. Further details of progress against each key objective are available in Appendix 1.

**4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

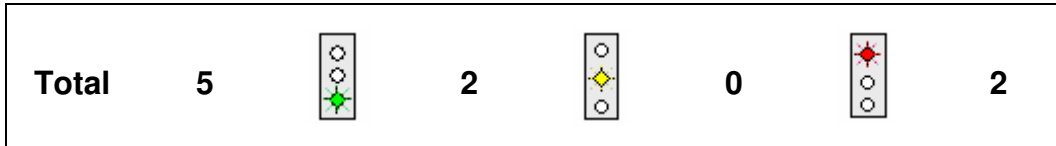


Of the three other objectives for the service, two have been met. Milestones have not been completely achieved on the remaining one. Further details of progress against each Key Objective are available in Appendix 2.

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**

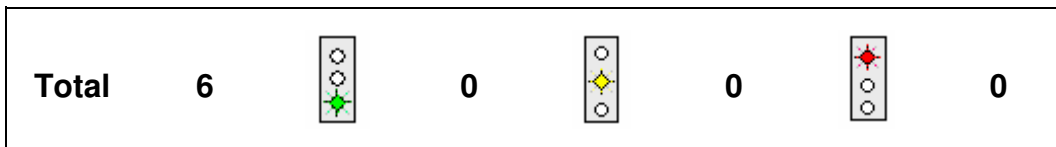
Nothing to report in this quarter

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**



Of the five key indicators for the service, two have achieved target and two have not. One indicator has not been assigned a traffic light as 2007/08 was the baseline year and a target was not set (SS LPI 3) Further details of progress against each Key Performance Indicator are available in Appendix 3.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**



Of the six key indicators for the service, two have achieved target and two have not. Two indicators have not been assigned a traffic light as 2007/08 was the baseline year and a target was not set (SS LPI 1 & 4) Further details of progress against each Key Objective are available in Appendix 4.

**7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS**

The service is responsible for reporting against LPSA 11 - Improved opportunities and levels of participation in education training and employment by children in the care of Halton Council. For details of progress, please refer to Appendix 5.

## **8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES**

During the production of the 2007-08 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

Further details of progress against risk treatment measures for the service are available in Appendix 6.




## **9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS**




During 2006/07 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

Further details of progress against risk treatment measures for the service are available in Appendix 7.

## **10.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2- Progress against Other Objectives / Milestones  
Appendix 3- Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
Appendix 4- Progress against Other Performance Indicators  
Appendix 5- Progress against LPSA targets  
Appendix 6- Progress against Risk Control measures (Q2 & 4)  
Appendix 7- Progress against high priority equality actions (Q2 & 4)  
Appendix 8- Explanation of traffic light symbols

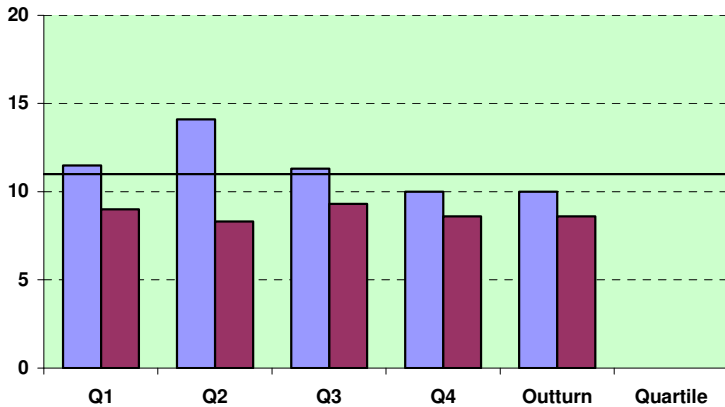
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SS1	To improve outcomes for looked after children and provide an integrated support service to LAC	Establish a baseline position for the % of LAC accessing early years provision as appropriate by June 2007		Baseline established.  100% of eligible young children are accessing their entitlement
SS2	To ensure children and young people are mentally and emotionally healthy	All frontline staff are trained in knowing how to identify the Emotional Health and Mental Well Being of children and young people by March 2008  CAMHS Strategy reviewed and updated by March 2008		Work is still ongoing. In place is a rolling programme across three levels to meet this objective. Additional capacity at tier 1/2 has been commissioned by the Emotional Health Partnership Board to ensure all staff are trained to identify emotional and mental health needs.  Completed December 07
SS3	All Directorates to exercise their corporate parenting responsibilities	Implement revised corporate parenting strategy by Sept 2007  Increase the number of work placements offered to LAC and Care Leavers by 5% against baseline by March 2008		Corporate Parenting Strategy now incorporated within the revised Children in Care Strategy  Issues in relation to work placements and employment of care leaver to be reviewed

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SS4	To provide a range of support services for children and families	<p>Child in Need mini trust established with aligned budget and joint commissioning arrangements by March 2008</p> <p>Review/ updating of strategies in the context of the new service design by March 2008</p>		<p>CiN Trust established Jan 2007. HSCB has agreed that the cohort of CIN will be those children at level 3(b). Analysis of this cohort will be presented to HSCB in September 08</p> <p>New Children Trust came into being in April 08, which will result in service redesign but will not be in place as of March 08.</p>
SS5	To provide a range of local placement options for looked after children	Revised Carer recruitment strategy in place by Sept 2007		Strategy in place and implemented within agreed timescale.
SS6	To provide a range of support and accommodation services for young people over 16 yrs and for care leavers	<p>Review/ updating of strategy in the context of the new service design by March 2008</p> <p>Establish a baseline position for provision of approved semi independent accommodation for young people 16+ and care leavers by Sept 2007</p>		<p>Strategy updated and revised commissioning plan in place</p> <p>Commissioning plan in place and additional resources identified</p>

BVPI  
49

### Stability of Placements for Looked After Children

Lower figures represent better performance



**Key**

- 2006/7
  - 2007/8
  - Target
  - Top 25%
  - Middle 50%
  - Bottom 25%
- No quartile data available

<b>PAF Assessment</b>	
Better ←	
Band <span style="background-color: #00ff00; padding: 2px;">5</span> <span style="background-color: #ffcc00; padding: 2px;">2</span> <span style="background-color: #ff0000; padding: 2px;">1</span>	
Target X	
Current X	
Likely to hit PAF target	
<b>Trend</b>	
<span style="font-size: 2em; color: #00ff00;">↑</span>	Green
Better than this time last year	Annual target hit or exceeded

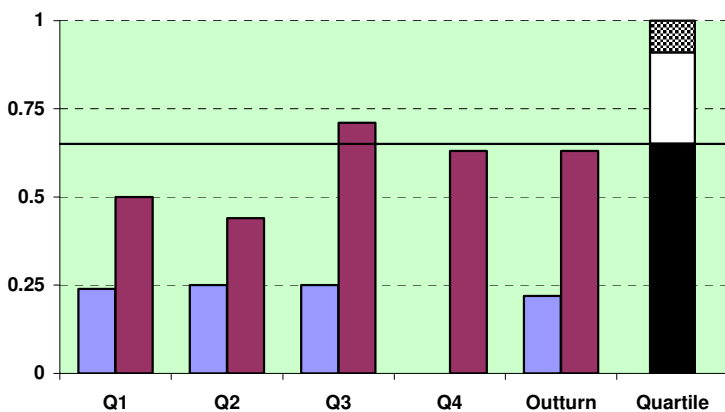
**Commentary**

Performance at the end of the year of 8.6% is excellent and shows a significant improvement from 10% in the previous year. The integration of services for Children in Care through the CiC Mini-Trust and robust procedures to prevent placement breakdown have had a critical role in the improved performance.

BVPI  
161

### Employment, education and training for care leavers (ratio)

Higher figures represent better performance



**Key**

- 2006/7
- 2007/8
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%

<b>PAF Assessment</b>	
Better ←	
Band <span style="background-color: #00ff00; padding: 2px;">5</span> <span style="background-color: #ffcc00; padding: 2px;">3</span> <span style="background-color: #ff0000; padding: 2px;">2</span> <span style="background-color: #ff0000; padding: 2px;">1</span>	
Target X	
Current X	
Likely to hit PAF target	
<b>Trend</b>	
<span style="font-size: 2em; color: #00ff00;">↑</span>	Red
Better than this time last year	Annual target missed

**Commentary**

The indicator measures the % of care leavers in EET at 19 as a ratio of the 5 of the general population in EET reported through the Labour Market Survey. Year end performance of 0.63 shows a huge improvement from the 2006-07 figure of 0.44, although it is still short of the very challenging target of 0.75. The development of an Integrated Youth Support Service and targeted interventions for Care Leavers should ensure performance improvements are sustained and further enhanced.



SSPAF A3

**Child Protection Re-Registration**

Higher figures represent better performance

**PAF Assessment**

Better ←

Band 5 4 3 2 1

Target X

Current X

**Unlikely to hit PAF target**

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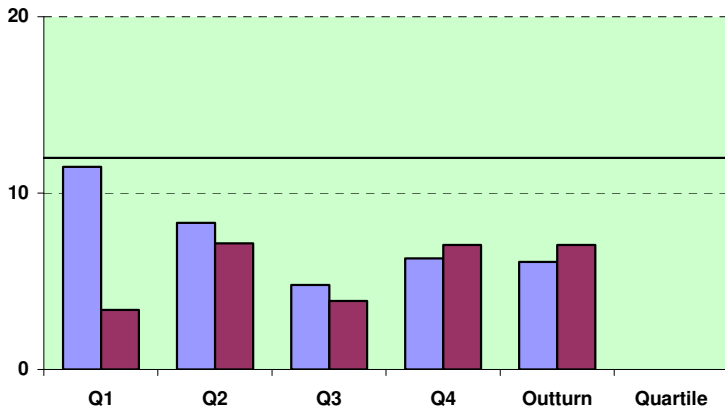
**Trend**

↔

**Green**

Same as this time last year

Annual target hit or exceeded



**Key**

- 2006/7
- 2007/8
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%

No quartile data available

**Commentary**

Year end figure of 7.04% shows a slight increase on Q3. This indicator has a banding of 10%-15% which is regarded as excellent performance, however it is not necessarily good to be high or low. Given the small numbers in the cohort the indicator is highly volatile and can be skewed by a sibling group.

SSLPI 2

**% of Care Leavers living in temporary accommodation**

Lower figures represent better performance

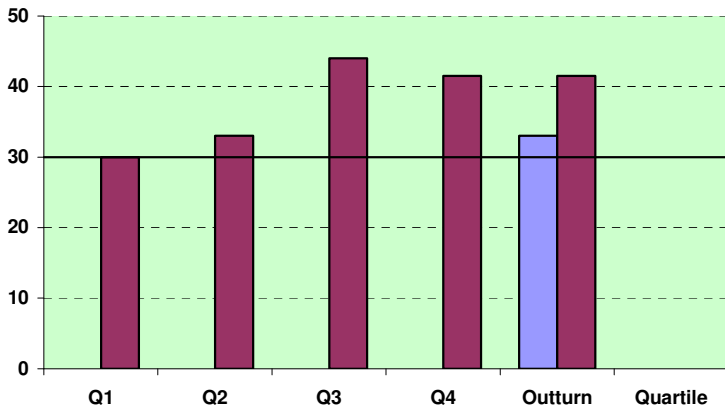
**Trend**

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**Red**

Worse than this time last year

Annual target missed



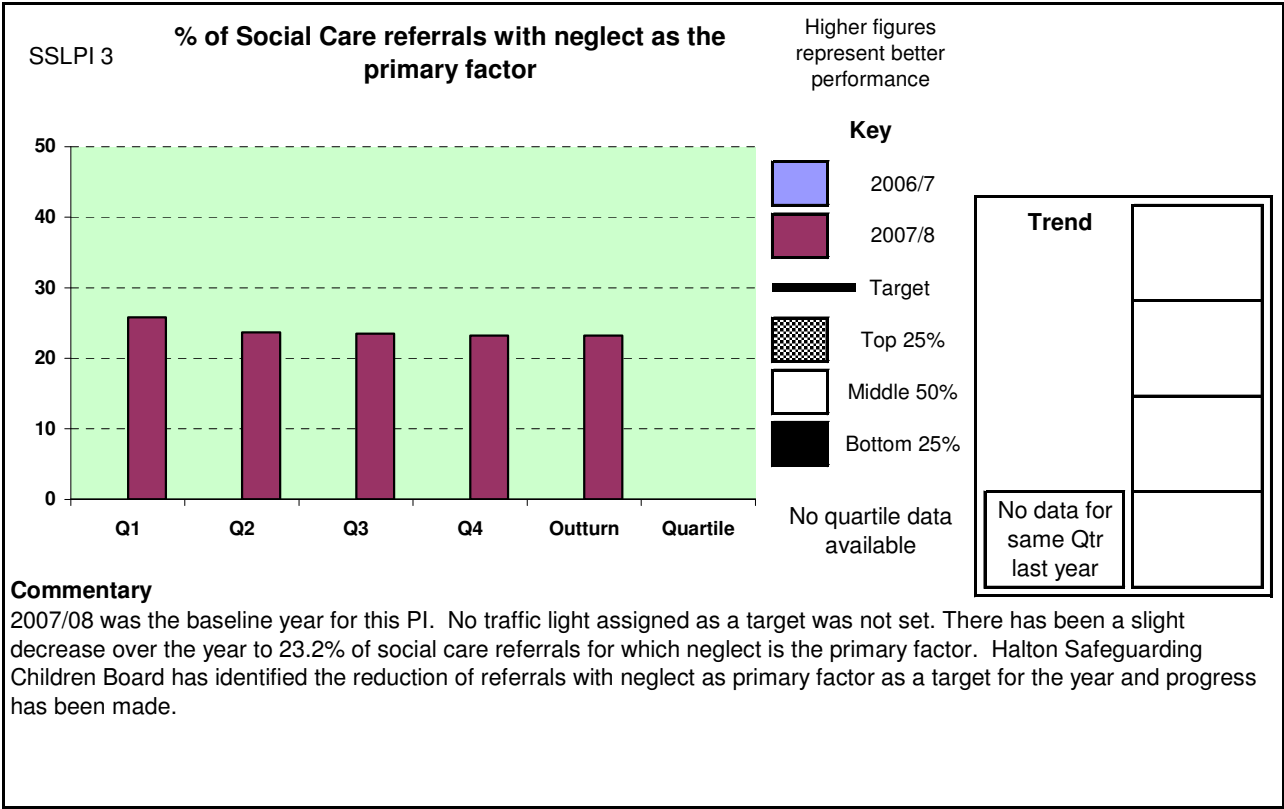
**Key**

- 2006/7
- 2007/8
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%



No quartile data available


**Commentary**




There has been a significant increase during the year to 41% at year end. 5 young people remain in temporary accommodation through choice or need and if they were removed from calculation, the proportion in temporary accommodation would drop to 35%. Accommodation for care leavers has been identified as a priority area and the new Accommodation Strategy will try to increase the availability of appropriate accommodation for care leavers.






Ref	Indicator	Actual 06 / 07	Target 07 / 08	Quarter 4	Progress *	PAF Target Band	PAF progress *	Commentary
<b>Service Delivery Indicators</b>								
SS LPI 1	% of LAC achieving at or above the level forecast using FFT data	New for 07/08	Baseline TBC	NYA	Baseline Year	N/A	N/A	Data is not yet available for this indicator.
BVPI 50/ PAF A2	Proportion of young people leaving care with at least 1 GCSE grade A-G or GNVQ	57	60	57%		4		This is an unvalidated figure, but it is expected that performance will be slightly below the target for the year
BVPI 162/ PAF C20	Percentage of children on the register whose child protection cases were reviewed within timescales	100	100	100%		5		Performance has been maintained at 100%
BVPI 163/ PAF C23	Proportion of children looked after for more than 6 months adopted	9.5%	9.0%	6%		5		A total of 8 adoptions were completed during the year. This indicator usually reflects a 2 year cycle and after last year's excellent performance a dip was expected. The 07/08 performance equates to PAF band 3.
<b>Fair Access Indicators</b>								
SS LPI 4	% of referrals to CAMHS services resulting in individuals accessing appropriate services	New for 07/08	Baseline TBC	90%	Baseline Year	N/A	N/A	This is a projected figure based on the data that is currently available.
SS LPI 5	% of LAC accessing alternative health assessments having previous refused	New for 07/08	57.7%	60%		N/A	N/A	Performance for the year has exceeded the target

LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q4	Traffic light*	Commentary
11	<p><b>Improved opportunities and levels of participation in education training and employment by children in the care of Halton Council.</b></p> <p>1. The percentage school attendance of children who have been looked after for at least 12 months</p>	<p><b>89.6%</b> May 05</p>	<p><b>92.6%</b> May 08</p>	<p><b>92.4%</b></p>	<p><b>92.4%</b></p>		<p>Projected performance has remained stable however this is still in the process of validation</p>
	<p>2. The percentage of children in the care of Halton Council who are under 16 years old and have been looked after for more than 2.5 years, that have been in their current placement for at least 2 years (LAC 24)</p>	<p><b>64.4%</b> 04/05</p>	<p><b>81.5%</b> 07/08</p>	<p><b>75.3%</b></p>	<p><b>69%</b></p>		<p>There has been a slight dip in performance at the end of the year to 69%. An analysis of the cohort has been carried out and the changing demographics of the CiC population combined with positive placement moves accounts for the change.</p>

Key Objective (Service Plan Ref. Only)	Risk Control Measures	Target / Deadline	Progress	Commentary
SS2	Implementation of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to ensure early identification of emotional difficulties and provision of targeted support.	All new entrants aged 10 and above to have a SDQ		CiC care service has been piloting the SDQ for all new entrants aged 10 and above. From April 08 all CiC aged 10 and above will have an SDQ assessment.

HIGH Priority Actions	Target (Resp. Officer)	Progress (Traffic lights)*	Commentary
Ensure staff participate in a programme of Equality and Diversity training	<b>2007/08</b> (OD Specialist Services and all DM's)		A programme of training has been running for the last 18 months and staff are identified for courses via the EDR process.
Participate in programme of Equality Impact assessments on all Strategy, Policy, and Service Areas	<b>2007/08</b> (OD Specialist Services and all DM's)		The programme of Equality Impact Assessments is in progress and currently on target.
Embed a system of stakeholder engagement, participation and consultation in all aspects of Service Delivery	<b>2007/08</b> (OD Specialist Services and all DM's)		Stakeholder engagement and participation is being developed across all service areas however further development is still required.

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicators (Excl. LPSA)</u>	<u>LPSA Indicators Only</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 07/08 target <u>has been achieved</u> or exceeded</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved.</u></p>
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that that the <u>objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 07/08 target <u>has not been achieved.</u></p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>