JAR NEWSLETTER

Joint Area Review Newsletter

Issue 1

Sept 2007

This newsletter is the first of a series providing information and updates on the Joint Area Review (JAR). This type of inspection is a recent introduction and is a new experience for Leicester.
The newsletters will explain the requirements and the processes for the inspection, so that staff from a range of agencies providing services to children, young people and their families know what is happening and what to expect.
Every Children's Services Authority is being inspected over a three year period. Leicester's JAR will take place between 28th January and 8th February 2008. This is when inspectors will be in Leicester looking at the impact of our work on children and young people across the city.

What is a JAR?

The Children Act 2004 requires a Joint Area Review (JAR) to be conducted at the request of the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families in accordance with arrangements made by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. This system-wide inspection covers all publicly-funded services for children and young people, including those that are directly managed or commissioned by the council, as well as services provided by health and youth justice services.
The JAR also covers the leadership and management of services for children and young people and, in particular, the way that services work together to improve outcomes.
The JAR forms the Children and young people's part of the Local Authority Performance Assessment (CPA).

What will the JAR look at?

Inspectors will examine what life is like for the children and young people who live in Leicester and what needs to change to make it better.
Particular attention will be given to joint action by local services on behalf of those groups of children and young people who may be vulnerable to poor outcomes, for example Looked after Children, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children from Black Minority Ethnic Communities and children in need of safeguarding.
JAR inspectors will track the experiences of a number of individual children and young people; meet with lead council members and members of bodies such as the police authority or primary care trusts, community and voluntary sector representatives, service users and senior managers. They will also hold group discussions with front-line staff, including those based in schools.

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What is the timetable for the JAR?

Inspectors will visit the city in January and February 2008.
Preparation for the JAR has already started. We have completed a review of our Children and Young People's Plan and this forms our self-assessment report for the JAR. A survey of the views of up to 600 school children has been carried out called 'Tellus2'. This and other key evidence will form the basis of the inspectors' initial judgements. From 28th January to 8th February 2008 there will be two weeks of field work by the inspectors to provide the rest of the evidence for the final report.

What are the outcomes of the JAR?

The most important outcome is that we will have a published report by a team of independent inspectors judging how well we are doing in terms of improving the lives and life chances of children and young people in Leicester.
The report grades the effectiveness of services for vulnerable groups of children and young people, the effectiveness of service management, and the capacity of services to improve. Following the report, a written statement of proposed action is drawn up by the local authority and its partners. The findings will inform the Healthcare Commission and influence future health inspections.
The JAR will give us an opportunity to develop a robust monitoring and self assessment framework across the partnership.

How will the JAR affect me?

The JAR inspectors will need to see a wide range of evidence from a variety of areas. There are several points at which you might be asked to help with the inspection.

1.Before
You may be asked to provide evidence of your work with children and young people. This will focus on –

- **What you did**
- **What difference it made**
- **How you know you made a difference.**

2.During
You may be asked to meet with the inspectors in a focus group or to host a visit or answer questions.

3.After
You may be involved in putting together an action plan for the future. You will be able to read a copy of the inspection report. This newsletter and our website will keep you updated.

Key Contacts

JAR programme management.

To help prepare for the Joint Area Review, we have put together a JAR team:

- JAR Senior Responsible Officer – Andrew Bunyan
- JAR Programme Manager – Susan Harrison
- JAR Team – Jane Taylor, Claire Jamieson, Sarah Ellix
- Admin Support – Anna Dias.
- Additional Support – We've also got support from a number of other people to help us prepare for the JAR.

To help drive the Programme and make sure all partners are informed and engaged, we have also set up a multi-agency JAR Steering Group.

***Next issue:** more about how we are preparing for the JAR*

If you are aware of any organisation not in receipt of this newsletter, please contact us, so that we can make sure they receive a copy.

For more information on the JAR visit our website on: www.leicester.gov.uk/jar
Email the JAR team on jar.team@leicester.gov.uk
Or contact: Susan Harrison, JAR Programme Manager, tel: 2254700,
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