

### **3.6 Chapter summary and key priorities for action**

The poor start in life described in Chapter 2 determines the life chances of the child, young person and adult – highlighting the urgency of addressing early years’ challenges. This is confirmed by the experiences described in this chapter. Poor education outcomes – bottom quartile for several years at Key Stage 4 and 5 - do not prepare our young people well for employment. Walsall has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the country (11<sup>th</sup> out of 406 councils in February 2012). There is some sign of improvement at Key Stage 4 with 5+ GCSE’s improving as Walsall was better than SN average. The attainment gap for SEN pupils is too large. This poor level of attainment is compounded by poor attendance, particularly in deprived areas, which contributes to the gap in attainment. Obesity levels are high and increasing. Teenage pregnancy is very high, even after a large decrease in 2009/10. Looked-after children numbers have increased, as in nearly every other council, due to the recession and the impact of the “Baby Peter” case. While the numbers are around the level we would expect, and they have reduced during 2011 due to our Early Health Strategy, the double-dip recession will maintain pressure on budgets. We need to ensure that the needs of children with disability are being met.

#### Priorities for Action:

- *Promote pupil aspiration and school/college improvement to:*
  - *Ensure further sustained improvement at Key Stage 4*
  - *Urgently address poor outcomes at Key Stage 5*
  - *Ensure that children, particularly those in care, have a stable high quality education that encourages high aspiration and supports them in achieving their potential*
- *Promoting pride in the achievements of the children and young people of Walsall (see Appendix 3, CYP Plan Priority 6)*
- *Learn from the schools with best attendance and spread this to other schools*
- *Roll out the Early Help Strategy to help improve outcomes for children and ensure resources match increasing need arising from the double dip recession*
- *Prioritise reduction in social inequalities in pupils’ educational outcomes and increase educational attainment particularly for vulnerable children in deprived areas*
- *Better communication between frontline staff in all agencies that support children and families (see Appendix 3, CYP Plan Priority 7)*
- *Supporting the most vulnerable families to provide the best start in life for children (see Appendix 3, CYP Plan Priority 1)*
- *Reducing the harm caused by child sexual exploitation including children missing from school, care and home (see Appendix 3, CYP Plan Priority 3)*
- *Ensuring that children maintain a healthy weight (see Appendix 3, CYP Plan Priority 2)*
- *Reduce levels of child obesity by focusing on healthy eating and physical activity with schools continuing to promote health and provide high quality PSHE*
- *Reduce the number and rate of teenage conceptions, especially in deprived areas*
- *Reduce the number of young people going into custody by working with Courts and partner agencies*

- *Ensure that young people are prepared for and supported in their transition to adulthood*
- *Development of a single multi-agency assessment and planning process for children and young people aged 0-25.*
- *Review of current SEN provision to ensure it meets demand – in particular to address the growth in children with Autism Spectrum; PMLD (profound Multiple Learning Disability)/SLD and provision for post 16 years with SEN.*
- *Redraft multi-agency SEND strategy*
- *Develop local offer to include Health and Social Care provision.*
- *Increase choice, control and engagement of CYP in whole systems service development (to include access to personalised budgets).*
- *SEN data to be further analysed to ascertain whether there is a match between need and provision.*
- *Reducing the harm caused by child sexual exploitation including children missing from school, care and home (see Appendix 3, CYP Plan Priority 3)*
- *The need to strengthen our early help arrangements*
- *Continue to develop an understanding of the child's journey through the system from receiving early help to protection.*
- *Ensure that the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) implemented in April 2013 has continued representation from key partnership agencies such as Education, Police and Health.*
- *The need to better understand and respond to children and young people and their families where substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse features.*
- *Develop services that address health and wellbeing and promote high quality care, especially for disabled children and those with mental health needs, delivered through integrated professional working, providing personalisation and single assessments*
- *Continue and expand a holistic partnership approach to tackling under-age consumption of alcohol, smoking and substance abuse*