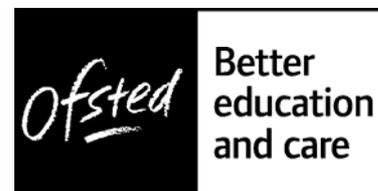


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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Mr Gerald Jones  
Interim Director of Children's Services  
London Borough of Wandsworth  
The Town Hall  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Mr Jones

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF  
WANDSWORTH COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE  
SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 4 July 2005 to assess the performance of the education and social care services within your authority. We are grateful for the information which you provided to support this process and for the time made available by yourself and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

**Being healthy**

Outcomes in this area are very good overall. The council has used a variety of methods to engage with children and young people on sexual health issues, including the use of information cards, and supported sessions on sexual health and drug education at drop-in youth centres. The health needs of looked after children are well supported and indicators exceed national and comparator averages. Looked after children have the email address of the Assistant Director of Children's Services and a mobile phone number of the looked after children nurse, who also provides sessions on individual needs.

The capacity of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is good. The staffing ratio is better than the national average. Youth Offending Team staff are trained to use a mental health screening tool and refer all young offenders for appropriate services if necessary. Effective partnership activity takes place through the Joint Commissioning Group led by the Primary Care Trust with South-West London and St. George's Mental Health Trust. Assessment and referral to treatment of young offenders for substance misuse is good.

The under 18 conception rate has fallen in the last two years, but is still above the national average. Good multi-agency work involving the Primary Care Trust's Teenage Pregnancy Unit, the Connexions Service and Education Department exists to support

teenage parents, which includes identifying and tracking teenage mothers to provide tailored support packages. Despite a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education in secondary schools, sexually transmitted infections rates amongst young people are high.

The council has successfully exceeded its target for the numbers of schools achieving the Healthy Schools Level 3 status and continues to provide additional support for schools in priority areas, which have been less successful. Young people aged 7-16, including those looked after, and those in special schools and pupil referral units, are targeted to ensure they have access to a minimum of two hours physical activity each week of every school term.

The council's performance in fostering and adoption placements is very good, and a dedicated doctor based in the adoption & fostering service is available for looked after children. All looked after children have an allocated social worker.

## **Staying safe**

Outcomes in this area are good overall. The council achieves its performance targets for child protection. All reviews of child protection plans are completed within timescales and all schools are monitored to ensure they meet the Area Child Protection Committee requirements.

Effective safeguarding training is in place and child protection training is provided to all early years settings by the council. Multi-agency child protection training for those in both the statutory and voluntary sector is well attended. The impact of training on performance is monitored by the council. Good arrangements are in place to ensure all adults having regular unsupervised contact with children are appropriately vetted. The multi-agency public protection arrangements are effective and working well. Good arrangements are in place to monitor and review racist incidents. The number of incidents has reduced over the last three years. Effective protocols have been established with the local police for identifying and reporting missing children. An anti bullying strategy is supported by practical initiatives to help young people to travel to school safely. The police also monitor local crime hotspots. The issue of female genital mutilation has been discussed by the Area Child Protection Committee and work is in hand to protect young women. Work has taken place with the local mosque and voluntary sector providers to discuss safeguarding and its importance to vulnerable young people.

The adoption services have restructured and the Family Plus Team provides a helpful single access point for advice, support and information for adopters, kinship carers and private foster carers. The council recognises a need exists to increase the number of adopters. A treatment fostering care service for challenging children and young people

has been established, which aims to keep them in a home environment, rather than a residential setting.

The percentage of younger looked after children in foster placements or placed for adoption is above both the national and comparator averages and the percentage of children in residential care is lower than the national average and that of similar councils. There is a lower percentage of younger looked after children in foster care within the borough than the national and comparator averages and a range of initiatives have been put in place to increase local provision. There are good monitoring arrangements for those looked after children who are placed outside of the borough. Indicators suggest that the placements of children in long term care are unstable with only 54% being with the same carer for over 2 years.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area are good overall. Weaknesses in the initial quality of non-maintained sector early years provision at the point of registration are being managed through new monitoring arrangements and additional staff appointments, which are improving the opportunities for children to meet the early learning goals. School standards overall are in line with statistical neighbours and show continuing improvement. For example, although not yet validated, outcomes at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 4 in 2005 indicate a rising trend despite a slight dip in performance at Key Stage 4 in 2004.

Attainment at Key Stage 1 is a weakness and the gap with similar authorities is widening in spite of additional support provided. Amongst other reasons this is due in part to the numbers of pupils for whom English is not their first language and in part to pupil mobility. At Key Stages 2 and 3, children achieve broadly in line with statistical neighbours. At Key Stage 4, attainment is good overall but the average points score at Key Stage 5 is slightly below national averages. However, the figures mask discrepancies between the attainments of different groups of young people. The performance of boys overall is a weakness and is reflected in the attainment of boys of African-Caribbean heritage and those in vulnerable groups such as looked after children. The council is fully aware of the difficulties it faces and has implemented a detailed school improvement plan based on the effective analysis of good quality data. The innovative 'Pupil Achievement Tracker' software is enabling officers to monitor the performance of individual pupils across the borough. Targeted action is in place through, for example, the Battersea Education Action Zone and a multi-disciplinary targeted support initiative both of which are improving the quality of support for vulnerable and underachieving groups. New arrangements for monitoring, challenging, supporting and interventions with schools are increasingly effective with only one school remaining in a formal Ofsted category of concern.

Attendance in primary schools is better than statistical neighbours and above the national average. In secondary schools, attendance is slightly below national averages but unauthorised absence has fallen significantly and agreed targets have been met. The council has plans in place to improve the attendance of vulnerable groups such as looked after children, which it acknowledges as a priority. Surplus places have been managed effectively ensuring that the council can respond to population changes in different parts of the borough. Improvements have been made on school admissions and the council leads on a pan London admissions project. The behaviour initiative programme has been very effective in reducing exclusions from targeted schools, but there has been a rise in other secondary schools.

Partnership activity is a strength and is helping the council to improve standards and provision. The council's Integrated Youth Services through their Bases, youth clubs and other projects and activities provides good opportunities for young people across the borough. Effective work takes place with, and between, the Youth Offending Team, the Educational Welfare Service and the police. Support at Key Stage 4 is provided by London Challenge and social services work with voluntary organisations to improve opportunities for young people with disabilities. A successful project supported by the Excellence in Cities initiative and the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant contributed to improvements at GCSE for African-Caribbean heritage pupils.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are good. A range of consultation mechanisms with young people are in place, which include surveys, using Connexions and the youth work service, the children in need census and the "Pupils' Voice" project. Further methods are being explored. The youth service, through its 11 bases, and other projects and activities successfully promotes young people's personal and social development. Levels of re-offending in Wandsworth are generally better than national averages and the youth offending team's engagement of offenders with victims is a model of good practice. The council provides effective support for homeless young people.

'Total Respect' training was provided for adults working with children and young people to ensure that their rights to participate in all decisions affecting them are respected in the looked after children system – by foster carers, social workers, residential care work staff, managers and elected members.

The formal advocacy service and social services complaints system is not well used by children with disabilities. The council are aware of this weakness and have put in place measures to improve future accessibility.

## Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are good overall. This is a positive area of the council's work with examples of good progress. The 14-19 strategic forum and a curriculum audit have been effective. Unified entry criteria for Level 3 courses have been agreed for schools and colleges across the borough. Effective link courses have been established for Key Stage 4 pupils and Year 11 pupils attending the pupil referral unit have access to national vocational qualifications. Participation rates in education at post 16, although a challenge, are improving over time and are supported by the very good progress in reducing the numbers of young people not in education, training and employment. Whilst the proportion of young offenders in education, training and employment is below the national target of 90%, it is well above national averages. The proportion of care leavers with positive outcomes remains consistently good and is above national and comparator averages with four young people each year progressing to higher education.

All post 16 looked after children have an individual action plan, a social worker and a Connexions personal adviser to support them. Almost all children in need with a disability have a transition plan to support their move from children's to adult services.

Good multi-agency activity exists in the Independent Living Service between housing workers, Connexions staff, part-time tutors and an unaccompanied asylum seeker worker. An effective care leavers activity for young people from black and minority ethnic communities is supported by the local Learning and Skills Council and European funding.

## SUMMARY

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement</b>
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exceeded Healthy schools initiative target</li> <li>• support for looked after children</li> <li>• robust partnership working with the primary care trust and local mental health trust</li> <li>• innovative schemes to access services</li> <li>• good use of youth services to access services.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduction of teenage pregnancy rates</li> <li>• impact of services and views of children and young people</li> <li>• increase support for priority schools to achieve Level 3 healthy school status.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good child protection interventions, referrals and assessments</li> <li>• pilot work for the common assessment framework</li> <li>• effective Safeguarding training in place</li> <li>• evidence of learning from management review on critical incidents</li> <li>• multi-agency public protection arrangements are effective and working well.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase number of adopters</li> <li>• long term stability of looked after children placements</li> <li>• increase local foster care provision.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good data and analysis available.</li> <li>• foundation stage profile overall indicates good outcomes for children and young people.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve the attainment of black and minority ethnic groups, looked after children and children and young people with complex needs</li> <li>• raise standards in all key stages, especially Key Stage 1.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• range of consultation mechanisms in place</li> <li>• "Total Respect" training provided for adults working with children and young people.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of advocacy/social services directorate complaints system by children with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good support for looked after children, care leavers and those who are not in education, employment or training</li> <li>• young people over 18 are encouraged to chair their own meetings</li> <li>• effective programme is available to children and young people black and minority ethnic communities to improve their literacy, numeracy, information technology and music skills.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greater need to measure impact of initiatives and impact on outcomes for CYP.</li> </ul>

## **Service management**

There is clear commitment by elected members, via a cabinet structure, and senior officers to take forward the Every Child Matters agenda. The Chief Executive has the interim role of director of children's services and chairs the children and young peoples strategic partnership board. The council values efficiency, quality and a clear customer and community focus. The council holds 26 Charter Marks, which includes children's centres, education welfare, independent living schemes and the integrated youth service. Substantial progress is being made in moving towards a production of a single children and young people's plan from 2006. The council held a seminar for the voluntary and community sectors in March 2005 to consult and discuss the Every Child Matters agenda. Local services share common objectives and targets for improving the well-being of children and young people in the area.

The council was rated excellent in the 2004 Comprehensive Performance Assessment and continues to demonstrate capacity to improve its children's services, such as the national college of school leadership extended school pilot, developing primary networks and the Battersea Every Child Matters cluster. Senior management and member commitment to engagement in innovative activity is evident. Elected members engage in regular visiting to services for children and young people. Structures are in place to enable members to discuss proposals about services for children and young people and to scrutinise the performance of these services. The early years review is due to go to cabinet shortly.

Local services share common objectives and targets for improving the well-being of children and young people in the area. Good research and use of data enables the council to identify needs accurately and work is clearly focused on areas of underachievement or low performance. The council is recognised as "leading edge" in supporting the use of data to monitor pupil progress and is working with the Department for Education and Skills on the national roll-out Pupil Achievement Tracker software. This enables individual children and young people's academic achievements to be monitored throughout their school life by teachers and senior officers.

Children's Services priorities have been carefully mapped against the five "Every Child Matters" outcomes.

Key senior staff are in post and offer good leadership for this development work. A Project Leader has been identified to oversee the change for children agenda. Multi-agency working has been developed in some key areas. Relations with key partners are in place. Links with the London Challenge Advisor are good.

There are strong strategic partnerships involving key senior managers and a wide range of stakeholders to ensure children's services are well planned and delivered. For example, early joint commissioning which demonstrates effective cooperation, an early

years centre, Sure Start programmes, child and adolescent mental health services and integrated youth service. The partnership arrangements ensures that the local diverse needs of the community are met. The Children's Fund project provides speech and language support to vulnerable families.

There are well established performance management systems in place. Performance targets, in line with departmental priorities, are reviewed quarterly. These are now more closely linked with Every Child Matters and divisional training is linked to priorities.

## **Areas for exploration in the joint area review**

### **Being healthy**

*Healthy life-styles are promoted for children and young people:*

- reduction of teenage pregnancy rates
- priority school targets for level 3 Healthy Living status.

### **Staying safe**

*Children and young people are provided with a safe environment:*

- progress in reducing bullying in secondary schools
- arrangements for safeguarding children and young people.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

*Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and to achieve highly:*

- continued improvement in educational attainment for all pupils
- all children and young people can access a range of recreation and voluntary learning provision
- the work of the youth service.

### **Making a positive contribution**

*Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision making and in supporting the community:*

- progress in achieving a coherent strategy to involve children and young people
- children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution

- improvements to respite care and services for children with disabilities.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

*Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to achieve economic well-being:*

- promote the use of Direct Payments.

### **Final judgements**

Please see your final annual performance assessment judgements attached at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely



**FLO HADLEY**  
Divisional Manager  
Office for Standards in Education



**JONATHAN PHILLIPS**  
Director – Quality, Performance and Methods  
Commission for Social Care Inspection

## APA final judgements 2005: London Borough of Wandsworth Council

Areas for judgement	Final judgements <sup>1</sup>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	<b>4</b>
The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	<b>3</b>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	<b>4</b>
The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people	<b>4</b>

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### 1

Grade	Service descriptors	Capacity to improve descriptors
4	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users	Very good
3	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users	Good/promising
2	A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users	Adequate
1	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users	Inadequate