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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Ms Romi Bowen  
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**1 November 2006**

Dear Ms Bowen

## **2006 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK**

This letter summarises the findings of the 2006 annual performance assessment process for your local 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.

### **Summary**

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

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<b>Grade</b>	<b>Service descriptors</b>	<b>Capacity to improve descriptors</b>
4	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users	Excellent / outstanding
3	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users	Good
2	A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users	Adequate
1	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users	Inadequate

Southwark Council delivers services above minimum standards to children and their carers. There is strong partnership practice in the authority and good progress has been made in the integration of children's services. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) describes a clear vision for services supported by a detailed needs assessment and ambitious targets. There is unified strategic management of education, social care and specialist health services for children and good evidence of collaboration across agencies at operational levels. Performance management is robust and some improvements in outcomes have been achieved. There is clear awareness of the significant challenges which remain, in particular with regards to educational outcomes for children in the borough. Rigorous strategies are in place to address these challenges and capacity to secure further improvement across all outcome areas is good.

## **Being healthy**

The council makes a good contribution to improving the health of children and young people in the area. There are strong multi-agency approaches to promoting health with core health services being delivered within the Sure Start programme, children's centres, early years providers, schools and youth services. Health and social care practitioners are co-located in a number of multi-disciplinary services and increasingly engaged in joint assessment and service delivery. Key performance measures show improvement including reduction of smoking in pregnancy, reduced infant mortality, increasing levels of breastfeeding, improved immunisation rates and dental health. There is a good focus on obesity with a clear strategy to address rising rates of obesity amongst young children. Teenage conceptions are reducing although they remain high. Targeted approaches are employed with vulnerable groups and in specific localities. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of young people accessing emergency contraception and an increased focus on work with younger children including the production of a curriculum pack for primary schools. There is a good range of substance misuse services delivered in schools, community and targeted settings. However, the number of young people in specialist treatment is relatively low.

Most schools in the council are working towards the Healthy Schools Standard and good attention is paid to healthy eating, exercise, sex and relationship education and substance misuse awareness in school settings. Most schools inspected were rated good at promoting healthy lifestyles.

Investment in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) has increased and steps have been taken to improve access to services by specific groups including Black and minority ethnic children. There is effective collaboration with the youth offending team (YOT) with plans to increase further the access of young offenders to assessment and intervention. Children affected by the mental health needs of parents or carers receive support from a jointly commissioned family support service.

There is a strong focus on improving health outcomes for looked after children and effective partnerships with health practitioners are in place. Performance in assessing the health needs of these children is good and there are targeted approaches to dental health, good diet, substance misuse and teenage pregnancy for this group. The access for looked

after children to mental health services is good with specialist provision in place. Carers receive good training, guidance and support to promote the health of looked after children.

Strategic management for specialist children's health services has been absorbed into the remit of the Director of Children's Services. Health and social care staff are co-located in specialist teams for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good progress has been made in improving co-ordination and collaboration between staff of different disciplines in assessment and care planning for these children. Specialist CAMH services for this group have been expanded. A new 'one stop' child development centre providing co-ordinated health and social care services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is currently under construction.

### **Staying safe**

The council makes a good contribution to providing a safe environment and safeguarding children in the area. A clear strategy is in place encompassing health and safety in the home, community safety and child protection and there is strong ownership of responsibilities across agencies in the borough.

Performance in completing timely initial and core assessments of children's needs remains good. Numbers of repeat referrals are now more in line with those of similar councils. All children on the Child Protection Register have allocated social workers and all reviews of these children are held within timescales set. However, more children have remained on the register for longer periods because of pressures on the family support and intervention service, and numbers of children re-registered have fallen. Although appropriate steps were taken last year to expand social worker capacity and increase managerial overview, there is room for improvement in these indicator areas.

The multi-agency Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) provides strong strategic leadership to safeguarding practice in the borough. Agencies operate within a clear policy and procedural framework and annual audits of the Children Act 2004 requirements are completed. There is a well established programme of multi-agency training commissioned by the Board. Partner agencies routinely monitor, and review, the application of thresholds for safeguarding intervention and consistency is further promoted by the use of a standard electronic referral form. Targeted development work has been undertaken with community and faith groups to support improved awareness of, and responsiveness to, safeguarding issues.

Procedures to safeguard children and enhance their community safety in education provision are good. A high profile safer schools strategy is in place. Anti violence and bullying programmes are delivered in primary and secondary schools. All schools inspected by Ofsted were rated satisfactory or better at safeguarding children.

There is a strong focus on early identification and a good range of preventive services are delivered by the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. A number of targeted initiatives have been developed in response to specific needs assessment and consultation

including services for Black and minority ethnic groups and those at risk of requiring local authority care. Steady progress is being made with information sharing and the development of common tools and joint approaches across agencies. Services for children with disabilities are an early focus with joint assessment and planning and the 'team around the child' model in place. Piloting of the common assessment framework in schools is underway as part of a rolling implementation plan.

All looked after children have allocated social workers. Placement stability has improved and performance is good in this area. Slightly fewer looked after children than last year are placed with foster carers however, levels fostered by relatives or friends are below those of similar councils. While numbers of adoptions remain high, the level as a proportion of all looked after children continues to be comparatively low. Although the council is placing an appropriate focus on employing other means to secure permanency including increasing use of residence orders and utilising new special guardianship provisions, attention needs to be given to maximising the rate of adoptions. All reviews for looked after children are chaired independently, as required, and most are held within timescales set. Specialist advocacy services for looked after children and children with disabilities are in place.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

The contribution made by the council is good. This is reflected in outcomes for young people which are now just adequate overall. This represents an improvement from last year's APA. However, there remain aspects which are fragile, especially in several primary schools.

There has been a growth in the number of childcare places, well matched to local needs. Most provide good opportunities to enjoy and achieve, although at registration more actions were set in this aspect than average. The authority has a sub partnership for children aged 0 to 6, involving professionals and parents, which has effectively defined a consistent model of integrated education and care. Good advice is provided to parents through the Children's Information Service.

In the Foundation Stage, children begin their education with much lower attainment than average. By age five, more girls than boys reach higher levels in language, personal and physical development. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, and those of Bangladeshi origin, achieve less well than others. Attainment at Key Stage 1 is in line with that in similar councils but well below the national average, with a high percentage of boys continuing to attain poorly in language. At Key Stage 2, there has been improvement and pupils' progress is satisfactory overall though with a wide variation between schools. Standards in all subjects remain well below national average and below similar councils in science and mathematics.

In Key Stage 3, standards remain below the national average but continue to improve, especially in English. In all schools, contextual value added is above average. At Key Stage 4, GCSE results have improved significantly and are better than those of statistical neighbours but below the national average. Value added in Years 10 and 11 is strong with

only one school below average. The achievement of Black Caribbean boys has improved but remains too low. The attainment of looked after children has improved significantly at GCSE and more are sitting public examinations in Year 11 than in similar councils. There has been a slight reduction in the proportion of young people leaving care with one or more GCSE, although the proportion with five or more GCSEs has increased and is higher than the national average.

Attendance is below average overall but in line with that in similar councils in secondary schools and better than this at primary level. The attendance of looked after children has improved above that of similar councils. There has been a significant reduction in the rate of permanent exclusion at secondary level, though it remains high and the reintegration rate is low. In primary schools, fixed-term exclusions are used more often than average.

The council targets support to schools increasingly well. The national strategies are well coordinated and make a good contribution to this. Collaboration between schools is successfully encouraged by the council, especially in the secondary phase. Some primary schools achieve very well, whereas others remain low achieving, especially at Key Stage 2. Efforts are being made by the council to raise expectations in these schools. Where institutional leadership and management needs particular strengthening, the newly formed Southwark School Leaders Team has made a real positive difference in motivating, empowering and guiding school-based staff. However, despite promising signs, it is too early to identify significant rises in standards as a result of this initiative.

The number of schools in special measures has reduced and overall, schools are being removed from categories more quickly. However, the two schools currently in special measures (one primary, one secondary) began by making inadequate progress. In the primary school, this is partly due to the council's initially weak support plan. In both cases, nevertheless, the council has acted firmly to resolve leadership problems, thus providing a sound basis for future improvement.

More pupils than average are in special schools and they generally make good progress. The provision, and funding, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in mainstream is being sensibly reviewed, so that more responsibility is delegated to schools. The council is aware of the need to provide support and monitor the ways in which schools exercise this responsibility. Provision for excluded pupils has improved, with most receiving more than 20 hours of weekly tuition in some imaginative programmes. Youth services are resourced at a very high level but the take up by 13 to 19 year olds is only just above average.

### **Making a positive contribution**

The council makes a good contribution to outcomes in this area. There is good investment in providing parenting and family support services in all settings. Also, there is an effective focus on building resilience and providing transitions support for younger children, with effective targeting of support to the most vulnerable. Transition planning for young people with continuing care needs, including those with disabilities and looked after children, is

improving. Effective protocols exist with adults' services, Connexions, the housing department and voluntary sector services.

A systematic approach is taken to the engagement of users and carers in service development and planning. A sub-group of the youth service partnership steers and reviews its participation strategy. Young people and carers are routinely consulted and appropriate steps are taken to engage users with disabilities and from minority groups. There is a well established participation strategy for looked after children. Young people inform specific service developments and are involved in the scrutiny of performance with managers and elected members. Levels of participation of looked after children in statutory reviews have reduced, however, and are now slightly below those of similar councils.

The council has a well established multi-agency approach to anti-social behaviour and offending. Local intelligence is well used to inform targeted strategies in response to issues such as knife and gang crime. A good range of crime prevention strategies is in place. Levels of offending by young people identified by the Youth Inclusion Support Panels and subject to Integrated Support Plans are low. Re-offending rates are below those of similar councils. Of those young people supervised by the YOT, more are now in education, training or employment, although levels remain below those of similar councils. Offending by looked after children remains slightly above that in similar councils.

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

The council makes a good contribution to outcomes in this area, which are also good. The improvements noted in the 2005 APA have been sustained. A-level results have improved significantly, and are above those of similar councils, but remain below the national average. The progress of students at Key Stage 4 is good overall. There is an increasing range of well constructed, flexible study pathways catering effectively for the range of needs of students at this level and beyond. The proportion of young people in education post-16 is above average. However, the low employment rate means that the overall number of 16 to 19 year olds not in education, employment or training remains high, though it is reducing. This reduction is caused in part by innovative vocational programmes supported by the council. For example, a consortium of four secondary schools collaborates with Southwark College and other providers to provide worthwhile training for particularly vulnerable young people.

The local 14-19 strategy is becoming increasingly effective and the quality of education provided for this age group is good. The council has continued to support and lead the development of collaborative partnerships. As a result, the coherence of provision continues to develop, enshrined in the Southwark Guarantee. The council works well in conjunction with the Local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC) and with Southwark College.

The council has had some success in improving childcare provision for families seeking work, although there has been some delay in planned improvement to extended schools provision. There is a helpful support structure to encourage young parents to return to work through suitable courses and training opportunities.

Outcomes for care leavers are improving. There is a comprehensive 16 plus service and clear protocols are in place with Connexions and the housing department. All care leavers have personal advisers and most have written pathway plans. There has been a good increase in care leavers in education, training or employment and the proportion of these young people in suitable accommodation is now higher than average which is a significant improvement. The number of homeless 16 and 17 year olds has also reduced.

### **The council's management of its services for children and young people, including its capacity to improve them further**

Good progress has been made in integrating children's services. Strategic management of education, social care and specialist health services is now unified and management across children's services is robust. Performance management in the council is strong. In social care services, a quality assurance framework has been embedded. There is increased investment in promoting the quality of early years provision. There is an appropriate focus on value for money within medium-term financial planning and service commissioning. Effective strategies have been employed to extend early intervention and preventive services, there is a good focus on parenting support, and there is appropriate targeting of vulnerable groups.

The education service is well managed and strongly committed to raising standards. During a year of considerable transition, in which many functions were restored to the council from the private sector, progress and morale has been maintained. Support and challenge to schools is increasingly well targeted and evaluated and there are clear plans for future service improvements.

Although good progress has been made in most areas for improvement since last year's APA, there remains room for improvement in educational outcomes, management of the Child Protection Register and in securing adoption for children looked after. There is strong ambition to further improve services and outcomes for children. The current year's self-assessment demonstrates good understanding of the council's strengths and remaining challenges. The CYPP contains a detailed needs assessment, appropriate prioritisation and clear plans for achieving objectives and targets. There is a well established and comprehensive partnership framework and clear strategies are in place for furthering collaboration between agencies and further integration of services. The council has demonstrated a strong commitment to the systematic participation of users and carers in the development of children's services, and has a good track record of their effective engagement in planning and consultative processes.

## Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths	Key areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health focus in CYPP</li> <li>• delivery of health care in a wide range of settings</li> <li>• improving health outcomes for young children</li> <li>• health care for looked after children.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• further reductions in teenage conceptions</li> <li>• increased access of young people to specialist substance misuse treatment.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• timeliness of assessments</li> <li>• cross agency monitoring of thresholds for intervention</li> <li>• range of preventive services</li> <li>• stability of placements for looked after children.</li> <li>• 'Team Around Child' model for children with disabilities</li> <li>• specialist posts to support work with Black and minority ethnic families.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishment of systematic review of repeat referrals</li> <li>• duration of children on the Child Protection Register and levels of re-registration.</li> <li>• increased proportion of looked after children adopted.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• childcare and early education integrated and well matched to local needs</li> <li>• better targeted support to schools leading to improved achievement in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5</li> <li>• effective encouragement of collaboration between secondary schools</li> <li>• attendance of looked after children and their attainment by age 16.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overall attainment in all key stages</li> <li>• achievement at Key Stage 2</li> <li>• achievement of Black Caribbean boys and attainment of boys in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, especially in language skills</li> <li>• high cost of the youth service in comparison to the take up by young people.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transitions support to CYP</li> <li>• systematic participation of young people, looked after children and carers</li> <li>• strong focus on anti-social behaviour and crime reduction.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• further development of YOT early intervention work.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaboration between providers leading to flexible pathways for 14-19</li> <li>• improving vocational programmes</li> <li>• proportion of 16-19 year olds staying in education and training</li> <li>• levels of care leavers in education, training and employment and living in suitable accommodation.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the high proportion of young people not in education, employment or training.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong and comprehensive partnership framework</li> <li>• progress in the integration of children's services</li> <li>• robust performance management</li> <li>• development of quality assurance in social care</li> <li>• use of resources.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Management of children's services;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accelerated progress in establishing children's centres and Extended Schools programmes</li> <li>• further improvement in overall school standards.</li> </ul>

**Aspects for focus in a future joint area review or the next APA**

- Progress in improving overall school standards.
- Progress with Children's Centres and Extended Schools programmes.
- Progress with Information Sharing/Child Index.

We confirm that the children's services grade will provide the score for the children and young people service block in the comprehensive performance assessment and will be published to the Audit Commission. The social care judgement is for CSCI's information only.

Yours sincerely



**FLO HADLEY**

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**JONATHAN PHILLIPS**

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