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Making Social Care
Better for People



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1 November 2006

Dear Ms Davis

2006 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

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Grade	Service descriptors	Capacity to improve descriptors
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

Warwickshire children's services make a good contribution to the well-being and achievement of children and young people in the area. The services provided by the authority are supported by good partnerships with other organisations including the voluntary sector. Following carefully directed action there has been good improvement in areas identified in last year's assessment. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) demonstrates a very accurate analysis of need, taking into account significant differences across the county. It is based upon a strong commitment to seek and act upon the views of children and young people as well as other members of the community. The newly structured directorate identifies individual and collective responsibility for delivering all of the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes to all parts of the county. It has an excellent capacity to improve services further.

Being healthy

The contribution that the council's services for children and young people make to improving outcomes in this area is good. Outcomes in this area are also good. There is evidence of progress over the last year. Evidence of effective partnership working is strong with clear examples of positive impact on services for example, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Integrated Disability Service (IDS). Work is ongoing to ensure that services fully recognise and meet the needs of children from Black and minority ethnic (BME) and hard to reach communities. This includes further developments within CAMHS and the targeting of resources in areas of greatest need, for example children's centres and health initiatives in schools. Teenage pregnancy is continuing to decline and a range of support is available for teenage parents. Performance against the health indicator for looked after children continues to be very good, with designated doctors and nurses in place for looked after children. The Health of Looked After Children (HELAC) team continues to work on health care pathways and being healthy outcomes. Support to looked after children by CAMHS is evidenced in inspections of the Fostering Service. Schools have a range of healthy lifestyles actions and services in place, including nutrition, reducing obesity, exercise, substance misuse, sex and relationship education. Work on the Healthy Schools Standard (HSS) is behind target and an action plan is in place to address this. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) seeks the views of children on being healthy, identifies needs and priorities, and initial outcomes to measure achievement. Current Primary Care Trust (PCT) financial pressures and changes are causing some concerns but these are being worked through. The move to one PCT is expected to be beneficial. More work needs to be done to establish outcome measures relating to the health of children and young people. A framework is in place with partners, to monitor progress against National Service Framework (NSF) targets.

Staying safe

The contribution that the authority makes to keeping children and young people safe is good. Outcomes in this area are also good. The transition from Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) to Safeguarding Board was achieved ahead of time, in October 2005. Safeguarding activity is closely monitored and subject to a range of audits which are overseen by the Safeguarding Board. In addition, duty room activity is monitored with arrangements for the management, sign off and follow up of safeguarding work. Sample

file audits are conducted regularly and an analysis of individual audits over the past 12 months has provided good evidence of improvement. Managers and social work staff involved receive direct feedback. The pattern of child protection activity is closely scrutinised and there is a good understanding of performance across a range of indicators. Work is ongoing with partners to bring the pattern of activity closer to the Institute of Public Finance (IPF) levels over time. Child protection case conferences are chaired by independent reviewing officers to promote consistency and quality. An audit of decisions has been undertaken which confirms that only children who reach the criteria are being registered. All schools met statutory regulations for child protection (safeguarding). Safety issues for registered day care providers are addressed at registration with no actions with regard to staying safe being imposed at inspection of these services.

The number of looked after children is reducing slowly. Looked after children numbers are expected to decrease as the range of preventative services increases. There is already evidence that family group conferencing is preventing children from coming into care. However there is insufficient evidence of the impact of preventative strategies on reducing the total number of children in care. The needs of both looked after children and children in need are considered by multi-agency panels. The needs of children from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds are considered by the Recognising and Celebrating Cultural Heritage (REACCH) team. A number of reviews for looked after children take place just outside the statutory timescales. The authority has very recently introduced a new planning tool to ensure timescales are met but there is insufficient evidence of the outcomes. The IDS is improving services for children in need with disabilities. The number and timeliness of completion of initial and core assessments has improved significantly, indicating better multi-agency working and speedier delivery of services to children and families. The volume of core assessments needs to increase further to meet IPF and national levels. The high referral rate is largely accounted for by recording practices. The re-referral rate has been audited. This is also affected by recording practices. Audit findings are that the vast majority of re-referrals are for new needs, not old needs that have not been met. Children in care are placed in family settings and this reflects the low use of residential care. Where return home is not possible, action is taken to secure permanency. The long-term stability of placement for looked after children is improving. This is supporting good performance on health and educational attainment indicators.

Enjoying and achieving

The contribution that the authority makes to this area is good. Outcomes are also good. Access to childcare for under-fives is excellent and the quality of provision for under-fives is consistently of a satisfactory quality and frequently good or better. Advice and guidance for registered providers has improved the outcomes of inspections since last year. The quality of provision for children in their early years is also reflected in the overall good outcomes for foundation stage learning, reported in inspections across the authority.

Standards continue to rise and are above national averages for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. In Key Stage 4 standards have risen but remain in line with national averages except for pupils attaining one or more qualifications where standards are higher than national and statistical neighbours. Attainment in A* - C grades at GCSE needs to improve further to be

above the national average. Achievement, reflected by contextual value added data is not significantly different to the national picture.

The authority has had a high proportion of schools causing concern over the last three years. There has previously been slow action to effectively identify and rectify weaknesses but this has improved since autumn 2005. More rigorous and effectively targeted intervention has resulted in positive and active responses from schools. Training for schools in self-evaluation has been effective and schools are less dependent on the authority in identifying their own strengths and areas for development. There are more schools causing concern in areas of deprivation but improved partnerships are starting to have a positive impact on the outcomes for children and young people. The authority has used data from Ofsted and Fischer Family Trust to inform more effective intervention for all schools to help raise achievement.

Achievement by looked after children is good. However, the gap between these pupils and other pupils in Warwickshire is still wide, as it is nationally. The authority continues to monitor differences in the achievement of boys and girls and has had success with specifically designed interventions for boys in some secondary schools. Differences in the achievement of other groups of learners do not cause concern. Initiatives to improve the achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds for example, Black Caribbean and pupils of dual heritage, have been successful. Improved tracking of the achievement of individuals and groups has started to influence the way in which schools use the data to inform intervention. Data on achievement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been collected. There has been no moderation of this data for allocating achievement levels for pupils working below the national curriculum levels. Therefore the data is unreliable and cannot be used to challenge progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the authority. The development of the IDS has greatly improved the proportion of statements completed within the required timescales.

Access to a range of recreational and voluntary learning experiences is at least satisfactory. Access to youth services is good. Attendance in both primary and secondary schools is rising and is good in primary schools.

Although exclusions in 2004 were in line with national averages, local information demonstrates a sharp increase in 2005 particularly in secondary schools. Further work, in partnership with other agencies and organisations, is planned but coordination of this is not yet fully in place. Access to education for permanently excluded pupils is a weakness - although all receive some provision the proportion receiving the required hours is low.

Making a positive contribution

The authority has made a good contribution to this area. Outcomes are good. There are many effective ways in which the local authority consults with young people to improve services. The contribution of young people to the Children and Young People's Plan is good. There are very good examples of independent reviews commissioned from young people which provide objective information that helps to shape future developments. One of the great strengths of children's services is the close partnership work across agencies

and with voluntary organisations. A particular strength is the innovative work enabling young people to help one another for example, members of the youth parliament working with disengaged young people, peer mentoring and arts initiatives.

Looked after children are encouraged to participate in improving services and clear action is taken as a result; for example, combining allowances to give more flexibility on spending. The involvement of looked after children in their own reviews has improved considerably but could be improved further. Similarly there has been considerable work to ensure more young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend their own reviews. However the quality of the involvement is less obvious. How the outcomes of high quality involvement influence decisions and service improvement for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not clear.

Analysis of which young people get involved across the county and how this influences outcomes is in the early stages. There are working parties to involve more faith groups in consultation.

Achieving economic well-being

The contribution that the authority makes to this area is good and results in good outcomes. There is excellent access to good quality child care. The provision is well targeted to the needs of local communities. The increase in Children's Centres is a good example of the importance of multi-agency work in this county.

The number of young people not in education or training is one of the lowest in the country. This is not so for young offenders and the gap between all young people in Warwickshire and young offenders is considerable. The authority has not ensured sufficient take up of education and training by young offenders to address the gap.

In Key Stage 4, the proportion of young people achieving accredited vocational qualifications is above national and statistical neighbours. There is good achievement at Key Stage 5. The range and suitability of the curriculum on offer for 14–19 year olds is very good and has been achieved by children's services working very effectively with the Local Learning and Skills Council, colleges, schools, Education Business Partnership and the neighbouring authority Coventry. Recent college courses for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have widened opportunities for this group.

Young people have an excellent chance of getting a job or further education after leaving school. The work with Connexions, and other organisations, has improved the knowledge and understanding young people have of the world of work. There are particularly good examples of online initiatives to help young people understand how to place their own aspirations within the local context. Information has also been produced for prospective employers about how to help young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities access training and employment.

Support for care leavers is very good. The need for children's services to increase the range of types of accommodation has begun to be addressed and provision has improved since last year. Transition arrangements for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good, supported by access to specialist Connexions personnel. The effectiveness of destinations is in line with that for all young people in Warwickshire. Direct payments to families and carers of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have risen in small numbers but there are no young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 16 or 17 in receipt of these.

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

Children's services are well managed and have excellent capacity to improve further. There has been clear improvement across a broad range of indicators and service developments. This has been maintained during a period of major change and the establishment of a Children's Services Directorate. Partnership working is strongly embedded in the organisational culture. The range and depth of partnership working is impressive with multiple examples including the Safeguarding Board and the Children and Young People's Forum. The structure of the new directorate is aligned to ECM outcomes and delivery of CYPP priorities. Heads of service have specialist, ECM and locality responsibilities and accountabilities. This ensures matrix management across the directorate, and individual and collective responsibility to deliver all of the ECM outcomes to all parts of the county. The management team have established a rapport which was evident during the on site day. They recognise the ongoing need to communicate their message to all levels of the organisation and to partners, if priorities are to be achieved. Good performance management arrangements are in place and these are being developed further to encompass multi-agency performance management of the delivery of CYPP priorities.

There are good examples of value for money in the delivery of services. These include the relatively low costs but high volume and quality of the Youth Service and the investment in the Fostering Service and reduction in out of county placement costs. The 2006/2007 budget is challenging. Work has started to align spending to CYPP priorities rather than historical spend. Work is also taking place to rationalise some elements of spend, for example on workforce development, to ensure the effective use of resources and the establishment of an integrated workforce development programme. A range of elements of this are already in place eg for social workers and educational psychologists with more work needed in other areas for example, succession planning for head teachers. The main area for development in service management, which was accepted by the management team, is the development of clear and specific indicators against which to measure and evidence the impact of actions and the achievement of outcomes.

Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths	Key areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partnership working and the impact of this on health outcomes for children and young people eg CAMHS and the Integrated Disability service • range of activities and actions in schools to support healthy lifestyles • involvement of children and young people in the CYPP. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work to meet HSS target • development of more specific outcome and impact measures.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Board, particularly the range and depth of partnership working and the auditing of safeguarding activity • minimal use of residential care and actions to improve stability and permanency • increase in the volume and timely completion of initial and core assessments • increasing range of preventative services. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that reviews of looked after children are completed on time • continuation of work to reduce child protection activity to nearer IPF levels, over time • increase the volumes of core assessments • demonstrate the impact of investment in prevention on the number of looked after children.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision for under fives • attainment and progress in Key Stages 1,2 ,3 and 4 (in gaining 1 or more qualification) • primary school attendance • achievement of looked after children. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stage 4 attainment at GCSE A* - C levels • reduce exclusions and ensure sufficient education for pupils permanently excluded. • reduce the number of schools in categories of concern • measuring and challenging achievement for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultation of a range of young people and creative ways of increasing participation. • acting upon children and young people's views. • partnership work across agencies and with the voluntary sector. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish how the involvement of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in their reviews influences provision and decisions about their own life experiences and opportunities.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proportion of post-16 year olds in employment education or training including those leaving care • increase in numbers and quality of Children's Centres including the range of partners involved. • the breadth and depth of partnerships established for 14–19 developments. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of direct payments to young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities • young offenders take up of education employment or training.
<p><i>Management of children's services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structure of the new Children's Directorate, matrix management and specific links to Every Child Matters outcomes and delivery of CYPP priorities • work to align expenditure to CYPP priorities • work to establish an integrated workforce development plan and effectively utilise currently dispersed resources • staffing capacity (in most areas) • existing performance management and plans to extend to multi-agency performance management of CYPP • partnership and cross corporate working. 	<p><i>Management of children's services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of a cohesive strategy to ensure head teacher vacancies are filled, including 'grow your own' capacity • establish clearer criteria for measuring the impact and success of actions on Every Child Matters outcomes • rigorous utilisation of this information to ensure planning is as robust as intentions.

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

Being Healthy

- Impact of investments in CAMHS on cross-county access to services.
- Impact of HELAC approach on health outcomes of looked after children.

Staying safe

- Impact of multi-agency preventative work on child protection activity and looked after children.

- Impact of the integrated disability service and of transition planning at 14+.
- Impact of strategies to deal with racial incidents and bullying in schools.

Enjoying and Achieving

- Secondary education particularly in Key Stage 4.
- Challenge and measuring of achievement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Exclusions and provision for excluded pupils.

Making a positive contribution

- Impact of children and young people's views on service delivery and development.
- Impact of children and young people's involvement in reducing anti-social behaviour offending and re-offending.

Achieving economic well-being

- Suitability of the range of options available for 14 -19 year olds with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for young offenders.
- Take up by young offenders of education and training.

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 (CPA) and will be published to the Audit Commission. The social care judgement is for CSCI information only.

Yours sincerely



FLO HADLEY

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