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Making Social Care
Better for People



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Dear Mr Coughlan

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

This letter summarises the findings of the 2006 annual performance assessment process for Hampshire County Council. We are grateful for the information that 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 awarded¹
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

In relation to all the outcomes, the council has made a good contribution. Strengths outlined in last year's annual performance assessment have been sustained and built upon. Work has been undertaken to address the weaknesses and all of them have been fully or partially dealt with. In particular, aspects of staying safe have improved. The realignment of council services into the children's department has made it more effective and efficient in terms of its service delivery. Partnerships with other agencies have remained strong.

Being healthy

The council makes an excellent contribution to improving the health of children and young people. Overall, children have a good start in life with national targets set for the health of children and young people being met in most areas and exceeded in some. However, there is variation in health outcomes for children between different wards in Hampshire. The council, with its partners, is targeting resources appropriately in these areas with some positive results. An example of this is teenage conception, which is now below regional, and national, averages and still declining.

Parents' and carers' understanding about healthy lifestyles is improved through contact with the range of multi agency support services that are available to them. These include health promotion, parenting courses and training courses for foster carers. In addition, there are a number of examples where joint working directly with young people through innovative targeted local projects is leading to improved outcomes. Examples of this include school-based health services, programmes to improve self-esteem and to encourage involvement in positive activity set up through Children's Fund projects.

Schools play an active part in promoting healthy lifestyles. There is good and appropriate access to sport activities for children and young people in schools and targets to increase participation. A high number of schools have achieved the Healthy Schools standard and the council has already exceeded the Government's December 2006 target for the number of validated Healthy Schools.

The Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) Pathfinder Trust continues to increase, and improve, the quality of its services. Developments are based on robust needs analysis and include an enhanced tier 3 specialist CAHMS capacity and the commissioning of a county-wide post-abuse service from the National Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. This service is well used by children and young people and there is positive feedback about its usefulness from children and their families. There are areas that need improving in the CAMHS service. These deficits are addressed in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and this should result in a full and equitable range of service provision across the county.

Work focused on improving the health of looked after children, including children with disabilities, continues to ensure that these young people receive good, timely health services. They also have easy access to other services such as leisure activities that promote healthy lifestyles.

Staying safe

The council makes a good contribution to ensure that children and young people in the area stay safe and there are some examples of excellent joint working. There is a good range of joint initiatives which focus on child safety and these are having positive outcomes for young people. The initiatives include vulnerable children being identified through community policing and crime prevention strategies. Accredited Community Safety Officers receive police referrals about children who are a cause for concern. The officers have developed a number of successful schemes for young people in partnership with schools, the youth service and the Children's Fund. Partners are also working effectively together to lessen the incidence and to support victims of bullying and domestic violence.

There is an appropriate focus on systems to refer, assess and review children's needs. This has led to reduction in re-referral rates, more timely completion of initial and core assessments, improvement in holding reviews of child protection cases on time and good performance for holding reviews about looked after children on time. The council demonstrates, through its analysis, that it has a good understanding of its child protection data and uses this effectively in performance management. The relevant data shows that generally the council is performing at, or above, the average performance level of comparable councils.

In 2005/06 the council has built on, and developed, its network of family support services. This has led to the needs of children at risk of harm and family breakdown being met through increased local preventative capacity and family support. This work to commission a more preventative approach has been undertaken by engaging partners across sectors, agencies and services. This is beginning to be successful, but there is recognition by all partner agencies that they need to increase the range of services that gives support and prevents the needs of children and families from reaching crisis level. The CYPP includes realistic proposals about how the increase is to be achieved. Implementation of these action plans is underway.

A wide range of strategies to support the placement of looked after children is in place, which has led to some improvements in long-term placement stability, increases in use of foster care and a high rate of kinship care. However, the overall stability of placement performance is insufficient. In addition, not all children in private foster care are known about and well supported.

There are sound policies in place to safeguard children. Joint training about child protection and good networking arrangements for professionals has led to improvements in understanding about child protection and in the way different agencies work together. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has been successfully established with full endorsement from all partner agencies. There is a plan to establish a Safeguarding Unit to bring together the functions of: child protection advice to schools (including advice on recruitment standards); performance management of the safeguarding outcomes; support to the LSCB and quality audit across agencies. This means that the council is on track to further strengthen multi-agency work in this area.

Enjoying and achieving

The council makes an excellent contribution to ensuring that children and young people enjoy life and achieve. Children make a good start to their education through excellent child caring facilities, good nursery and day care provision and a strong early years education, which prepares them well for school. Achievement is good for all groups of pupils and has improved again in 2005. Standards for pupils in test results and GCSE passes are all substantially better than the national average and generally above that of similar councils. Attendance is good. The number of children and young people attending and remaining in school is also improving because the council has targeted additional support to this area.

All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress at all key stages because they get very good support. Between Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils' progress is above the national average. By the time young people reach 16, the standards they achieve are above the national average. Progress is better in primary schools than secondary schools because progress is not always quite so good at Key Stage 3, although standards are nearly always above national average. The council recognising the differences has provided high quality support and positive intervention strategies so that in 2005 standards improved in specific targeted schools at Key Stage 3. Pupils tend to achieve better in academic courses and less well in vocational and level 1 qualifications. The council recognises this weakness and is providing support.

Achievement is good for looked after children and those from minority ethnic groups because there is a well coordinated support service, which works with all the agencies involved. Often these children and young people reach their full potential because of this good multi-agency working. The small groups that do underachieve are monitored because of the good data and then support is targeted to meet their needs. This response to need, with carefully planned strategies based on good data, and the analysis of it, is why the council is successful at targeting support where it is needed most.

The council analyses school performance very well and its implementation of strategies for school improvement is effective. It listens to children's views and acts upon them. As a result of a survey, it was revealed that primary pupils enjoy their time at school more than secondary pupils. The council is proactive in putting in place strategies to improve young people's time at school, such as acting on their views to make school a more exciting place to be. Schools are categorised and given appropriate support and the number of schools causing concern is below the national average. The council is good at recognising when a school is having difficulties and gives additional support where appropriate.

The council continues to have clear and often innovative strategies for improving performance and for supporting vulnerable groups of young people. Its Right, Respect and Responsibility programme is an example of how well the council uses proven initiatives to bring about improvement in their services. There are many examples of effective leadership and focused priorities within its work. The quality core services are maintained to a high standard and appreciated by schools. The very good use of performance data to analyse strengths and weaknesses gives the council a clear and accurate self-evaluation of

how well strategies are working and where adjustments are needed. Key areas for development are correctly identified and strategies and policies are developed to address these. Through its strong partnership working, high quality support, good success record of past action and the clearly focused objectives on continuing this improvement, the council is in an excellent position to maintain this position.

Making a positive contribution

The council makes an excellent contribution to enable children and young people to make a positive contribution. Its services for children and young people are making a difference and are beginning to have a real impact on their lives. In most primary schools, a good proportion of secondary schools, and all special schools, pupils are making a positive contribution to the community. Children and young people are willing to take responsibility and become enterprising individuals. For example, children have opportunities to interview their future teachers and children's views about new developments are taken seriously by the council.

Support for children and young people in making a positive contribution to the community starts early through the excellent childminding arrangements for families with changing needs.

Young people who attend youth projects are very positive. Many join local and national schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and reports from schools state that pupils are engaged in making positive contributions to their community. The number of young people participating in public funded services is above the national average, although public funding for the 14–19 age group is low.

In schools, pupils are willing, enterprising and keen to be involved at all levels. The Rights, Respect and Responsibility programme has been largely successful in schools and is regarded as a significant contributor to pupils' improved attitudes to school.

Behaviour is good in the majority of schools and exclusions are falling overall, although fixed term exclusions are still higher than the national average. Pupils know who to talk to if they have concerns about bullying; their ideas are listened to and acted upon if possible. The offending rates for looked after children have fallen over time overall, although this is slow and did rise last year. The council is aware of this weakness and has good strategies in place to improve the area further. The number of final warnings, reprimands and convictions of looked after children is better than the national average.

Council services are increasingly being aligned with those of other agencies to provide better access to information for children and young people. The proactive use of web-based information is an example of how the council keep all interested parties involved. There are good plans in place to increase the opportunities for young people volunteering and getting involved. There is good evidence of the council listening to pupils' views and pupils are involved in the consultation processes that lead to providing better, and more appropriate, youth services.

Good parenting and family values are a fundamental part of the council's strategies for improving opportunities for vulnerable children. The participation in the extended school pilot is an example of this work. The council knows that it has to ensure that this good quality is maintained as the extended schools become a reality. It does not underestimate the difficulties.

Achieving economic well-being

The council makes a good contribution to ensuring children and young people achieve economic well-being. The close working relationship with partners, such as the local Learning and Skills Council, youth offending team and the early years providers means that there is a consistency of approach in providing good quality services. The number of children and young people in education, training and employment is above the national average, and effective procedures are now in place to properly assess the learning needs of the 14–19 age group. Standards achieved by young people in post-16 education are good. The council takes the views of children and young people very seriously and there are many examples of changes to priorities and provision as a result of the pupils' input into discussions. Through the good work in schools and colleges, pupils are becoming more actively involved, making decisions, and having a say about the changes they want to make. Arrangements for looked after children and those with learning difficulties and disabilities have all improved. The most vulnerable children, such as care leavers, get good additional support and, as a result, more are able to live in suitable accommodation.

Support for families is good. This has been a priority of the council as a result of conducting a profile of parents' needs. Child care arrangements are one of the best in the country and there has been more development in this area to ensure that this good provision is available for more children. The introduction of the 53 children's centres, with good cross-agency support, will greatly improve the access for more families to high quality child care arrangements. The council takes seriously its responsibility to help parents become better carers. Child care places are of good quality and in increasing supply.

The provision for the 14–19 age group is a priority area for the council. The relationship between the local Learning and Skills Council and the council has improved. All providers are now in a good position to offer courses at the three levels of entry, and this will improve flexibility of study for more students. In addition, the council is ensuring that more students can reach courses through locally agreed travel plans. The local Learning and Skills Council and the council have jointly appointed a consultant to work with 14–19 age groups across the local Learning and Skills Council and council areas. This is a good initiative and is further evidence of the commitment to improving this area. However, the council correctly identifies the problems in properly aligning some of the short-term funding, and in assembling the information about the wide range and diversity of courses available for its students. Close collaboration with Connexions has increased the work-related learning opportunities and improved the possibility of employment for many post-16 students. Support for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved in the last year and is now good. The council is developing its

direct payment scheme for families with disabled children and has achieved over 80 families receiving them, which is higher than similar councils.

The provision for adult learning is now more responsive to local need and there is an increasing amount of specialist support in local areas. These courses address areas such as adult literacy, numeracy and parenting. The programmes reflect the closer working relationship between the many agencies such as the local Learning and Skills Council, child care providers and Connexions. Joint information through the internet and newsletters ensures that the communities are kept informed.

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

The council's management of children's services is excellent and its capacity to improve them further is excellent. There are robust partnerships with both statutory and voluntary sector agencies and a well established track record of working together to drive improvement across the council area. Alongside this, the children's services department has developed a comprehensive suite of management information. It uses this effectively to manage performance and to target its work at the areas of greatest need.

The council, and its partners, have a clear understanding of the requirements of the Change for Children programme. A new department for children has been created which is in the process of realignment of resources to deliver integrated services. Effective leadership is provided by the key postholders and is supported through strong political direction. The new department has adopted an appropriate pace for change that ensures the strong performances in partnership working, education and social care are consolidated.

Good partnership working has led to the production of an ambitious but manageable CYPP. Its priorities are jointly owned, give excellent attention to the full range of equality and diversity issues and cover the five outcome areas. The CYPP, with the Local Area Agreement, is a sound basis for taking forward the work of children's services in a way that will make real improvements to the lives of children and young people in the county. When the success criteria are supplemented by local measurable criteria against all targets the plan will be further strengthened.

Consultation with parents, children and young people is considered an integral part of the department's working and it is undertaken effectively in a range of ways. There are good examples across all five outcome areas where their voice has informed planning and led to changes. Children and young people identified some priorities in the CYPP such as action on bullying.

Since the council is one of the lowest funded children's services authorities, expenditure necessarily remains low in comparison with other authorities. However, children's services deliver effectively on budget. Efficient financial management arrangements are in place. The department's budget preparation, monitoring timetable and processes are effective and appropriately designed. They enable the spending pattern to reflect service decisions,

priorities and respond to emerging needs. There is a strategic focus on securing value for money. A range of partnership arrangements including pooled and aligned budgets are effectively improving value for money in services. Building on its current effective mechanisms, new commissioning arrangements are being considered with partners, including with the Primary Care Trust. There is clear understanding about potential pitfalls and the need to monitor any new arrangements to ensure they give added value.

Through the joint arrangements, priority is being given to providing a wide range of high quality preventive services for children and young people at a local level. There is some evidence that this is resulting in needs being addressed before problems become intractable. This approach has been further strengthened by an agreement between the department and the schools forum to create a significant fund to develop early intervention and prevention services. This agreement has been made possible because of a history of high quality, strong governance of the partnership arrangements with schools.

The children's services department has a well trained workforce, with all performance indicators for training above those of similar councils. Despite all the uncertainty and change, a recent MORI survey showed good levels of morale for children's services staff when compared against national data. However, although there have been a number of innovative recruitment and retention strategies, which have been successful in targeted areas, overall vacancy and turnover rates in social care are higher than those of similar councils. Work is going on to address this.

Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths	Key areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successful joint working across statutory and voluntary agencies, which are leading to improved outcomes for young people • effective targeting of resources to areas of greatest need • government targets are exceeded in respect of healthy schools standards • looked after children receive a good service. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure a full range of CAMHS services is available and that there is equity of service provision across the county • further reduce health inequalities across the county.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaboration between agencies in safeguarding children at both the universal and the high risk level • outcomes for children are improved through effective case management 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase and effectively co-ordinate the number and range of agencies that give support and prevent the needs of children and families in reaching crisis level

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective use of performance information leading to improved practice and greater cross county consistency in child protection practice • extensive training and networking arrangements for all staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater stability and choice of placements • increased knowledge about the number and quality of placements of children who are being privately fostered and better support for them.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective leadership and high quality services • standards and achievement of most pupils including looked after children and those from ethnic minorities • carefully planned strategies based on good data analysis targeting support where needed • effective use of pupils' views • support to schools in difficult circumstances • inter-agency partnership working. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further work to improve standards and achievement at KS3 • improve students' access to high quality courses which meet their individual needs.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective inter-related services to support children and young people and gives them opportunities to become independent and involved • improved attitudes and behaviour • information for students • recognition of fundamental rights for children and young people and their contribution to strong family values. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take steps to reduce further the offending rates of looked after children.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high quality provision for childcare • joint working and close collaboration between agencies • number of young people in education, employment and training • support for vulnerable children and their families • improving provision for 14-19 age group • provision for adult learning. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve provision for disabled children and young people.

<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective analysis of need and current resource have led to priority areas being appropriately targeted • The CYPP is a robust document, devised with children, parents and a wide range of partner agencies, with ambitious but realistic targets that should lead to better outcomes • strategic focus on securing and improving value for money • partnership working with external agencies and voluntary sector • appropriate pace of change to consolidate strong performance. 	<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embed new joint commissioning and de-commissioning arrangements across all service areas and robustly monitor them • continue to develop quantifiable success criteria for all the CYPP priorities • continue to work on the recruitment and retention of social care staff.
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Aspects for focus in a future joint area review or the next APA

- Review of pupils' progress and standards in value added terms at Key Stage 3.
- Review of progress in respect of commissioning/decommissioning of services.
- Monitor students access to a range of high quality courses at all levels.
- Analysis of the range of placements for looked after children.

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 Commission for Social Care Inspection information only.

Yours sincerely



FLO HADLEY

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