



Making Social Care
Better for People



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Dear Mr Carriline

2006 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CITY OF BRADFORD

This letter summarises the findings of the 2006 annual performance assessment (APA) 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	3
The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	4

1

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

City of Bradford provides good services for the children and young people in the district. The council has made significant improvements since the 2005 APA; almost all of the priorities identified in the assessment have seen some improvement. In terms of attainment and achievement, the outcomes for children and young people remain behind those of other councils. However, this is in the context of a council that is aware of the shortfalls and is demonstrating improvement across this and all other outcome areas. The council has engaged its partners well and this is reflected in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), which shows a clear set of objectives and is supported by action plans that allocate responsibility and, for the most part, clear measures of success. These action plans are working documents and the council needs to ensure that the partnership member agencies are clear about the specific tasks to which they have agreed.

The council has established a service structure for the delivery of its services for children; however, it has yet to appoint the director of children's services. The council is aware that this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

In 2005, the council was assessed as providing good social care services for children and young people and was judged as having excellent capacity to improve. This year's assessment confirms that picture. Bradford Council now provides outstanding social care services for children and young people and this is reflected in almost all of the outcomes for children who are looked after or believed to be in need.

Being healthy

The council makes a good contribution towards improving the health of children and young people in the district. It works closely with health partners to collect a range of local data and information that provides a clear view of the health needs across the area and enables effective targeting of work.

School inspections show that health awareness is promoted well by encouraging healthy eating and by ensuring regular access to sport and exercise. A higher than average number of schools is working towards the healthy schools standard. The council is well on its way to achieving the aim to have 81% of its schools achieving the healthy school standard by December 2006.

The incidence of teenage pregnancy, which was an issue identified in the 2005 APA, has reduced significantly and is much lower than that of other councils.

The health needs of looked after children are consistently well monitored and the council's performance in this area is well above that of other councils. Joint working, incorporating the services of both designated doctors and nurses to meet the health needs of looked after children and young people, are well established. These arrangements have been nationally recognised as very good practice. The council also makes preferential provision for looked after children and young people to access

leisure and recreational facilities in the district. The inspection of the fostering service also recognised that the health and developmental needs of children are well met within this service.

The acute and non acute needs of young offenders are responded to well within the targeted timescales. The council is making good progress towards providing a fully comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) by the end of this year, and plans for the next year are well developed. The council is aware that further service development is needed for people with learning disabilities and young people aged 17 and 18 years.

Staying safe

The council's contribution to ensuring children and young people are safe is excellent. Bradford provides a well managed child protection service and support for looked after children; it is a service that monitors its own performance and responds by attending to the relevant areas when needed.

Children on the Child Protection Register are well monitored and all have a named social worker. They do not remain on the register for long periods and are not subsequently re-registered. The number of children on the register as a proportion of the population is falling. This is better than other councils and this is due to effective family support and preventative services provided.

Only a small proportion of looked after children have more than 3 placement moves in a 12-month period. This compares very well with other councils.

Almost all (over 90%) of assessments are completed within prescribed timescales, and this performance is exceptional when compared with other councils. There are also effective mechanisms in place to assure the quality of the assessments and case management. These include the work of the independent reviewing team and processes that ensure that all managers, including the director, have regular opportunities to review the files of a sample of cases. This reflects a department which is at all levels well engaged with the services and support it provides.

The council's residential provision for looked after children is also well managed. Two years ago a significant proportion of looked after children were accommodated in independent placements often outside of the district, incurring disproportionate cost and disruption and hardship for young people and their families. Many of these young people have been returned to the district and are now in local provision run by the council. Overall, regulatory inspectors judge these residential homes as good and in some, the council has been able to demonstrate that they exceed the national minimum standards.

The proportion of looked after children who are adopted is above that of most other councils, ensuring good long term outcomes for these children. Over 8% of looked after children were placed for adoption in the year ending March 2006 and most of these children were placed within 12 months of the court's decision that this was in the best interests of the child.

Enjoying and achieving

The contribution the council makes to ensure children and young people achieve at school and enjoy their education and leisure activities is adequate. Year on year improvement has been made in raising standards, and in 2005 considerable improvement was seen in Key Stage 2 and in GCSE results. However, educational attainment remains low in comparison to national standards.

Children start their education with a low base of skills. At the end of their Foundation Stage years, many children lack the skills, breadth and depth of knowledge to aid their achievement as they move through school. In 2005 results at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with statistical neighbours, though below national averages. At the end of Key Stage 2, although significant improvement was seen in English and mathematics, results overall were well below the national average and below statistical neighbours. In Key Stage 3 the trend of improvement in results in English, mathematics and science was in line with the national picture. However, standards remained well below the national average.

In 2005, the highest ever GCSE five or more A* to C results were attained. Standards overall, however, remain well below the national average and below that of statistical neighbours. A similar picture of improvement was seen in the percentage of looked after children who achieved five or more GCSEs, which increased significantly. As a result, the level of attainment of looked after children is now above that of similar councils. The proportion of looked after children gaining one or more GCSE is also comparable with groups elsewhere. Although the progress made demonstrates the council's commitment to improve outcomes for young people, the council acknowledges that there is significant work still to be done to raise standards for all pupils regardless of need.

The council has commissioned the services of Education Bradford to provide a service for school improvement. They are clear in their thinking and planning in order to hold Education Bradford to account for the delivery of an effective service. As a result, the council has a range of programmes available to provide positive support for improvement. For example, strategies to tackle the extent to which girls outperform boys, particularly at Key Stage 3, are well planned and involve a good range of approaches showing improved partnership working. Other examples include the increasingly successful intervention and support for schools causing concern. In comparison with the national picture, fewer schools are now being placed into

categories by Ofsted. The proportion of schools being removed from special measures is higher than nationally and in similar councils. The programme of support for secondary provision has recently been strengthened through key appointments for the secondary phase.

The council has worked hard to improve attendance at school of its young people. As a result of a clear multi-disciplinary approach, the attendance of looked after children is improving slowly. A mentoring scheme and work with parents, for example, are high on the agenda to secure improvement. Similarly, through a range of well planned strategies in which schools are actively engaged, attendance in many secondary schools has improved. Although attendance in primary schools is broadly average, it remains an issue for secondary schools. However, there are good plans in place to continue the improvement already made.

Making a positive contribution

The council makes a good contribution to the outcomes in this area.

Children and young people make a positive contribution to the work of the council through an effective system of consultation. They are encouraged to participate in decision making and in supporting the community through a variety of initiatives and mechanisms. The young people's involvement in compiling the CYPP was impressive; care was taken to involve a range of children and young people, including looked after children, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and representatives from minority ethnic groups. The young people produced their own dissemination document and the outcomes have been well publicised. Key actions have been taken as a direct result of this consultation, including work to identify a trusted adult to whom each young person can turn. The Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament is composed of elected representatives from all groups of young people, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Young people are engaged in the decision-making mechanisms of the council by representation on strategy groups, including the scrutiny committee, and they are encouraged to hold the council to account through the Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament annual conference. The council was shortlisted for the Beacon status for Involving Young People in Decision Making. Further dissemination and plans for future consultation exercises are now the main focus for development in this area.

The council takes effective action to prevent offending and to reduce reoffending by children and young people. The youth justice plan is a comprehensive document with clear milestones, targets and measurable outcomes. A one stop shop crime prevention centre provides support for the Prevent and Deter Strategy by engaging 700 young people identified as at risk of offending. The council has taken effective action to reduce the number of looked after children who have received final warnings or reprimands.

School inspections at all phases show that the opportunities for children to take responsibility within school are better in Bradford than the picture nationally. Almost all inspections also show that provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils in schools is better than nationally.

Good arrangements are in place to take the views of looked after children into account; for example, in their involvement in the recruitment of social care staff. A change in the way in which the proportion of looked after children who attend reviews is measured has led to an apparent decline. However, the actual proportion is still too low and the council acknowledge this to be an area for development.

Achieving economic well-being

The council makes an adequate contribution to children and young people's economic well-being. There has been a reduction in the proportion of young people who are not actively engaged in education, employment or training although the proportion remains too high in comparison with national figures and with similar councils. The 14 to 19 Strategy, which was praised in last year's APA, continues to provide the basis for development. It is a forward looking and dynamic document which effectively underpins further improvement in the staying on rates and retention of young people within the education, training and employment sectors. Five confederation arrangements for secondary education are in place and they are beginning to take individual ownership of the strategy. Bids from all five confederations for involvement in the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) special diploma pilot have been submitted. Increased numbers of places in vocational provision and Levels 1 and 2 courses have been resourced and young people are currently applying for these.

Work continues to promote the staying on rates of students into further education and to promote the completion of courses. The council has undertaken research into the characteristics of the groups of these young people; this is now well documented and has led to better targeting of appropriate provision. Within the youth offending team, challenging targets have been set and additional resources have been made available to improve the number of young people in education, training or employment with training. The council reports that this is an area for development.

There has been a significant improvement in the engagement of care leavers and other vulnerable groups in education, training and employment. The council is fully committed to the importance of transition planning to ensure good outcomes for young people as they move to adult services. In addition, Bradford has maintained good and comparable performance with that of other councils in the provision of suitable accommodation for care leavers.

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

Bradford Council's management of services to deliver the outcomes for children and young people is good. The children and young people's strategic partnership is made up of groups which reflect the every child matters agenda, and appropriate representation from key stakeholders is in place. The safeguarding board oversees the staying safe outcome and the cross-agency steering group has oversight of the work. The CYPP is a wide ranging document, which has taken good account of the views of children and young people, and summaries have been widely publicised. The working plans for each of the outcomes are annexed to the CYPP and most are clear and detailed. However, there is insufficient evidence to explain how key priorities to improve educational attainment are to be achieved.

The self-assessment undertaken for the APA demonstrates that the council has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The council's social services are effective in recruiting and retaining staff. A rigorous performance management system (service improvement framework) is now in place.

There are clear plans in place to fulfil the national expectations for the common assessment framework. Key appointments have been made, three pilot projects have been established and a detailed training plan has been organised. Protocols have been developed and appropriate consultation has taken place. The council is well placed to further extend this project under the oversight of the cross-agency development and implementation group.

The council has successfully secured funding in order to increase management capacity within strategic areas. Services manage their budgets well; for example, where looked after children have been returned to local and council run provision in Bradford.

Leaders and managers are of high quality: they are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and professional and they demonstrate a passion for their work in improving services for children and young people. Both the officers in post and the progress made by the services and initiatives they lead, demonstrate good capacity for further improvement. The council is committed to the establishment of a single service for children and young people, and the appointment of a permanent director for this service is a key priority.

Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths	Key areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent reduction in teenage conceptions • referral times for young offenders • health of looked after children • high proportion of schools achieving healthy schools standard • provision for health in foster care. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completion of the programmed development of CAMHS • infant mortality rate.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outcomes for children following assessment • pathway plans for care leavers • low recidivism rate compared to similar councils • stability indicators for looked after children • reduction in road deaths and injuries. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • year on year improvement on educational attainment • improvement in numbers of schools removed from Ofsted categories • attainment of looked after children • inclusion in schools. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further improvement in standards of attainment • continued improvements in attendance of looked after children. • boys' underachievement • schools in categories for concern.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced number of children receiving final warnings/reprimands • comprehensive planning of youth justice work comprehensive • opportunities for children to take responsibility in schools • social, moral, spiritual and cultural education provision • involving youth opinions in decision making 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation of looked after children in their reviews.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high level of involvement of children and young people in development of CYPP. 	
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 to 19 Strategy • Numbers of care leavers not in education, employment or training • suitable accommodation for care leavers. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retention and staying on rates post-16.
<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's services expenditure in line with national figures • staff recruitment and retention; stable and well managed group • CYPP outlines key issues. 	<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of children's services directorate.

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

- The establishment of a single children's service and subsequent progress.
- The impact of the fully established Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- The impact of Education Bradford's actions to raise standards in schools.
- The impact of the council's actions to improve attendance in schools.
- How well the council's actions have improved the proportion of young people who are engaged in education, employment or training.
- How well the council and its partners continue to use the information gained from consultation and engagement with children, young people and their families to develop services and improve outcomes.

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



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