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Making Social Care
Better for People



Ms Margaret Dennison
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Dear Ms Dennison

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF TORBAY COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 25 July 2005 to assess the performance of the education and social care services within your authority. We are grateful for the information which you provided to support this process and for the time made available by yourself and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

Being healthy

Outcomes in the area are good, reflecting sound working between social services, health and education. The Council's Corporate Plan 2005/06 includes a key action to work with Schools on Health issues.

Schools inspections indicate good or better participation in sport and all schools have either achieved the Healthy Schools standard or are working towards it. Torbay remains in the 'very good' band for the health of looked after children and there is good partnership working between the health, education and social care services. The appointment of a nurse with specific responsibility for the health of looked after children has been very valuable. Good progress is noted on the provision by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) of dentists for looked after children.

Outcomes for children and young people with disabilities appear to be in line with those for other pupils but do not come through strongly in the council's self evaluation.

Whilst levels of conception rates have improved, there is need to further reduce conception rates of 16-18 year olds; a number of initiatives are in place to address this. It is noted that the Council's Scrutiny Committee is monitoring progress in this area.

The response times of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to referrals of young offenders with non-acute needs are good, but there is need for further improvement on the timescales for responding to referrals for those with acute needs. Further joint working will be needed to address this.

The 'Take Part' project managed by the Children's Society includes children and young people in the development of health provision; it will be important to ensure that the views of black and minority ethnic (BME) children and young people and other vulnerable groups are also captured.

Staying safe

Outcomes are satisfactory overall. All schools inspected in 2003/2004 were good or better for care, welfare, health and safety and complied with statutory requirements on Child Protection procedures. CSCI inspections of fostering, adoption and residential services are all generally positive, with all national minimum standards met. There have been no serious case reviews. All statutory child protection reviews of looked after children have been completed in a timely way, and all children on the Child Protection register have been allocated to a qualified social worker. Multi-disciplinary Child Protection (CP) training, which incorporates a programme for those working with children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), is available for all staff including designated teachers, headteachers and Governors.

Whilst the numbers of core assessments completed within 35 days have increased markedly, performance in initial assessments have dropped and remain at disappointingly low levels. Performance on file audit is also poor and it is important that the CSCI inspection Action Plan, which addresses these issues, is implemented and monitored. The stability of placements of looked after children needs to improve.

There has been a further decline in the number of looked after children allocated to a qualified named social worker and the 2005/2006 target is only 75%. This is unsatisfactory and should be 100%. The council has identified further resources to address this problem.

The CSCI inspection identified raising the profile of private fostering as an issue, and an identified plan is in place to improve work in this area. The further development of management information systems will allow police and health professionals in accident and emergency departments to have direct access to the CP register.

There is good joint working and preparation for Safeguarding Boards including some work with adjoining Councils.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. The overall quality of early years' provision is good but work on evaluating outcomes at the end of the Foundation Stage is at an early stage of development. Standards in education at other key stages are variable. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 are below Torbay's statistical neighbours in all subjects and below national averages in reading and mathematics. There was a fall in results for

mathematics and writing in 2004, and reading results have not shown overall improvement over the last five years. Results in Key Stage 2 are above the national average and in line with statistical neighbours in English and mathematics but below in science. The support provided by the education service in implementing the national primary strategy has been targeted at identified schools with a focus on stretch targets. The council's initial analysis of the unvalidated 2005 Key Stage 1 and 2 results indicates some improvement.

Standards at Key Stage 3 are in line with national averages but are not showing signs of steady improvement. Outcomes at Key Stage 4 are average for 5 A* - C and very good for 1 A* - G, but performance between individual schools is variable. The council has analysed the difference in performance between the three selective schools and five non-selective schools and is targeting support appropriately. Outcomes for looked after children and for sixth form pupils are good. Pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) are set individual targets by schools in consultation with education advisers, and progress towards these is monitored at an individual level. The council analyses results by pupil, group and school and those from black and ethnic minority groups achieve the expected progress. Ofsted inspections of schools show provision to be satisfactory or better and no schools have been placed in a formal category.

Attendance, including that of looked after children, has improved and is now close to that of statistical neighbours and national averages. There is a higher than national number of permanent exclusions and not all excluded pupils currently receive their full entitlement to education. The council acknowledges the challenge of engaging the whole school community in raising achievement and widening opportunities for all young people, including those with LDD or who may be disaffected or hard to engage. More funding is being devolved to schools to facilitate early intervention and reduce the need for statements. The Council recognises the need to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy by monitoring the outcomes for pupils. Torbay meets the statutory requirements for issuing statements of special educational need very well.

The Youth Service inspection of April 2004 found the service to be inadequate. Young people engaged with the Youth Service made insufficient progress and overall standards of achievement were low. Action plans are in place to address the weaknesses, additional funding has been agreed to improve provision and progress on delivering the action plan is being monitored by the scrutiny committee. An interim review has noted limited improvement.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. There has been a reduction in the rate of first time offenders and in the number of looked after children and young people receiving final warnings and convictions. However, the rate of re-offending remains a concern. The council has initiated a three stage prolific offender programme – prevention, catching and convicting, settlement and rehabilitation - with an exit strategy to enable

young people to be supported by mainstream services. There are no outcome indicators as yet but targets for reduction have been set and strategies are in place for monitoring the outcomes.

The number of looked after children and young people contributing to their reviews is good and they are fully involved in planning their care. The council works well with other agencies such as the Children's Society to help engage children and young people in decision making but further work is needed to develop strategies for involving pupils with SEN and disabilities. The lead members for Children's Services and scrutiny actively seek opportunities to talk to children and young people in a range of settings. Consultation with and engagement of children and young people in planning and decision making is not yet systematically embedded in practice across the council and it is not clear to what extent outcomes are monitored and used to inform further developments.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. There are good outcomes for pupils in sixth forms and the percentage of care leavers in employment, education and training (EET) is at very high levels, exceeding performance in the comparator authorities and in the south west.

All care leavers are offered Pathway Plans and most had their plans reviewed; transition planning included in the 14+ annual review was completed for all pupils with statements of special educational need. There has been an improvement in direct payments for carers of children with disabilities but further improvement is needed.

However, the 14-19 strategy was judged unsatisfactory in the recent inspection and a strategy plan has been put in place to address this. The youth service has also been judged unsatisfactory and measures are in place to bring about improvements.

The engagement of some vulnerable groups, for example young mothers, offenders and BME continues to be a challenge. The Connexions 'Get On' programme and some project work with the Princes Trust are beginning to improve the range of available options. It is important that the outcomes of these initiatives are carefully monitored to ensure continued improvement.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong performance on health of looked after children • good developmental work on multi-agency looked after children especially appointment of dedicated looked after children nurse • good health care in regulated children's homes • food developmental work in Healthy Schools standards pilot • good performance on referrals of non-acute YO cases to CAMHS. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategies to improve or target services for BME and other vulnerable groups • response time to CAMHS referrals for YO with acute needs.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant improvement in most PI's in this area, including 100% CP reviews and allocation on top banding • good joint working and preparation for Safeguarding Board • strong commitment to CP training • training programme available for schools and those working with children and young people with SEN or disabilities. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management audits of case files and improvement of management information • private fostering arrangements • timely completion of initial assessments • allocation looked after children to qualified social workers • evaluating outcomes of activities. • stability of placements for looked after children.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good outcomes at KS4 • good education performance for care leavers at 16 • good performance on looked after children absent from school • team around the Child Project • good attendance rates • very good statutory performance re SEN. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maths at KS1 and science at KS 2 where results have fallen • securing improvement in standards at all Key Stages over time • rate of permanent exclusions including pupils with SEN • provision for pupils permanently excluded from school • provision for G&T and SEN • standards of provision in the Youth Service.

<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of looked after children communicated view to statutory review improved performance in looked after children final warnings and convictions reduction in first time offending rate. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formulation of cohesive strategy to further increase consultation and opportunities for contributing to decision making with children and young people especially SEN/LDD and other vulnerable groups reducing re-offending rates.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outcomes for pupils in sixth forms care leavers in EET at 19 show very good performance 100% care leavers offered Pathway Plans; 90% p.p. review achieved percentage of care leavers at age 19 living in suitable accommodation. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase in uptake of Direct Payments for carers children and young people with disabilities opportunities for 19+ with disabilities strategic overview of 14 – 19 strategy and monitoring of effectiveness quality of Youth Service provision: see also outcome 3 planning to improve outcomes for BME and other vulnerable groups.

Service management

The capacity to improve further is promising but sustaining long term improvement will depend on the rigour with which plans are implemented and evaluated. The CSCI inspection of January 2005 found Torbay Council’s capacity to improve to be promising and the Audit Commission identify Torbay as one of the fastest improving councils in the country. Strategic Plans are in place and some improvements have been evidenced. There is a cohesive view across the council about the strategy and what needs to be done and the council’s self evaluation is honest and open.

Education officers know the schools well and acknowledge the challenge of engaging the whole school community in raising achievement and widening opportunities for young people with LDD or who may be disaffected or hard to engage. Good use is made of other agencies, such as the Children’s Society and Dartington Tech, to support developments in Torbay and enhance the opportunities and experiences available to children and young people. There has been an improvement in the delivery of social care services to children and vulnerable young people, and there is a strong commitment from officers and members to improve this further.

The council has worked in partnership with other agencies to develop some effective consultation procedures with children and young people, especially with those who are looked after. Opportunities for seeking the views of children with special educational needs or disabilities who are not looked after are not as clearly defined, neither is the

strategy for embedding consultation with children and young people into whole council processes.

Strong partnerships are being developed and a number of separate action plans are being drawn together into a single Children and Young People's Plan. The delivery of the action plan is built into senior managers' Key Performance Indicators and is monitored through the council's performance management system. There are good working relationships between members and officers and members monitor progress against the action plan through their scrutiny procedures. Many plans are at the early stages of implementation and the impact on outcomes cannot yet be fully evidenced. It will be important that changes in leadership do not result in loss of impetus or focus and that there is sufficient capacity in the council to ensure the required improvements can be delivered at a faster rate.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

Action is taken to promote children and young people's mental health:

- impact of CAMHS services on acute and non- acute referrals.

Staying safe

The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:

- performance rates and consistency of initial assessments
- monitoring of private fostering.

Enjoying and achieving

All children and young people can access a range of recreational and voluntary learning provision:

- quality of the Youth Service.

Early years provision promotes children's development and well-being and helps them meet early learning goals:

Action is taken to ensure that educational provision 5-16 is of good quality:

- impact of early years provision on attainment at entry and outcomes at KS1.

Making a positive contribution

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

- the impact of consultation with all children and young people on policy development and community involvement.

Achieving economic well-being

Action is taken to ensure that 14-19 education and training is planned and delivered in a coordinated way, and to ensure that education and training (16-19) is of good quality:

- implementation of 14 –19 strategy.

Final judgements

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

Yours sincerely



FLO HADLEY
Divisional Manager
Office for Standards in Education



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

APA final judgements 2005: Torbay Council

Areas for judgement	Final judgements ¹
The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	2
The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	2
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	2
The council's overall capacity to improve its services 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	Very good
3	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users	Good/promising
2	A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users	Adequate
1	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users	Inadequate