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Making Social Care  
Better for People



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**1 November 2006**

Dear Ms O'Sullivan

**2006 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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 <sup>1</sup>
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

<sup>1</sup>

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

Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council delivers good services overall for children and young people and has excellent capacity for improvement. The Director of Children's Services has provided strong leadership and increased the momentum of change. She has established quickly a team approach to the delivery of improvement and this has already begun to have a positive impact. However, some aspects of education provision remain variable. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) identifies clearly the council's commitment, ambition and priorities for improving the lives of children, young people and families in Kirklees. The plan acknowledges strengths and weaknesses and has identified clear service principles, which are already delivering improved outcomes for children and young people. Routinely, the Local Public Service Board (LPSB) has involved children, young people and their parents in identifying what needs to be done and in the development of services.

## **Being healthy**

The council is committed to the health and welfare of children and young people. The contribution of the council to health provision is good and improving; most national targets are met and some are exceeded. The Kirklees Healthy Schools Partnership provides a coordinated approach to promoting the health of children and young people. It includes a whole school approach to food and nutrition, sex and relationship education and alcohol, tobacco and substance misuse which encourages pupils' involvement in strategic planning and evaluation of services.

Three health professionals have been employed and a designated doctor has been appointed to monitor and promote the health needs of looked after children. The impact of this can be seen in the health of looked after children, which continues to improve and is very good. Health professionals also support the training of social workers, residential staff and foster carers. Foster carers visited during a recent fostering inspection had a good understanding of the health needs of the children they cared for. Children and young people who returned questionnaires as part of the inspection of foster care indicated that they were given support and advice regarding health, food and healthy lifestyles.

The council has a strong Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) strategy in place with direct access and consultative services. The council is making good progress towards a comprehensive service, and plans for next year are well developed. The council is in discussion with South West Health Trust to secure plans for 24 hour cover beyond summer 2006.

The proportion in treatment for substance misuse is high and above the regional average. A high number of young people are accessing specific young people's services, which is above the regional average. Overall teenage conceptions amongst 15 to 17 year olds are in line with similar areas; the council has appointed a coordinator to maintain the reduction in teenage pregnancies in order to meet the 2010 targets.

## **Staying safe**

The council's contribution to ensuring the safety of children and young people is excellent; in most cases outcomes are consistently and significantly higher than for most authorities. Children and young people in residential and foster care report that they feel safe.

However, bullying in schools has been identified as a concern by the council through its engagement with pupils, and initiatives have been implemented, for example the Safer Schools partnership to address specific issues.

The recent fostering report concluded that the fostering service is well run and effective. A recruitment drive has delivered 14 new foster carers since November 2005.

Most children and young people looked after can expect to have a secure and stable placement; the council excels in the provision of appropriate adoption and foster places. Safeguarding systems are secure and in place for the assessment and review of children on the Child Protection Register. One hundred per cent of child protection cases are reviewed. Very few re-registrations are made and all children on the Child Protection Register have an allocated qualified social worker.

A Local Safeguarding Board has been established and is developing models of integrated working. There have been no serious case reviews; incidents that have not progressed to serious case reviews have been investigated in a timely and well organised manner to ensure that all partners learn to continually improve safeguarding. Effective corporate parenting is well established and understood by the recently formed cabinet.

A wide range of information, support and guidance is easily assessable to children and their carers that reflect the well targeted action being taken to combat the local safeguarding issues and diversity of needs. Most services are well targeted on needs and increasingly engage with children and their carers. Almost all children and their carers are actively participating in planning and reviewing the services they receive and how effective these are. There is regular and very innovative consultation with children and young people. In addition the experience of children and young people is routinely collected, collated and used to influence the design of services.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

The contribution the authority makes to ensuring children and young people achieve at school and enjoy their education is adequate with some emerging strengths. The council acknowledges that there are still some aspects of performance, which require further attention.

Standards attained by children and young people are satisfactory overall and indicate a rising trend. Children are supported well in their early years and make good progress towards meeting early learning goals. Support for childcare providers has focused appropriately on identified areas for development. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the national average, and at Key Stage 2 and 3 standards have continued to improve and are in line with the national average. However, pupils' progress between Key Stage 1 and 2 is below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving five passes at A\* to C at the end of Key Stage 4 has risen and is in line with statistical neighbours; the number gaining at least one GCSE remains higher than in similar areas.

The council is taking steps to address the variable performance of different groups, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. At present, Pakistani boys perform less well overall and black pupils perform less well at Key Stages 3 and 4.

However, Black Caribbean pupils perform better than all other pupils in English and science at Key Stage 3. The gender gap between the performance of girls and boys is falling at Key Stage 4.

The recently appointed Director of Learning has identified priorities for action and plans are well in hand to establish the new learning service management team, which is expected to be in place by September 2006. The council has recognised the need to raise standards further and to reduce the number of schools that under perform in the end of the key stage tests, particularly at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4. A wide range of data is used to identify fluctuations in results from year to year and to target resources and intervention strategies according to need. The single conversation is used effectively to support schools, particularly those causing concern, and is beginning to challenge those which are potentially coasting or under-performing more rigorously. Arrangements are in place to develop the role of school improvement partners across Kirklees. The council has taken effective steps to support those schools in a category of concern. As a result, the number of schools in special measures has fallen during the last year and the number with a notice to improve is below that of similar areas.

Attendance is satisfactory and is above average in secondary schools, compared with similar areas. The attendance of looked after children, however, is below average. Permanent exclusions in Kirklees are low, although the number of fixed term exclusions is too high. The council has assessed all schools on their use of exclusion and expects that, as a result of actions taken, targets to reduce exclusions will be met. The number of hours of education provided for permanently excluded children is too low at 20%. However, the council is positive about the impact of a multi-agency Revolving Doors programme, introduced to speed up the process of excluded pupils' reintegration into school.

The council has a wide range of recreational and informal learning activities, with good levels of participation; for example, over 38,000 young people took part in the dance education programme and the total number of registrations for young peoples' services and young peoples' youth organisations rose in 2005/06 to 3,400.

Positive steps have been taken to reduce surplus school places. An additional senior post has been created on the management team to 'develop an education infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' through innovative practice.

### **Making a positive contribution**

The council provides good opportunities for children and young people to make a positive contribution. Regular consultation has developed successful models for active involvement for children and young people; for instance, Kids Count. *KIRK*, a magazine produced for and by young people, has informed and improved their understanding and awareness of the ranges of services that they receive. Views and experiences with others have been shared and there are opportunities for young people to engage in strategic planning. The council has commissioned VOICE who has a good record of engaging young people in order to increase the participation of children and young people in reviews.

Established partnerships with the voluntary and private sector are developing further to deliver the aims of the CYPP. There is an innovative and active multi-agency support group for young people, one of the first in the country, and a multi-agency counselling service is commissioned from a local voluntary organisation. The young people involved value this initiative. A number of volunteers provide support to disabled children and young people, children in need of support, looked after children and young offenders.

Although the level of crime by looked after children remains too high, impressive action has been taken to work with young people who offend and the council uses named officers to improve the consistency of dealing with incidents. The youth offending team (YOT) is very effective, with higher performance than similar authorities and the national averages. A good range of activities is provided for children and young people who have offended or are at risk of offending. The Positive Activities for Young People programme engaged 1,725 young people in 2005, many of whom were referred by the YOT. Multi-agency preventative work such as Crime Time programmes in schools helps prevent offending and anti-social behaviour. The youth inclusion programme has had positive outcomes for young people at risk of offending in areas where it operates. The council is not complacent about the challenging priority to ensure that young people under the supervision of the YOT are placed in education, training or employment. However, current performance is 55.8%, short of the challenging target of 90%. A new service agreement between YOT and CAMHS is expected to strengthen the level of support for mental health needs.

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

The authority makes a good contribution to children and young people's economic well-being. Achievement at Level 3 post-16 is good. The collegiate development is providing a strong partnership and infrastructure for implementing 14–19 reform locally. The council has taken steps to provide a greater range of Level 1 and 2 courses to meet the needs of all young people, particularly in north Kirklees. Partnerships between schools, local colleges and the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have strengthened and increased participation rates in the increasingly collegiate approach to 14–19 provision. Three hundred pupils in Year 10 have been recruited onto twenty new courses, designed to attract the hard to reach. The council is working closely with schools and colleges to develop new specialised diplomas.

The Kirklees Learning Partnership has contributed to improved transition and participation in post-16 learning. The council has improved the number of pathway plans in response to concerns raised as a weakness in last year's APA. Development of an on-line area wide prospectus from September 2006 will make more information available to young people. The council is taking appropriate action to improve the access to post-16 opportunities for young people with severe and complex needs, having identified this as a priority. A review into the provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will inform future planning of post-16 provision.

Kirklees has consistently the lowest proportion of young people not in education, employment or training within the region. The council is working in partnership with Connexions and the local LSC to inform decisions regarding provision for young people not

in education, employment or training in 2006/07. The proportion of children in care gaining employment is higher than in similar areas and risk assessments are undertaken to ensure that suitable accommodation is provided for most care leavers.

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

The council has appointed a Director for Children and Young People and has almost completed the appointments of the senior management team to reflect its strategic commitment to integration and planning of services for children and young people. During a period of significant change, the new team has been empowered by the effective leadership of the Director for Children and Young People and the Director for Learning . A strong team approach has been quickly established with high levels of communication and close links between core services. As a result, good management of services has been maintained and the council has achieved positive outcomes from early actions taken to support further improvement.

The council's CYPP sets out key information, an analysis of the issues which affect the outcomes for children and young people, and identifies the areas in which outcomes need to be improved. The council has also communicated effectively with children and young people, for example through *KIRK* and the development of their own plan, to raise awareness of what they 'should expect to get from services to help make their lives better'. The local Area Agreement demonstrates clearly, the contributions of all partners in ensuring that most priorities, resources and budget changes are linked.

Budgetary control and financial management is strong and will ensure that expenditure is in line with budget. The council has dealt effectively with serious pressures on the children and families service budget where increased demand has led to an unforeseen rise in legal services costs. The council has a strategy in place to tighten budgetary monitoring and controls and is developing systems with legal services to predict volume and complexity of cases. The council has a value for money assessment process built in to the service. Budget planning processes enable the council to readjust resources according to changing priorities. Children and young people are routinely involved in the performance management process. These processes are highly effective in improving the service and outcomes for children and young people. The council provides good service management for children and young people. Where gaps in service provision have been identified, the council has begun commissioning new services; for example, *VOICE* which encourages the further participation of children in reviews. Firm foundations have been laid for the future and the council has excellent capacity to improve further.

## Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths	Key areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>health of looked after children</li> <li>progress towards comprehensive CAMHS.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintenance of 24 hour access for CAMHS.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>safeguarding children and young people</li> <li>stability of children and young people in placements</li> <li>foster and adoption placements.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue initiatives to address bullying in schools.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved standards overall</li> <li>reduction in number of schools causing concern</li> <li>attendance of pupils in most schools.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduction in the number of schools that are under-performing at one or more key stage</li> <li>challenge for potentially coasting schools</li> <li>attendance of looked after children</li> <li>the number of hours education for permanently excluded children</li> <li>reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>well developed opportunities for children and young people to have their say</li> <li>well established multi-agency links to ensure smooth transitions.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>final warnings and convictions</li> <li>participation in reviews</li> <li>ensure that young people under YOT supervision are in education, employment or training.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of 14–19 collegiate approach and increased participation</li> <li>good achievement at Level 3 post-16</li> <li>low numbers not in education, employment or training</li> <li>good response to children's views.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of Level 1 and 2 courses.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clear vision and direction</li> <li>strong leadership, ambitions and priorities clearly understood and shared</li> <li>good CYPP</li> <li>good performance management</li> <li>good change management.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>embed new teams to maintain increased momentum of change and improvement.</li> </ul>

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

- Pupils' achievement and attainment.
- Challenge to under-performing schools.
- Maintenance of CAMHS 24 hour care.
- Final warnings and convictions.

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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**JONATHAN PHILLIPS**

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