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Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr Richardson
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Dear Mr Richardson

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

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 20 July 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 this area are good, particularly in the way that healthy lifestyles are promoted through the effective partnership work of key services. For example, the innovative work of the Teenage Pregnancy partnership has made a significant impact in reducing the very high rate of teenage conceptions, although the council and its partners recognise that this area remains a significant challenge. In schools, revised sexual relationship policies and a range of innovative multi-agency services are all in place, including access to emergency contraception.

There is evidence of good participation in healthy school activities. Performance in meeting the health needs of looked after children has fallen slightly but remains acceptable, and there is planned further improvement particularly around dental checks. The proactiveness and effectiveness of the actions taken to promote the mental health of children through multi-agency Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) arrangements is delivering some good outcomes. The council has invested additional social worker staffing resources in CAMHS – local tiers 1 & 2 – and the inter-agency link team has had a marked and positive impact to reduce tiers 3 and 4 referrals by 86% in five years. Improved access to CAMHS services is promoted by the councils 'BEST' and 'MAST' teams.

Participation in sport in schools is very good and many healthy activities are encouraged.

Offering of free school meals – with a nutritionist from the Primary Care Trust evaluating nutritional quality is an ambitious initiative, the impact of which is subject to local independent evaluation.

A children's disability team is in place; all special schools have an allocated social worker and there has been increased investment by the council in children's equipment. Integrated approaches with health are promoted at principal manager level and later in 2005 council plans to integrate with the Children's Trust Community Learning Disability Team.

Staying safe

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory, addressing some key areas for maintaining safety although some areas show a decline in performance. The council is working to ensure children and young people are provided with the safe environment to which they are entitled.

There has been a significant reduction in the numbers of looked after children and in the numbers in out-of-authority placements. Whilst all looked after children have an allocated social worker, the council should ensure this work continues to be supervised by a named allocated qualified social worker, with overall responsibility for the case.

Overall performance in short-term foster placement stability remains excellent, and performance in the adoption of looked after children has improved to this level. However, there has been a slight reduction in the previous year's good performance on placement for adoption within 12 months of the Best Interest decision, reflecting the increasingly complex needs of these children. Eighty per cent of care leavers, many living outside the council's boundaries have pathway plans to guide their futures and all have a personal adviser. Performance for disruptions in foster care placements of children in longer-term care has fallen but remains satisfactory, and the council will wish to continue to examine how this can be improved.

The completion of initial and core assessments of children in need has improved and is good. All children on the child protection register have an allocated social worker and the council's performance in conducting child protection reviews has improved and is now good. Levels of referrals for children in need are high, explained as a data input issue with a recent change of system. Levels of conducting initial assessments have yet to reach the council's target. Initial child protection conferences, the numbers on the child protection register and levels of re-registration are high. Taken together this supports the council's intention to continue to examine with partners the effective application of multi-agency preventative approaches, the application of thresholds in responding to referrals and of child protection planning in practice.

The council's review of its race equality scheme is still in progress and it is too early at this



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stage to assess whether this will bring about improvements in services. The ratio of children in need from minority ethnic groups as a percentage of the local population accessing services has shown reduced performance this year although remains satisfactory.

Seven schools have set targets on bullying in response to the council's intervention and an anti-bullying charter is being developed in eight secondary schools. However, there remain issues concerning security from harassment in some schools.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory.

The provision of childcare has increased well and local partners have wisely ensured that the expansion is targeted particularly on the more disadvantaged areas. Ofsted's inspections of new providers at registration, however, have led to more requirements for action than is seen nationally, especially amongst child minders. This suggests a need for enhanced support to new providers. Inspection judgments on established providers are generally in line with or better than the national picture.

Pupils' standards of attainment at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are in line with comparable authorities, except for mathematics at Key Stage 2, which is better than those authorities. Key Stage 1 levels though are below national averages and reading and writing have declined recently. By contrast, Key Stage 2 standards in English and mathematics have risen faster than the national rate and mathematics and science are now in line with national figures. Recent inspections show the breadth of education provided by primary schools.

Standards at secondary schools are lower and the outcomes at Key Stage 4 are a major challenge for the city. Improvements at Key Stage 3 up to 2004 have been uneven and the outcomes are below comparable authorities. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE in 2004, the year in question, was the lowest in the country and the proportion achieving at least one GCSE was also very low. Nevertheless, the rate of improvement at higher grades is faster than it is nationally. Rates of absence from secondary school are well above the national figure, although there has been a very welcome decline in unauthorised absence for the last two years. The youth service contributes well to informal education and gives young people good opportunities for accreditation.

The 2005 local authority inspection judged as satisfactory the monitoring of schools and the challenge given to them. Over a number of years the proportion in an Ofsted category of concern has fallen significantly, but this good record was blemished when two schools were recently identified as having serious weaknesses. The authority's school improvement work has had a positive impact on primary schools, but has not yet achieved



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the desired effect on secondary schools though improvement is on a consistent upward trend.

There are indications of the success of the authority's approaches to inclusion, such as work to promote access for disabled children to mainstream leisure facilities. The council has an extensive programme of activities and initiatives delivered through sport, play, leisure and cultural opportunities.

The number of Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements is low. Pupils with SEN make good progress in schools, and the quality of the authority's moderation of schools' SEN processes are well attested. Good collaboration between the city and the health authority has led to a greatly improved speed of producing statements. More young people who have been excluded from school are re-integrated into education than is the case nationally. However, the number of children excluded from primary schools- already high - increased further this year. There has been improvement in the attainment of looked after children and care leavers and the proportion achieving a GCSE grade is now good, although their attendance rate is weak. The council monitors attendance on a regular basis and has strategies to effect improvement. Permanent exclusions of looked after children have declined.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory.

The general development of pupils in primary schools is sound, and the service to promote personal and social development provided by the youth service is strong. Looked after children receive good support as they prepare for leaving care and whilst fewer of them are now involved in offending, the council's plans to secure further improvement are not ambitious. However, more generally, rates of re-offending in Hull are high and the Youth Offending Team performance has improved whilst significant challenges remain.

Vulnerable young people, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive good support from a range of organisations in presenting their views and influencing service provision but more general opportunities for young people to represent others and to plan activities are mixed. All parents and carers are invited to participate in the reviews of looked after children where the engagement of individual children is good at 90%. The engagement in pathway plan reviews of young people leaving care is also good. Connexions' contributions to support the council in transition planning is excellent and Connexions also supports the future planning for looked after young people looked after placed outside the council's boundaries.

The Youth Council has an important role as a consultative body, but the area youth forums have not all fulfilled their potential. Young people's involvement in strategic and operational management in the youth service is weak.



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Achieving economic well- being

Outcomes in this area are inadequate across the council area with the exception of performance for most looked after children.

The standards achieved by many pupils at age 16, as described above, militate against their future economic success. Furthermore, the council's self-assessment notes that the proportion of 16-year-olds continuing with full-time education has been below target. The proportion of 16 to 19 year-olds not in education, employment or training is very high, but is reducing at a faster rate than nationally. The proportion of young offenders involved in education, employment or training is low and is not improving. Overall, this is a very bleak picture, albeit one which is improving in most respects.

The situation for vulnerable groups differs. Most looked after children receive good support post-16 and there has been improvement of already excellent performance for care leavers involved in education, training or employment. The percentage of disabled children known to and receiving services from the council shows marked improvement near the maximum of comparator councils. Levels of direct payments to their carers have slightly improved but remain comparatively low. The educational progress of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, however, has been impeded by lack of a comprehensive post-16 programme. Collaboration between the city and the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is developing but has not yet resulted in sufficiently improved outcomes. The current review by the council of the role of special schools, although overdue, is welcome, as is the collaboration between health bodies and the council services for young people with disabilities.

The city's support for developments in education and training for 14-19 year-olds was judged by the 2005 LEA inspection to have been unsatisfactory. There had been a number of initiatives involving various institutions but the citywide curricular offer was not yet coherent. Since the local authority inspection some progress has been made in establishing mechanisms for improving coordination and planning as a result of joint funding by the city and the local LSC of a new post.

SUMMARY:

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectiveness of the CAMHS service. participation in sport in schools. free Healthy School Meals for all children. 	<p>Being healthy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduce further the rates of teenage pregnancy. redressing declining performance for the health of looked after children.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduction in numbers of looked after children. foster placement stability in the short and longer term. looked after children adopted from council care. action to complete all core assessments. Child Protection Register levels of de-registration and reviews. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the percentage of looked after children allocated with a named qualified social worker. security from harassment in some schools. Child Protection levels of re-registrations and numbers on Register / % of child protection re-registrations during the year.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improvement in percentage of young people leaving care at 16+1 GCSE grade A*-G or GNVQ & Improvement in % of care leavers with 5+GCSEs A*-C. increases in childcare provision. the rate of improvement in some aspects of attainment. reintegration of excluded pupils. early intervention in supporting pupils with SEN. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school attendance by looked after children. preparedness of new childcare providers for registration. secondary school attendance. attainment in secondary schools.

<p>Making a positive contribution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looked after children - final warnings and convictions. • looked after children who communicated their views to a statutory review. • The youth service's support for young people's personal and social development. • support for care leavers. • support for vulnerable people in presenting their views. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rate of re-offending. • opportunities for young people to represent others.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustained and improved performance in % of care leavers in employment, education/training at age 19. • the proportion of care leavers entering education, training or employment post-16. • the level of support to young people with disabilities. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educational standards at 16-plus. • the proportion of young people in education, training or employment post-16. • the proportion of young offenders in education, training or employment post-16. • impact on outcomes of planning for education and training at 14-19. • planning provision for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities post-16.

Service management and capacity to improve

The council has been subject to an intervention by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), although the latest inspection by Ofsted identified a picture of overall improvement. The council now gives high priority to education and the recently agreed Community Strategy supports the overall focus on improving outcomes for the people of the city. As a result of more coherent strategies to promote inclusion and the development of good collaboration and shared priorities between education, social care and health those services targeted to support many of the city's most vulnerable children and young people are increasingly effective. Corporate partnerships, linking for example education and housing, seek to tackle Hull's real issues across the whole range of council provision. Good progress has been made with the implementation of the Change for Children programme as a result of the effective work of the children and young people's development team, joint management team meetings with partners, and senior managers keeping progress under close review.

The council's priorities are reflected in the overall budget increases for social care services and the education budget is above the Formula Spending Share. The council is using its medium term financial plan to support strategic decisions such as increasing spending on school improvement services, the new commitment to healthy eating and pooled budgets to improve support for LAC and children with disabilities. For example, there has been a significant reduction in the number of looked after children placed outside the area, although the weekly cost of placements has risen.

Weaknesses in service delivery are now identified more effectively and appropriate action is taken to remedy them. For example, better collaboration between the education service and the primary care trust to speed up the completion of statutory statements for children with special educational needs. Educational attainment is below the national averages in all key stages but education improvement services have been restructured and there is a clearer focus on outcomes. The council's recovery and improvement programme includes secondary education as a key focus in order to raise standards. Generally, levels of educational performance in Hull are now increasing at a faster rate compared with statistical neighbours and nationally.

Performance is good on the recruitment and retention of social care staff. Sickness levels are low. Training for residential care staff at Level 3 of the National Vocational Qualification in social care shows signs of leading to improvement in service provision. However, the number of social workers and residential managers working with children and needing to achieve the childcare post qualifying award (PQ1) should be improved to support the overall strategy.

This is a council with improving services but more remains to be done. The council's self assessment correctly identifies most of the areas requiring improvement. Recent strategic action and firm resolve, supported by increasingly effective partnership work and planning, are beginning to make a positive impact although some measures, such as the reduction in surplus places and the co-ordination of the post-14 curriculum, have been slower in development and implementation.

Overall, there is new energy and investment and clear ambitions for the city. The council has good capacity for further improvement.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review:

Being healthy

Healthy lifestyles are promoted for children and young people

- further progress on reduced levels of teenage pregnancy.

Staying safe

Agencies collaborate to safeguard children according to the requirements of current government guidance

- the effectiveness of child protection planning including high levels of initial conferences, registrations and re-registrations.

Looked after children live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation:

- support for looked after children including allocated social workers and pathway planning for all children leaving care.

Enjoying and achieving

Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and achieve highly:

- action to improve secondary school attendance

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

- action to improve standards in secondary schools

Children and young people who are looked after are helped to enjoy and achieve:

- action to improve school attendance by looked after children.

Making a positive contribution

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

- opportunities for young people to represent others

Action is taken to prevent offending and to reduce re-offending by children and young people:

- action taken to reduce re-offending.



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Achieving economic well-being

Young people 11-19 are helped to prepare for working life:

- action taken to identify and target groups under-represented in education and training post-16

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

- planning for education and training at 14-19
- planning provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities post-16
- provision for young offenders in education, training or entering employment post-16.

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: Kingston upon Hull City 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	3
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 capacity to improve its services for children and young people	3

1

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