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Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr Dorian Leatham
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1 December 2005

Dear Mr Leatham

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF
HILLINGDON'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 25 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

Some improvements have been achieved and provision is satisfactory overall. There are good initiatives as a result of the 'Healthy Hillingdon' project in the areas of sport and healthy eating.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has benefited from the deployment of an additional social worker, and has been awarded an additional £486k over two years to develop existing mental health services for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), known as the Well-Being Project. It will be important to ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained between specialist CAMH services for UASC and those for the community in general.

There has been a small increase in the percentage of looked-after children who have received health assessments. Although the figure is below the average for outer-London authorities, performance remains in the 'good' range nationally. The council should continue to strive for further improvement in this area.

Teenage pregnancy figures have increased. The council has conducted a thorough analysis of its data in relation to the increase and has devised a strategy to reverse the rising trend. This will need to be translated into tangible service improvements in the future.

Staying safe

Performance in this area is good overall. There have been positive CSCI inspection findings on both fostering and adoption services during the last year.

Initial assessments of children completed within seven days of referral have shown a significant increase and performance is now above the average for Outer-London authorities.

The percentage of core assessments of children completed within thirty-five days have also increased, although the figure remains below the Outer-London authority average and needs to be improved further.

The pattern of the council's child protection performance, as shown by performance measures compared to Outer-London authorities, indicates that Hillingdon has lower numbers of children on the child protection register, that the time spent on the register is on average shorter and that numbers of re-registrations are higher. The council should ensure that its criteria for de-registration are sound and secure. All other child protection indicators are good: all reviews are completed on time and all children are assigned key workers.

Child protection services are well researched. The council has determined that 25% of child protection cases arise from instances of emotional abuse after witnessing domestic violence. It has therefore appropriately offered supportive services and is working with schools to train pupils and teachers on what to do in instances of domestic violence.

The number of children looked after by the council is almost double the average for Outer-London authorities. A significant factor has been the number of UASC requiring care, and additional pressures arising from the fact that Heathrow airport is within the authority's catchment area. Nevertheless, the council needs to keep the position under review to establish that numbers of looked-after children are at an acceptable level after allowing for demand arising from UASC and the fact that Heathrow airport is within Hillingdon's boundary.

The council has used information from referrals to shape the provision of some specialist services, including a dedicated residential unit for UASC, which is performing well. A multi-agency support team is now in place and having some success in averting the need for children to be taken into care. At the request of CSCI the council contributed examples of its work to the 2005 Joint Chief Inspectors Safeguards Review, which highlighted foster parents and the residential unit for UASC as areas of good practice in Hillingdon.

Other positive features are placement stability, which is in line with other Outer-London authorities and high numbers of case files audited during the year.

Services to children from minority communities are broadly in line with other outer-London authorities. The priority is to maintain local ties and continuity. The preferred Independent Fostering Agency provider has secured a range of carers from diverse communities close to the Borough.

Enjoying and achieving

Some effective support is provided to help improve the quality of early years education. Pupil performance at the end of Key Stage 1 is currently in line with that in similar authorities. However, it has declined in comparative terms over the last four years. The position for Key Stage 2 is rather better in terms of current comparisons but there has been a similar decline relative to other authorities. The position is better at Key Stage 3, where there has been a faster rate of improvement than elsewhere. Performance, which has been a relative weakness in recent years, is now in line with the average for similar authorities. Key Stage 4, however, performance is both comparatively poor and there has been a significant decline relative to both similar authorities and the national average. Some impact has been made on addressing the under-achievement of particular ethnic groups and of boys in general. Overall, the figures give cause for concern about the effectiveness of provision to monitor, challenge and support schools. This is confirmed by the comparatively high number of schools in special measures or serious weaknesses.

The authority has clearly recognised that significant change is required in such respects. It has taken firm action to address its weaknesses. However, the development of this new approach is only in its early stages. A key determinant of success will be the ability to build a new and more productive relationship with schools. Appropriate steps are being taken to address this and to strengthen monitoring, challenge and support more generally. Early indications of progress give some cause for optimism. However, it is too early to assess whether the measures overall will have the desired effect. The authority has been in this position before and the eventual outcome was disappointing.

Attendance in primary schools is worse than in similar authorities and the gap has not reduced in recent years. In secondary schools it is similarly worse and the gap has widened. However, early indications for 2004/5 do show some progress. Some good support is provided for pupils with behaviour problems. The proportion of pupils permanently excluded is similar to elsewhere, although the early indications for 2004/5 are again positive. A slightly higher proportion of pupils is educated otherwise than at school than the average nationally. Pupils tend to stay in such provision longer than elsewhere and fewer are reintegrated into schools. However, aspects of the alternative provision made are good.

The educational attainment of looked after children is similar to elsewhere. Their school attendance is very good. Provision to meet the particular needs of unaccompanied asylum seekers is good. More work needs to be done, however, on analysing and meeting the very different needs of children and young people within the looked after children group overall. Educational provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory overall and has some good features. The analysis of their educational achievement has improved. Progress has also been made in developing provision within mainstream schools and reducing the number of special school placements. Major improvements have been made in youth service provision, which was poorly resourced hitherto.

Making a positive contribution

The local authority has satisfactory procedures in this area. Acceptable levels of consultation take place with looked-after children and their carers to help shape policy and service delivery. Examples of consultation include the involvement of the local Youth Council in the recent Best Value Review of Vulnerable Children; the 'Time to be Heard' consultation event attended by looked-after children and a teenage parents' seminar during which young parents made presentations to professionals and elected representatives. Eighty five percent of looked after children communicated their views in their latest statutory review, in line with other Outer-London authorities.

The council provides a range of support to vulnerable groups, including a Young Carers' Support Group, a specialist worker who advises parents of autistic children, and a Portage Service, which provides specialist guidance on parenting.

The residential unit for UASC has provided a useful source of specialist expertise which the council has commendably disseminated to other interested agencies.

A low proportion of looked-after children received a final reprimand or warning during the year. This performance outcome is better than the average for Outer-London authorities. Local police services have established a popular Cadet Scheme for young people at risk of offending, through which they shadow police officers for a brief period.

The council's self-assessment gave little evidence of instances where consultation and involvement of children and young people had actually promoted change, though some examples were given during the APA meeting.

Achieving economic well-being

Collaboration between partner agencies to improve educational provision for young people aged 14-19 is satisfactory overall. Joint working on analysing need has been good and there have been some positive developments in developing provision post-16

for young people with poor educational achievement. There has been a significant recent reduction in the proportion of young people not in education, employment and training. However, much more needs to be done, both in terms of engaging productively with the full range of partners and raising young people's aspirations and attainment. Low attainment and disaffection amongst a significant minority of young people at Key Stage 4 remains a significant contributory factor.

Looked after children receive good support in preparing for working life. A significantly higher than average, and improving, proportion of care leavers is in education, employment or training at age 19. This is in part a reflection of good support for and high aspirations amongst unaccompanied asylum seekers within the group. However, appropriate steps are being taken to ensure that good support is also provided to the others involved. Provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory.

Reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that early years day care provision is accessible to all parents who want it for their children. Good support is given to new day care providers in preparing for registration. However, inspections of established providers show a much less positive picture in terms of the quality of provision. Some effective support is given to help providers to improve but more needs to be done. The use of direct payments to families to assist in meeting care needs has increased and now compares favourably with other areas. The provision of respite care and other support for such families has improved.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development of specialist CAMHS services for unaccompanied child asylum seekers determining reasons for the rise in teenage pregnancies. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need to develop the general CAMHS service achieving further improvement in the percentage of looked-after children receiving health assessments acting on findings to tackle the rise in teenage pregnancies.

<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive inspection outcomes in relation to fostering and adoption services • improvements in initial and core assessment figures • positive use of information determined from child protection cases to establish specialist services • the dedicated residential unit for unaccompanied child asylum seekers. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further improvement in numbers of core assessments to bring into line with Outer-London average • ensure that numbers of looked-after children are not high after allowing for the impact of unaccompanied child asylum seekers and the location of Heathrow Airport.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rate of improvement in the performance of pupils at Key Stage 3 • improvements in the educational attainment of some ethnic minority groups • attendance at school by looked after children • the development of provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities within mainstream schools. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rate of improvement in the performance of pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 • the comparative performance of pupils at Key Stage 4 and the rate of improvement • monitoring, challenge and support for schools • attendance at school overall.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low offending rate for looked-after children • dissemination of expertise obtained in relation to unaccompanied child asylum seekers • some good initiatives for children with specific needs, eg autism, teenage parents. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examples of instances where outcomes from consultation have had an impact on services.

<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developments in post-16 educational provision for young people with low achievement • support for new providers of early years day care. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborative working with the full range of partners to develop education and training provision post-16 • raising the aspirations of young people and increasing their involvement in education and training post-16 • support for existing providers of early years day care to improve the quality of provision.
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Service management

The authority has satisfactory capacity to improve. Structures and processes for partnership work with other agencies are well designed and relationships are beginning to improve. The authority recognises the need for the voluntary sector to be supported in making a full contribution to this work and has taken action accordingly. However, for the authority and its partners overall there is some way to go in developing both a common framework of values and priorities and new ways of working to improve collaboration on the ground. A good start is being made in mapping need and analysing where service provision should be developed. The authority has already made some significant changes in the deployment of resources to target identified development priorities.

Appropriate changes are being made in elected member and senior officer responsibilities within the authority to deliver the new children's services agenda. The timetable for implementing these changes takes sensible account of current service performance issues and what needs to be done to implement change effectively. There is an extensive range of initiatives for consulting young people and involving them in service planning and review. The authority recognises the need to draw these together into a more coordinated framework and to provide better feedback to young people on how their views have influenced decisions. Effective measures have been taken to recruit and retain staff within the authority and to develop their skills. Staff morale has improved. In the main, performance monitoring and review is systematic.

The key task for the authority now is to ensure that the recent and planned changes in structures and processes follow through to better service provision on the ground and improved outcomes for children and young people locally. This will take time. Building on the recent improvements in working relationships with schools and other partners is a key requirement.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

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

- development of mainstream CAMHS services.

Healthy life-styles are promoted for children and young people:

- measures taken to reverse the rise in teenage pregnancies
- the percentage of looked-after children receiving health assessments.

Staying safe

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

- the impact of unaccompanied child asylum seekers
- the impact of Heathrow Airport within the catchment area.

The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:

- improvement in the percentage of core assessments.

Enjoying and Achieving

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

- monitoring, challenge and support for both primary and secondary schools
- support to raise the achievement of some ethnic groups and of boys in general.

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

- support for school attendance.

Making a positive contribution

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

- action to ensure that mechanisms for consultation with young people about their own future and policy impact on service outcomes.

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:

- action to raise the aspirations of young people and improve their participation in education and training post-16
- the development of partnership working to improve the provision of education and training post-16
- the development of educational and training provision for young people with low attainment.

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

Cc: Chris Spencer, Director of Education and Children's Services Designate

APA final judgements 2005: London Borough of Hillingdon

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 overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people	2

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