



# Joint area review

Report for children and young people

## Report for children and young people about the services they receive in the London Borough of Harrow

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and doing well at school and as they grow up
- Making a positive contribution to society
- Being successful in whatever they choose to do when they are adults

## Why should I read this?

The law says that inspectors must look at and then report on how well local services serve children and young people in an area. This is called a "review". Inspectors visited your area recently. You might like to read this, or the full report which you can find on Ofsted's website, to find out what they had to say.

## What did the inspectors do?

Eight inspectors visited Harrow in November and December 2006 so that they could get a feel of what life is like for children and young people in the area. They:

- ❖ talked and listened to a number of children and young people
- ❖ talked with adults working with children and young people (like social workers, teachers, youth workers, nurses, doctors, police officers and councillors)
- ❖ spoke to parents and other people caring for children
- ❖ met with school councils' representatives and members of the Harrow Youth Council
- ❖ heard from the council and other agencies what it thinks about the services it provides for children
- ❖ read a lot of reports
- ❖ visited services all over Harrow and in a neighbourhood in South Harrow to see things for themselves.

The inspectors also looked at how well particular children are doing, like those children in council care or those who have a learning difficulty or disability.

## How well are children and young people doing in Harrow?

- ❖ Outcomes for children and young people in Harrow, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are good overall.
- ❖ Children and young people are safe, mostly in good health, achieve very well at school, make a good positive contribution to society and go on to achieve well in further or higher education, employment and/or training.
- ❖ Youth crime is low in Harrow.
- ❖ Outcomes for children looked after by the council are not as good as the outcomes for other children and young people in Harrow.

## What were the main things children and young people told inspectors about your area?

- ❖ Most children and young people enjoy and are happy living in Harrow. They say they generally feel safe both in and out of school and their concerns about safety on public transport and in parks have been taken seriously and attended to. Their worries about bullying and gangs are also being addressed by the council and the police. The police have a good and valued presence in schools.
- ❖ Children and young people say they enjoy school and benefit from being in school in Harrow. They use a good range of recreational services but many young people say they need more information on the range of things available to them. Some older young people say that they do not use certain facilities because they are too costly and have difficulties getting to them on public transport.
- ❖ Children and young people say there are good opportunities to make their views known to the council and other agencies. They say they benefit from a number of active groups such as the Harrow Youth Council, the student advisory group, schools' councils and various conferences. Not enough attention is paid to getting the views of younger children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## What things did the inspectors say are good for children and young people in my area?

- ❖ Improving outcomes and services for young people is important to Harrow Council and its partner agencies.
- ❖ The Primary Care Trust is working hard, along with the council, to improve the health services for children and young people. Some things such as mental and sexual health services have improved as a result. Schools work hard to promote healthy lifestyles for their pupils. The health needs of looked after children are met well.
- ❖ Children and young people who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, abuse are protected well. There is a good range of advice and information to help parents and carers keep children safe. Initiatives to reduce road traffic accidents, bullying, anti-social behaviour and violence in families are having a good impact.
- ❖ The council and its partners, including schools, are good at ensuring children and young people enjoy leisure services and achieve high standards. The majority of children and young people make good progress throughout their time in school. Schools are good and the council supports and challenges them well.

- ❖ There are good opportunities for children and young people to develop socially and emotionally in Harrow through the good schools and the wide range of activities provided by the council and voluntary groups. Children and young people who are more vulnerable, such as unaccompanied asylum seekers and teenage mums receive good personal and practical help. A lot of good work is done to prevent young people offending or becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.
- ❖ There is effective support for parents and carers to help them start training courses and go to work. The three children's centres help with this, and there are plans to have nine centres by 2008. There is a good plan for developing training opportunities for 14-19 year olds and Harrow has a new skills centre for training young people to undertake various jobs. Young people leaving care and those with special educational needs are supported well in entering employment, further education and/or training.
- ❖ The social care services for children and young people have improved.

### What things are not so good for children and young people?

- ❖ There are lots of plans to improve lots of things but it is not clear which ones are the most important.
- ❖ The youth service for children and young people in Harrow is not performing well.
- ❖ The Youth Offending Team's contribution to helping young people in Harrow is too variable.
- ❖ The social care services for children have improved, but children, young people and their parents and carers do not always get a quick enough response. Some other agencies are not clear enough about when and how the social care services should become involved when difficulties arise of children, young people or their families need help.
- ❖ Some aspects of services for children and young people with learning disabilities and/or difficulties are good, but getting a social care service is too difficult and there are not enough social care services for them.
- ❖ Younger children and children with learning disabilities and/or difficulties do not have enough opportunity to participate and give their views about services.
- ❖ The services to help children and young people with mental health problems do not work closely enough with the schools.