

17 December 2008

Mr Peter Lewis  
Director of Education, Children's Services and Leisure  
London Borough of Enfield  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor Civic Centre  
Silver Street  
Enfield  
EN1 3XQ

Dear Mr Lewis

## **Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in the London Borough of Enfield 2008**

This letter summarises the findings of the 2008 annual performance assessment (APA) for your council. The evaluations and judgements in the letter draw on a range of data and information which covers the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. As you know, the APA is not based on an inspection of your services and, therefore, can only provide a snapshot based on the evidence considered. As such, I am grateful to you for assuring the quality of the data provided.

Performance is judged on a four point scale as detailed in the handbook. I should emphasise that the grades awarded are based on an overall 'best fit' model. For instance, an outstanding judgement of Grade 4 reflects that overall most aspects, but not necessarily all, of the services in the area are working very well. We know that one of the features of outstanding provision is the drive for greater improvement and no council would suggest, and nor would Ofsted, that a judgement of outstanding indicates that everything is perfect. Similarly within a judgement of inadequate overall, Grade 1, there could be some aspects of the overall service that are adequate or even good. Judgements are made in a rounded way, balancing all of the evidence and giving due consideration to outcomes, local and national contexts, priorities and decision-making.

The following table sets out the grades awarded for performance in 2008.

Assessment judgement area	APA grade
Overall effectiveness of children's services	3
Being healthy	3
Staying safe	4
Enjoying and achieving	3
Making a positive contribution	4
Achieving economic well-being	3
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	4

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale  
4: outstanding/excellent; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate*

## Overall effectiveness of children's services

**Grade 3**

Enfield Council consistently delivers good services. The council works effectively and has a strong track record of identifying barriers, initiating change and sharply targeting resources to achieve improved outcomes. Its management of sustained improvement across services is linked to highly effective senior leadership, very good partnership work and ongoing consultation. The needs of vulnerable children and young people are championed well; barriers linked to poverty are prioritised and tackled through integrated services. The council has effectively ensured that young people have a voice in decision-making around services that affect them. It has ensured that hard-to-reach groups are engaged in discussions and have equal access to services. Educational achievement is at least satisfactory and is particularly better at Key Stages 1 and 4 where children and young people make the most progress. The trend of improvement in these key stages is generally above the national and that in similar authorities. The year-on-year improvement was most marked in 2007 when the GCSE results, including English and mathematics, were better than the national average. The council's provision for staying safe and making a positive contribution is outstanding. These positive features demonstrate the council's determination to raise expectations and meet the needs of its diverse residents.

The council has made good progress since the 2007 APA, particularly in relation to social care. Joint working arrangements including a renewed focus on teenage pregnancy are contributing to good health outcomes. There was good progress in education in improving the high level of unauthorised absence in both primary and secondary schools. Effective steps have been taken to increase the resources to improve the language skills of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, there is an upward trend in helping more children to acquire the target language skills expected for their age group at the end of the Foundation Stage.

There is very good corporate support to improving children's services. Planning for future improvement is underpinned by good needs analysis and the capacity for improvement including service management is outstanding.

## Being healthy

**Grade 3**

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development in this outcome area is over-optimistic in relation to teenage pregnancy and overvalues the progress made in this area. The table below sets out the evidence for the grade awarded.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very good progress on implementing the Healthy Schools Programme. At 82%, significantly more schools have achieved Healthy School status than similar authorities or nationally. This is making an important contribution towards promoting healthy lifestyles for children and young people particularly in relation to sexual health, healthy eating and exercise.</li> </ul>

- Good arrangements to meet looked after children and care leaver's health needs including mental health and emotional well-being. There is very good take-up of health assessments and dental checks.
- Good multi-agency arrangements to support children with disabilities ensure improved collaboration between professionals, earlier identification of need and good lead professional arrangements. Excellent provision supports children with complex medical needs including promoting inclusion in mainstream schools.
- There is good access to CAMHS provision for vulnerable children including looked after children, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and young people who have offended and good or very good performance on most waiting time measures.

#### **Important weaknesses and areas for development**

- Although good action has been taken to address the recommendation from the 2007 APA the rate of teenage conceptions increased in 2006 and there had been an overall increase of 18.6% since the baseline year against a target of a 50% reduction.

## **Staying safe**

## **Grade 4**

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is outstanding. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

#### **Major strengths**

- The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) ensures that child protection systems have an effective focus on improved prevention. The numbers of core assessments completed has increased very significantly and is now in line with that in similar authorities, while maintaining excellent compliance with timescales, addressing a recommendation from the 2007 APA. The LSCB has made excellent progress in establishing child death review processes in advance of requirements and there is good learning from this process and quality assurance systems.
- Very effective services support children and young people to remain with their families resulting in low numbers of children and young people who need to be looked after. A successful placement strategy, high quality provision, and very good reviewing arrangements contribute to good outcomes for looked after children including a good improvement in long-term placement stability which is now better than that in similar authorities, addressing another recommendation from the 2007 APA.
- There are excellent arrangements to support families of children with disabilities, including short breaks provision. The Cheviots Centre, a multi-agency specialist Children's Centre, is nationally recognised as a model of good practice.

<b>Important weaknesses and areas for development</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Despite good performance on the numbers of children adopted from care, relatively few children are made the subject of Special Guardianship Orders.</li> </ul> |
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## Enjoying and achieving

## Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. This is in line with the council's self-assessment. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

<b>Major strengths</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a sustained trend of improving educational attainment and achievement particularly at the end of Key Stages 1 and 4. Rigorous school improvement work has had the most impact in these two key stages and contributes to children and young people achieving better than average results, demonstrated in the GCSE examinations at five or more A* to C including English and mathematics.</li> <li>▪ Since the 2007 APA, effective and targeted school improvement has increased the proportion of children reaching the expected target for their age group in communication, language and literacy and reducing unauthorised absence in primary schools. Attendance has improved significantly and is now in line with that in similar authorities. The upward trend in improving the language skills of children against challenging targets demonstrates sound gains.</li> <li>▪ Most children and young people, and particularly those from vulnerable groups, achieve well in relation to their starting points. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress. Good intervention and support is leading to narrowing the attainment gap between most minority ethnic groups and their peers.</li> </ul> |
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<b>Important weaknesses and areas for development</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The council has a number of schools below the floor targets and in a category of concern particularly in the primary phase.</li> <li>▪ Attainment at Key Stages 2 and 3 is generally below that of similar councils and the national average. Additionally, there is still variability in performance in schools across the council.</li> </ul> |
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## Making a positive contribution

Grade 4

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is outstanding. This is in line with the council's self-assessment. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good engagement with diverse groups in different localities, in particular looked after children and care leavers and those with a learning difficulty and/or disability. There are very good opportunities for looked after children to meet with senior managers and exchange ideas and raise questions about the quality of services provided. Similarly, children and young people with learning difficulties and or/disabilities make a significant contribution to planning their futures.</li> <li>▪ The Youth Offending Service has made good progress in significantly reducing the rate of first-time offenders, including the numbers of look after children receiving a final warning.</li> <li>▪ The engagement of children and young people with members of the council resulting in increasing participation and opportunities to influence decisions across the services.</li> </ul>
Important weaknesses and areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Despite remaining lower than in similar councils, re-offending rates have increased.</li> </ul>

## Achieving economic well-being

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Highly effective focused attention for the most vulnerable groups, notably those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after children has resulted in them achieving well, ensuring a smooth transition to the next stage of their life.</li> <li>▪ Strong partnership work across the borough and robust procedures have contributed to the 14–19 curriculum meeting the needs of most young people very well particularly at Levels 2 and 3. This is improving outcomes for most young people.</li> <li>▪ The effective use of projects and initiatives across the borough to instigate early intervention and preventative work to minimise poverty, increase greater</li> </ul>

access and thereby economic independence.

### **Important weaknesses and areas for development**

- Despite the overall downward trend, the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training is higher than those in similar councils'
- The percentage of young people completing the advanced vocational courses is improving but is still well below the national averages. Progress in increasing the provision and completion of work-based learning for all groups of young people is also slow.

## **Capacity to improve, including the management of children's services**

**Grade 4**

The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people is outstanding and its management of these services is good. Very strong partnerships, high ambition, a clear vision and effective performance management have ensured sustained improvement in outcomes for children and young people across many key service functions. Very high priority is afforded to children and young people for example in the Local Area Agreement. The partnership has prioritised early intervention and prevention services well and has effectively refocused resources to this area. Strong arrangements are in place to listen to the voices of children and young people. Commissioning is increasingly devolved to area partnerships ensuring good focus on local need. Most recommendations from the 2007 APA have been addressed well. In spite of some good initiatives, the impact is not yet evident in relation to the re-offending rates and reducing the number of schools below the floor targets. However, local data provides evidence of better rates of improvement at Key Stages 2 and 3. The council's self-assessment reflects a good understanding of most strengths and weaknesses and appropriate plans are in place to address areas of weakness.

### **Major strengths**

- Good and increasing prioritisation of the needs of vulnerable groups and areas of high deprivation with well targeted services.
- Highly effective strategies to address equalities, for example reducing the attainment gap for children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities.
- Good corporate parenting arrangements.

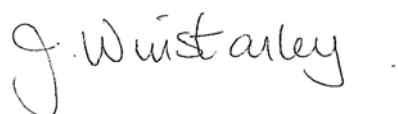
<b>Important weaknesses and areas for development</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Although there is sound improvement in increasing the proportion of children developing good language skills in the Foundation Stage, the gap is still wide between those reaching the expected level and those below the level expected for their age group.</li></ul> |
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The children's services grade is the performance rating for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It will also provide the score for the children and young people service block in the comprehensive performance assessment to be published by the Audit Commission.

We are grateful for the information you provided to support this process and for the time given by you and your colleagues during the assessment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Local Services Inspection