

26 November 2007

Mr Philip Holmes  
Acting Director of Children and Family Services  
East Riding of Yorkshire Council  
County Hall  
Beverley  
East Riding of Yorkshire  
HU17 9BA

Dear Mr Holmes

## **2007 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

This letter summarises the findings of the 2007 annual performance assessment for your local authority. The judgements in the letter draw on your review of the Children and Young People's Plan where it was available, and the evidence and briefings provided by Ofsted, other inspectorates and relevant bodies. 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.

### **Overall effectiveness of children's services**

**Grade 3**

East Riding of Yorkshire Council consistently delivers services for children and young people at a good level. Services make a good contribution towards improving outcomes for children and young people despite being a rural area where distance and travel is often an issue. A multi-agency approach has been established between key agencies. Virtual Integrated Management teams and 'Child at the Centre of the Hub' teams have been established and show a good commitment to joint working. There are improving outcomes in most areas of the council's work. In particular outcomes on health, staying safe and the attainment of children and young people are good and continue to be above national and similar authorities. The council's efforts to involve children and young people in decision making at all levels are outstanding. This is a council where children and young people really do have a voice.

### **Being healthy**

**Grade 3**

#### **Summary of strengths and areas for development**

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. Many health outcomes are good and some are outstanding. Almost all schools are participating in the Healthy Schools initiative and achievement

of Healthy School status is good. School inspections found that most schools are good at promoting healthy lifestyles. A high proportion of new early years and child care providers have had actions imposed at registration in respect of healthy lifestyles. Fewer actions were imposed post-registration. The council has taken action to raise awareness and improve their support to prospective providers.

Very good performance has been maintained in relation to the health of children and young people looked after by the council and those leaving care, with most children and young people having an annual health check and access to dental care.

A good range of opportunities exists to enable young people to have access to advice and guidance on health matters. The council is working with young people to further improve the range and quality of advice. The Youth Assembly have formed a focus group to plan a conference for young people aged 13 to 17 focused on relationships, sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception and HIV/Aids. A sexual health magazine for young people is also being created.

Teenage conceptions, at 32 per 1,000 of the population aged 15 to 17, continue to be lower than the national average of 41 per 1,000, and in similar areas which is 34 per 1,000. However, this performance masks variations across some wards and targeted action has been taken to focus activity in these areas to further reduce numbers. The rate of reduction in conceptions is lower than the national rate and there remains a challenge for the authority to achieve the national reduction of 45% by 2010. Good outcomes have been achieved in reducing smoking during pregnancy and the rate is better than nationally and in similar authorities.

Children and young people have very good access to outstanding Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Significant reductions in waiting times have been achieved through the introduction of intake clinics and brief intervention services. The majority of children and young people are seen within two weeks, which is excellent. Improved identification and assessment services to young people at risk of substance misuse has led to a significant reduction in the incidence of substance misuse. For example the number of young people admitted to hospital to substance misuse has fallen from 129 in 2001–04 to 103 in 2003–06.

### **Area for development**

- Improve support and advice on healthy lifestyle standards to early years providers pre-registration.

## **Staying safe**

## **Grade 3**

### **Summary of strengths and areas for development**

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. Children and young people who responded to the Tellus2 survey generally feel safe in school and in their local community. Effective initiatives are in place to prevent bullying; when it does occur it is responded to well. The number of

children and young people seriously injured or killed on roads is low and has reduced by 25%, but this is lower than the national average reduction of 48%. A higher than average proportion of new child care providers were issued with actions relating to safeguarding at registration. The council has already taken action to address this through pre-registration training and awareness raising sessions.

The number of looked after children and young people is significantly lower than the average nationally and in similar authorities. Children and young people looked after by the council have a good level of stability which is, in part, a result of good and well targeted support to carers. Most live in foster placements and significantly more than usual are being fostered by relatives or friends. All looked after children and young people are allocated a qualified social worker and the great majority of reviews (93%) are held on time, which is better than average nationally and in similar councils. The council now has more secure data on the numbers of looked after children and young people from Black and minority ethnic groups and this now reflects more accurately the make up of the local population

The percentage of adoptions of looked after children and young people has risen significantly from 7.9% to 11.2% which is very good. However, performance in achieving a placement within 12 months of the decision to adopt has dipped significantly from 68% to 50%, which is lower than both the national average and in similar councils. This is due primarily to the make up of the cohort. The council's own audit indicates these are children and young people who have very complex needs, are sibling groups or are older young people who are harder to place, and for whom it takes considerably more time to identify placements.

Child protection continues to be good overall. The number of referrals of children and young people in need leading to an initial assessment remains high and historically has been better than nationally and in similar councils. There continues to be very good performance in relation to repeat referrals to social care. All initial assessments are completed on time and at 85%, this represents good performance. There has been a significant improvement in the number of core assessments completed on time which, at 97%, is outstanding.

There is a strong emphasis on early identification, intervention and preventative services for families in need, delivered through integrated teams. This is having a positive impact on reducing the number of children and young people entering the child protection system. Re-registration rates are good and have improved since 2006 when performance was 'acceptable.' De-registration rates remain steady but more children and young people are staying on the register for over two years, with the percentage having risen from 4.8% in 2005/6 to 15.1% this year. The council understands the reasons behind this dip in performance, which is linked to a small number of enquiries that are complex, time consuming and require specialist reports. The percentage of section 47 enquiries leading to an initial child protection conference held within 15 days has risen from 13% to 20% but remains very low. The council is well aware of this and is taking steps to improve performance through various actions, including increasing capacity within the Independent Reviewing

Officer Group, increasing police availability and improving access to a range of venues for meetings. All children and young people on the register have an allocated social worker and all have their plans reviewed on time. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are safeguarded well and get good support from specialist service. There is good and improving access to respite care. Over 90% of these children aged 14 to 18 have a transition plan for managing their move to adult services and into independence.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board is well established and has a clear focus on ensuring staff have access to up to date procedures and training and that it is in a position to manage the new wider safeguarding agenda. Good arrangements are in place for the safe recruitment of staff and for managing allegations against professionals.

### **Area for development**

- Increase the percentage of section 47 enquiries leading to an initial child protection conference and held within 15 days.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

**Grade 3**

### **Summary of strengths and areas for development**

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. An improving trend in attainment at all key stages has been maintained and is above national averages and similar authorities.

Standards in Key Stage 1 remain high for reading, writing and mathematics and are above national averages. Standards in Key Stage 2 dipped slightly in 2006 but remain above national averages and the trend of improvement is good against similar authorities. Pupils attain well against the Level 4 thresholds but the progress of higher attaining pupils is not as good. Intensive support by the authority has reduced the number of schools below floor targets in English and mathematics. There has been an improvement in Key Stage 3 standards with mathematics and science rising by three points. English fell back slightly, resulting in standards that are above national averages and in line with similar authorities. Key Stage 4 results continue to rise, with 62 % of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades and 50% achieving A\* to C including English and mathematics, which is above the national average. The council's own evaluation of 2007 results shows a continued improving trend in all key stages.

The percentage of young people leaving care with five or more A\* to C grades is well above the national average and similar authorities, and rising. Overall, rates of progress are good, especially from Key Stages 2 to 4. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and there has been significant improvement for these pupils across all key stages. Some 30 schools have achieved inclusion accreditation.

Children are getting a good start to their education. An above average proportion of early year's settings are judged to be good or better in Ofsted inspections. Nursery provision in the authority is a strength with a higher proportion judged good or outstanding. The Tellus2 survey carried out with 10- and 11-year-olds showed that, on the whole, pupils enjoy their education and this is supported by school inspections where there are a high proportion of good or better judgements.

The proportion of schools causing concern is low. Two secondary schools were in categories; a secondary school has moved out of special measures into a notice to improve and another school has had their notice to improve removed. However, in the primary sector, where there were no schools in categories, two have been placed in special measures. Both of these schools were known to the authority and already subject to amalgamation or federation proposals. The authority has a larger than average number of primary schools with surplus places and they have developed extensive proposals to reduce these over two years.

The behaviour, attitudes and attendance of children and young people are good. The amount of unauthorised absence in secondary schools continues to fall and primary school attendance continues to be above national averages. The rate of permanent exclusions in schools has declined, although there has been a slight rise in the number of fixed term exclusions in secondary schools mainly due to new procedures for managing permanent exclusions being trialled by the authority. There are very low numbers of pupils who are educated other than at school and although the authority has improved the percentage who receive 20 hours of tuition to 50% this remains in the worst quartile.

### **Areas for development**

- Increase attainment for higher ability pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Increase the number of children and young people educated other than in school who receive more than 20 hours of tuition a week.

## **Making a positive contribution**

**Grade 3**

### **Summary of strengths and areas for development**

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. There is very good involvement of children and young people in making decisions about services provided for them across education, social care and health. The involvement of the Youth Assembly in meetings at a strategic level is outstanding. All secondary schools participated in the 2006 UK Youth Parliament Elections and over 18,000 votes were cast. In the Tellus2 survey young people said they had had opportunities to vote and be involved in charity work. The Youth Assembly has developed many innovative initiatives to improve information to young people about sexual health issues across the region. The appointment of two Youth Engagement workers to oversee the development of active youth councils in each of

the local areas has proved effective and young people are trained to assess bids for funding to create more things to do and places to go in the region.

Information and advice provided for children and young people and their families by the council is very good. The online information service is well used and feedback from families and children and young people who have taken part in the councils many initiatives is positive. The council has targeted traveller families and those moving into the area from Eastern Europe, as well as recreation and leisure activities for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, all of which have been well received. There is a free leisure facilities passes scheme for looked after children and young people, carers and their families which is well used. The council has signed up to the Every Disabled Child Matters charter.

The work of the Youth Inclusion Support Service is having a positive impact in reducing the risk of offending among children and young people and there is a 15% reduction in first time entrants to the Youth Justice system. The council is engaging many young people to reduce anti-social behaviour through the Positive Activities for Young People Initiative. Young people have been trained to lead and deliver the Youth Challenge and Youth Opportunities Funds, targeting activities that have widened the scope available to young people. There is also a commitment to targeting young people who live in rural and deprived wards to develop their own initiatives. The proportion of young people involved in making a positive contribution to their local communities is good given the rural nature of those communities.

However, the number of looked after children and young people with final warnings and/or reprimands has significantly increased over the last year, mainly due to a small group of young people who have entered the system who were already known to the Youth Offending Team. Similarly the target for the number of looked after children and young people who communicated their views to statutory reviews was not met. This was in part due to the tragic death of the key lead worker.

### **Areas for development**

- Reduce the amount of looked after children and young people who require final warnings or reprimands.
- Increase the amount of looked after children and young people who communicate their views at statutory reviews.

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**Grade 3**

### **Summary of strengths and areas for development**

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. Strong corporate parenting promotes the economic well-being of looked after children and young people. The council has plans to ensure that they have opportunities to access jobs and apprenticeships with the council. The number of young people who stay in education, employment or training is well above that in similar authorities. Similarly, high numbers of care leavers settle successfully into

suitable accommodation provided by the council and other partners. Good partnership working with Connexions helps ensure continuity of targeted and personalised support for care leavers, all of whom have plans in place.

There are good opportunities for vocational education, and partnership working between schools and colleges is well established. The council has been particularly successful in developing the new diploma gateway with five submissions accepted. There is a comprehensive on-line prospectus which has been extensively trialled across the authority and children and young people receive good advice and guidance about career development. Participation rates in Levels 2 and 3 are the highest in the region at 85%, and attainment at Level 2 is improving quicker than the national trend to 71.2%. Achievement at Level 3 has improved, but the council is aware that more curriculum options are needed so that all young people choose to complete their education in East Riding. The success rate for work based learners is improving faster than the national rate, although the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is decreasing year on year and is below that nationally. The proportion of young people not engaged in education, training or employment (NEET) has risen marginally over the last year but numbers are still very small. The council has been proactive in diverting resources to identify those at risk of becoming NEET and the targeted strategies to keep them in education, training or employment have been successful.

### **Areas for development**

- Increase the opportunities for work-based learning for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Increase the attainment of those young people who continue to Level 3.

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

**Grade 3**

### **Summary of strengths and areas for development**

The council has good capacity to improve its services for children and young people. There is a strong culture of performance management and quality audits. Areas for development identified in the 2006 annual performance assessment have been tackled successfully. A new Director of Children's Services has been appointed and there are effective interim arrangements. Capacity has been increased with the creation of a new post of Assistant Director for Children's Services which frees up more of the Director's management time for strategic management. There is effective leadership across all partners and from within the wider council to further improve outcomes for children and young people. There is a clear strategic direction for the delivery of children's services and priorities for children and young people have the agreement of partner agencies. The local authority has built on the good progress achieved as a Children's Pathfinder Trust and the strong commitment to collaborative working. The review of the Children and Young People's Plan sets out clearly where there have been improvements in outcomes and where there is still

work to be done. There was wide ranging consultation on the review, particularly with children and young people, and their views have helped to shape priorities.

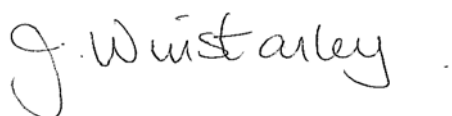
There is a strong commitment to inter-agency and joint working, and the establishment of the Virtual Integrated Management Team has strengthened the partnership's aim to deliver joined up services and to commission them at both a strategic level and local level. Some progress has been made towards pooling budgets and in developing contract monitoring arrangements. Work has been done to better align agency and service boundaries across localities. Action plans have been developed within localities to support the commissioning and delivery of services to meet local needs. Good progress is being made in implementing the common assessment framework and information sharing arrangements.

There is good financial management and management of resources. Resources are well targeted to support service delivery. Strategies to deal with school surpluses have been implemented and are having a positive impact. Costs of services for children looked after by the council have remained higher than the national average and those in similar authorities. The council has taken steps to successfully reduce out of area costs, but in-house provision remains relatively high, due in part to the way in which costs are aligned to one children's residential care home. The level of spend on youth services is significantly lower than the national average, but the council has plans in place to improve this. The most recent Corporate Assessment graded the council as 3 Star and improving well, with use of resources a key strength. The council has reached Level 3 equality standard.

There is good capacity within the workforce. Vacancy levels are low. Within social care, where there was a significantly high turnover of staff in 2005–06, and a higher national turnover than the national average last year, vacancy levels have reduced. A good workforce strategy has been implemented and has resulted in retention rates improving.

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager  
Local Services Inspection