

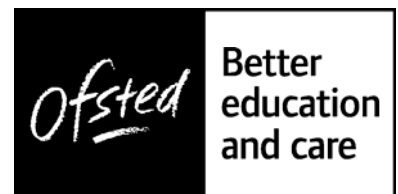
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Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr Jon Mager
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1 December 2005

Dear Mr Mager

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE
COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 6 July 2005 to assess the performance of 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 very good, particularly in the way that the council promotes healthy lifestyles and emotional well-being for children and young people across the county of East Riding. Health has a high priority within the council's strategic plan and key services work together to achieve positive outcomes. The health of looked after children, for example, has significantly improved from concerns highlighted by the Social Services Inspectorate in 2002; this improvement has been achieved through coordinated support from a dedicated team with direct links to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the Youth Offending Team (YOT), family placement, adoption and health. This multi-agency approach to addressing the health care needs of looked after children engages the children concerned and there are appropriate and flexible strategies to address key issues related to their health. There have been improvements, for example, in the take-up of dental care, specifically for fostered children.

The council rates of teenage pregnancy are lower overall than the national average, although there are known geographical areas where this presents more of a challenge. The multi-agency approach to addressing this has been successful and has included targeted work in these areas.

Although there can be delays in the initial assessment of young people who are misusing substances, subsequent access to the drugs action team has improved. A health worker has now been appointed to ensure that assessments take place swiftly.

The council's provision of social work staff for the CAMHS service has proved to be very effective in promoting the mental health of children and young people. One of the strengths demonstrated is the speed of response to mental health needs in terms of assessment and referrals for support.

The number of schools positively participating in the National 'Healthy Schools Standard' scheme is already high when compared to the national average, with all schools expected to be fully participating by March 2006. Young people are fully involved with, and helping to steer, this initiative. A large number of schools have also achieved 'Heartbeat' awards through offering healthy options in catering. Participation in sport is strongly encouraged through a very high-performing sports development service, and no schools inspected by Ofsted have received less than satisfactory assessments in this respect.

Staying safe

Outcomes in this area are good and meet the key areas for maintaining safety although there is a negative trajectory of performance in some key areas that needs to be monitored and addressed. The council is working with partners to ensure children and young people are provided with the safe environment to which they are entitled. Shadow children's trust arrangements are showing positive results, particularly in family support and child protection. The council's policies recognise what constitutes a safe environment and implementation is monitored consistently and rigorously.

Numbers of looked-after children have increased in line with national trends. Investment in in-house fostering services has resulted in increased numbers, although the strategies to address continuing large numbers placed with independent fostering agencies have yet to have a significant impact. Although continuing as good performance, disruptions in foster care placements in the first year have increased. A reduction in placement disruptions is necessary for those children who are placed with foster carers in the longer term.

Levels of referrals of children in need have reduced in response to effective multi-agency arrangements. Repeat referrals have also reduced, giving a further indication of the success of these arrangements. While there has been a small reduction in the percentage of referrals leading to initial assessments, the numbers leading to multi-agency core assessments have increased. Performance for the completion of initial assessments within time scales is good.

Initial child protection conferences have declined, and numbers of children whose names are included on the child protection register have fallen, representing positive multi-agency practice in this area. Positive steps have been taken in de-registration activities to ensure children's names are not included on the register for extended periods when this is not appropriate. All child protection reviews are conducted to timescales and all children concerned have an allocated qualified social worker. The council has used positively the outcomes of three serious case reviews conducted in the last year and has referred appropriately for national attention the issues in tracking suspected paedophiles when they move to council areas. The council is also putting into place the post-Bichard multi-agency arrangements for the management of sex offenders in the community.

The council's performance on adoption of looked after children has improved. Reduced performance in adoption placement within twelve months of the best interest decision has been affected by increased use of agencies for children who are difficult to place, the timing of adoption medicals, pressures on the health team and a significant increase in sibling groups with lengthy matching processes. The council has invested in additional administrative support posts following a best value review, and expects this, combined with tracking in line with new national adoption standards, to improve the position.

Performance has reduced markedly for the number of children with disabilities known to the council receiving social care services. This follows changes in council recording practice and the recent establishment of a separate disabled children's team from the longstanding position of a joint team with Kingston upon Hull council. Up to 75% of children with disabilities have a transitions plan. The council recognises there is more work to do to improve its overall performance in this area of work including the increased provision of direct payments to support carers.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are good. The overall quality in full and sessional early years provision is good, with very good support offered in nursery education to help children work towards early learning goals. Good initiatives are being taken to ensure that childminders are better prepared to meet the National Standards at registration and thereafter, even where rural aspects make it difficult to offer a high level of support.

Early years achievements continue through Key Stages 1 and 2, where attainment is above that achieved by statistical neighbours and in comparison to the national trend. Performance at Key Stage 3 is just above the same comparators and is rising. Some reasonable progress has been made as pupils progress from Key Stage 3 to 4, shown by a positive value added measure, but there is scope for improvement relative to the national picture.

Although the number of schools placed in formal categories of concern by Ofsted increased between 2003 and 2004, good progress has been made. All schools have received a suitable range and quality of support with, for example, a change in management for both of the pupil referral units having a specific impact. With each unit being managed separately, the level of oversight increased and one was removed from a formal category by Ofsted at the end of June 2005.

The percentage of children leaving care with passes in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) had been very high, but recent figures show a drop in this level of achievement, which may relate to a specific cohort. Demonstrable levels of integration between education and social services should ensure future progress in this respect. Indeed, strategic approaches to absenteeism and exclusions are positive features, as are the burgeoning activities and performance of the leaving care pathway team. The council's strong focus generally on health and recreational activities is replicated for children in care, all of whom have individual leisure plans.

One striking feature of this council is the positive effort made to promote enjoyment for children and young people with examples such as the 'Creative Contexts for Learning' and the 'Instrumental Music' pilot project. Although Creative Contexts is an example of a project which promotes multi-cultural aspects, the council's overall strategy for inclusion and integration could be further improved to ensure a more comprehensive approach. Services for disabled children are improving through the establishment of a relatively new specialist team and specific targeted initiatives such as the creation of a single sensory impairment service.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. Reductions have been made in the rates of re-offending across three of the four cohorts, but further offences committed by those offenders who have been released from custody remains high. The proportion of supervised young offenders in education, training or employment has dropped against the expected target and the national figures although the council is able to relate this to a specific small cohort of young people. Devised strategies, in any event, are well considered and should lead to improvements.

There is only slow progress to improve performance on final warnings, reprimands and convictions of looked after children, though the multi-agency early intervention strategy supports a planned localised pilot scheme to address this. There are examples of innovative practice to consult and support children placed for adoption and care leavers, but multi-agency approaches to consulting disabled children and to improve victim engagement with offenders have yet to develop fully.

There are some very good examples of different methods being used to obtain and collate the views of young people. Examples of this include the Youth Assembly, the

'Hear by Right' scheme, the 'Say Something' website and the children's services press conferences. This level of engagement and articulation has also been influential in relation to outcomes.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. Within early years provision, the increase in full day care places is in keeping with the national trend but the lack of growth in childminding and the minimal growth in out-of-school provision are both well behind the national average. The overall increase in childcare places is, therefore, not keeping pace with the national average but this reflects a fall in population and the meeting of local needs.

There are good Youth Service initiatives, such as the setting up of a breakfast club, which help to improve economic prospects for the young people involved. Youth workers have also provided appropriate information on further education and employment opportunities.

The inspection of schools judges sixth forms as effective. Attainment of 16 to 18 year olds has improved but remains below the national average and comparator authorities. The council has strengthened partnerships between schools and further education colleges through the use of the Excellence Fund. The commitment to services working together to support economic well-being is also evidenced through the work of the Learning Partnership, local area partnerships and the 14 to 19 advisory group. Involvement of care leavers in education, training or employment is not as good as expected and a strategy to improve this situation, particularly for disabled young people and young parents, has yet to reap dividends. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities should receive more support from the council's social care services to enhance their individual prospects.

There is progress on attainment for young people but the impact on outcomes for some initiatives has yet to be comprehensively measured.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of a strong health strategy by the council • strong 'Healthy Schools' scheme involvement by schools/multi-agency • number of schools achieving Heartbeat Awards – offering healthy options in catering • speed of response to mental health needs in terms of assessment and referral for support • participation in sport and leisure • improved access to the drug action team • action on teenage pregnancy. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dental checks for looked after children and access generally to health care for care leavers • initial assessment and support for young people who misuse substances.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decline in initial child protection case conferences and correlation with establishment of multi-agency family support services • appropriate levels of child protection register de-registration activity • all children on the register have an allocated qualified social worker and all have had appropriate review conferences • core assessments are completed quickly which reflects enhanced multi-agency working • positive response to regulatory findings (fostering and children's homes) • family support and children with disabilities team. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preventing children having to be looked after • performance on children looked after for four or more years who were in foster placements, for more than two years • best interest decisions on adoption • children with disabilities receiving a service • council's performance on ethnicity.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nursery education • the quality of early years provision, specifically in relation to full and sessional day care • educational attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value added measure for transitions between Key Stage 3 and 4 • the number of schools in formal categories of concern • strategy for the promotion of racial equality

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general attendance in schools • support for enjoyment in schools • strategies in place to address weaknesses identified by council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • absenteeism among looked after children.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general engagement of young people and their participation in decision-making • reduction of the number of first-timers in the youth justice system • East Riding Youth Assembly • target strategy for final warnings, reprimands and convictions of looked after children. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rate of re offending of those released from custody • supervised young offenders in education, training and employment • final warnings, reprimands and convictions of looked after children • consultation and participation of children with disabilities • victim engagement • reducing the rate of offending of children who are looked after.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth service initiatives to improve economic well-being • overall effectiveness of sixth forms. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engagement of all care leavers in employment, education and training with particular attention to young parents and disabled young people • the percentage of children with disabilities in need who receive support from social services • overall attainment of 16 to 18 year olds.

Service Management

Shadow children's trust developments are positive, including the introduction of performance measures for the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes and a joint preventative strategy. Social care budgets for children's services have increased but remain below England averages. Looked after children placement costs have increased, and this is explained as a temporary position with the introduction of a revised payment scheme to support recruitment of more in-house foster carers with some success from targeted local initiatives. There is a range of approaches to harness the views of children with consequent potential adjustment to policies and practice, but approaches to diversity do not appear to support fuller integration.

Staff turnover and recruitment/retention difficulties may affect capacity to sustain performance and develop services, and these are likely factors in slow progress on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 and post-qualifying awards (PQ1) staff training, though there is now a corporate strategy to address issues generally.

Areas for exploration in the Joint Area Review

Being healthy

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

- CAMHS performance — evaluation of the outcomes from the new quality compliance system and an assessment of the feedback from service users.

Enjoying and achieving

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

- integration of care and education for looked-after children.

Making a positive contribution

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

Children and young people who are looked after are helped to make a positive contribution:

- multi-agency engagement to address the offending behaviour of looked after children.

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution:

- development of services for children with disabilities.

Economic well-being

Children and young people who are looked after are helped to achieve economic well-being.

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to achieve economic well-being:

- impact of strategies to address the engagement in employment, training and education of the cohort of young parents and children with disabilities amongst care leavers.

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: East Riding of Yorkshire 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.	3
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	3
The council's overall 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