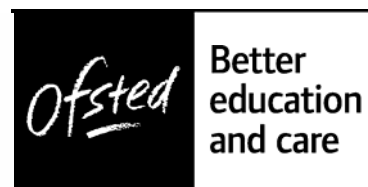




Making Social Care  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Mr Hawker

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY 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 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**

Overall outcomes for the area are good. The authority has restructured its services using data provided by a recent health-related behaviour study. Rates of smoking and alcohol use among children and young people are lower than national averages. The health of children in care who are looked after locally is well managed and immunisation levels for looked after children have risen to 90% from an intake of 30%. However, the health needs of children placed out of the area remain a concern. The authority has recently established protocols with adjacent authorities to ensure all health checks for looked after children (LAC) are completed on time. However, it is too early to measure the impact of this new initiative. The authority is reducing incidences of teenage pregnancy overall, although the rates are slightly above national averages and those for looked after children remain high. Good multi agency support is helping to reduce substance misuse. The identification, assessment, intervention and treatment of young offenders by the youth offending team (YOT) are very effective. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provision is well staffed, although the authority is reviewing its service in response to the public health statistics which indicate a greater level of need. Through the collaborative work between the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and its other services for substance misuse and looked after children, the authority's preventive strategies are effective for those children and young people known to it.

Overall, a good range of activities and programmes are offered to young people including, sport, music, art, outdoor education, health education and volunteering. Performing arts enjoy a national profile. School governors are actively involved in developing healthier schools.

## **Staying safe**

Outcomes for the area are good and improving. Comprehensive social work practices are in place to protect and safeguard children. The authority has given high priority to safeguarding children and young people. The local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) is well regarded and has produced a three-year children and young person's safety strategy linked closely to the CRDP strategy. The numbers of looked after children are falling and children in care are well supported through permanence planning and the greater choice in matching opportunities within the fostering and adoption service. The authority has good adoption and fostering services. The placement stability figures are improving but short term stability progress is slow.

The strategy to improve the outcomes for children in need is effective.

In response to the high levels of domestic violence in the area and its effect on children and young people, the authority has been pro-active in targeting services appropriately. A multi-agency programme has successfully prevented high numbers of children in need being placed in care. Similarly, Family Group conferences have helped families to remain together.

The authority is introducing Family Centres to manage services for children in need. The Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) have successfully transferred over 350 cases to the Family Centres and this is having a positive impact in reducing the current high levels of cases held by the DAT staff. However, DAT social workers continue to carry higher workloads than statistical neighbours, indicating a lack of vetting between referral and assessment stages and leading to delays in the allocation of cases. The appointment of a specialist advocacy worker for disabled children means they can voice their opinions and concerns effectively. The authority provides guaranteed support to young people not in mainstream education. It has made good progress in addressing recommendations arising from the Ofsted and SSI inspection in 2004.

All children and young people on the child protection register are allocated a named social worker and 70% of looked after children have a named qualified social worker. The authority believes there are robust supervision arrangements for those children who do not have an allocated qualified social worker. All non-social work qualified staff are involved in a staff development programme that includes child protection training, and many progress to a social work qualification.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area are good. The overall quality of early years provision is good and the rates of imposed actions following inspection are very low. Children are supported well in meeting their early learning goals. The authority supports high numbers of three to four year olds taking up early learning places and the proportion of black and minority ethnic children exceeds that of the local population.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national averages for reading and mathematics, although writing is slightly below national averages. Attainment at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 is in line with national averages and improving. The proportion of young people achieving 5 or more GCSE or equivalent qualifications are in line with the national average, but lower than some comparable authorities. However, the number of looked after children achieving 5 or more GCSE qualifications has substantially improved and is above the national average. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress.

The number of pupils currently excluded from schools is below the national average and the authority's re-integration strategy is effective, with the proportion of pupils receiving alternative tuition below the national average. Authorised absences in primary schools and unauthorised absences in secondary schools have been above national averages, but provisional data for 2004-05 show improvements to about the national averages.

Schools are given comprehensive guidance and good support for self-evaluation. They are closely monitored and challenged. Intervention to address under-performing schools is now good. For example, since 2003 no schools have been placed in formal categories of concern by Ofsted.

Close links with the Learning and Skills Council and providers, has led to improved participation rates in post 16 education and training. The authority's has a clear strategy to improve its special educational needs provision. The focussed support for minority groups, such as bullying and the traveller education service, is of high quality and diverse. The authority provides an adequate youth service. The level of resource it makes available to the youth service is insufficient. However, the service has been able to maintain a full range of activities by obtaining high levels of external funding. The authority considers play to be an integral part of child development and a play strategy is in place. Consultation with parents ensures that provision meets individual needs.

## **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are good. The YOT works effectively with partners, such as New Deal and the Children's Fund, to provide a good range of preventative activities. It is held in high regard by the Children and Families Community Advise Support Service (CAFCAS). Rates of re-offending are below the national average and reducing. The rate of offending by looked after children remains consistently low in relation to national averages and statistical neighbours. The council's approach to preventive and early

intervention services is underdeveloped. The authority intends that a priority for the Children's Trust will be to address this area of weakness.

There are a range of effective measures in place to support transition from early years through to post 16, including early years to school and primary to secondary transition plans. Children and young people are positively encouraged to contribute to the development of the service. For example, young people were involved in the production of video aids to encourage young people with disabilities and communication difficulties to participate in their reviews. Young people were also involved in the setting up, design and implementation of a website for young people.

The authority has an effective system to engage with young people placed outside its area through its independent visiting scheme. Young people are also engaged in service reviews and redesign processes. In a joint project between the authority's Children's Fund and the Scarman Trust, children from socially excluded services can access funding to develop projects within their own communities to meet their needs. At least 50% of the panel which decides on funding are children and young people aged eight to thirteen. Twenty-five projects were funded in 2004/05. The Children's Fund 'Can Do' project has received national recognition and its evaluation by children and young people showed that they had developed their ability to interact positively with others. The Children's Rights service is currently located within the authority but plans are being prepared for future arrangements under which the service will be commissioned from a suitable voluntary sector organisation.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

Outcomes in this area are good. The authority has effective transition plans for looked after young people and children with disabilities to help them to move into adult life. For example, the proportion of looked after young people entering post 16 education, employment and training is above the national average. The authority continues to expand the use of direct payments to support care leavers and disabled young people and their families, in a variety of appropriate settings. A 'One Stop Shop' for those young people not in education, employment or training, helps match them with local employment opportunities with a particular focus on apprenticeships. Support for teenage mothers provided through the teenage pregnancy integration project has resulted in a high number of young parents returning to education, employment or training.

There are good examples of effective collaboration to extend the range of opportunities available both at Key Stage 4 and post 16. These include vocational GCSE and other vocational qualifications. The authority has worked closely with the LSC and post 16 education and training providers to analyse need and develop a joint strategy. There are also strong links with the Connexions service, youth development groups and local general further education and sixth form colleges to ensure that most young people, who are motivated to do so, can enter appropriate education, employment and training. A new sixth form centre, located alongside a school and sixth form college, is to open in 2006. It will provide specialist services for young people with disabilities or learning

difficulties. However, despite the recent introduction of new courses the range of post 16 programmes at entry level, level 1 and level 2 remains limited.

No school sixth forms have been judged by Ofsted to be inadequate since 2001. The average point scores of students entered for AS and A levels are below the national averages and those of its statistical neighbours. However, their performance compared with their qualification at the start of their course is good. The proportion of young offenders who are in education, employment or training is low.

The authority works closely with the housing department, local social landlords and voluntary organisations to provide a range of flexible accommodation for care leavers. A high number of young people are accommodated in appropriate settings. Following consultation, every care leaver has a pathway plan, and there is a range of provision to support young people leaving care.

## SUMMARY

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for improvement</b>
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the under 19 substance misuse service</li> <li>• initiatives to reduce conception rates for under 16s and under 18s</li> <li>• effective support by YOT in identifying, assessing, access to early intervention and treatment for young offenders</li> <li>• LAC fast track therapeutic intervention project</li> <li>• high immunisation rates for LAC</li> <li>• engagement of school governors in the health of children</li> <li>• low smoking and alcohol rates.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health checks for LAC placed outside the city</li> <li>• implementation of the CAMHS review and monitoring evaluation processes</li> <li>• strategies to address the high proportion of births to LAC.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• child protection procedures and a well regarded inter-agency ACPC</li> <li>• the multi-agency programme for children at high risk</li> <li>• high placement rates for young LAC in foster placements or placed for adoption</li> <li>• well managed and effective fostering and adoption services, with comprehensive support services</li> <li>• specialist advocacy worker for disabled children</li> <li>• effective Family Group Conferences</li> <li>• good support for young people out of school.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high workloads among DAT.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proportion of care leavers with 5+ GCSE's A*-C</li> <li>• effective reintegration of pupils receiving alternative tuition into school</li> <li>• improving post-16 education participation rates</li> <li>• effective SEN provision</li> <li>• well supported and effective early years provision with high take up by 3 and 4 year olds</li> <li>• good quality education provision 5-16 through effective monitoring, challenge and intervention</li> <li>• wide range of fora for young people to participate in service design, recruitment in a range of settings.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• educational attainment of LAC</li> <li>• proportion of young people achieving 5+ GCSE's A*-C.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunities for children from socially excluded areas to develop projects within their own communities</li> <li>• good quality childcare provision</li> <li>• young people’s involvement in developing the service</li> <li>• low and reducing rate of re-offending</li> <li>• low offending rates of LAC</li> <li>• the impact of measures to support transition</li> <li>• participation of young people in service design and delivery.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children’s rights service</li> <li>• impact of young people’s involvement in service.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support for teenage mothers</li> <li>• post-16 education/training needs of area well analysed and joint strategy developed</li> <li>• post-16 SEN education centre and good quality SEN provision</li> <li>• good support to help schools broaden curriculum at KS4</li> <li>• high proportion of LAC in EET.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the range of post-16 programmes at entry level, levels 1 and 2</li> <li>• below average point scores at GCE AS/A level for pupils in school sixth forms</li> <li>• low proportion of young offenders in suitable EET</li> <li>• low proportion of children in need with disabilities receiving a service.</li> </ul>

## Service management

The authority’s children and families directorate demonstrates strong leadership both operationally and politically. The authority has a well-managed strategy to complete the transition to a Children’s Trust and is actively engaged with parents and young people to inform the development of its services. The Children’s Trust has a clear plan that encourages innovation and partnership working, but some actions are too new for their impact to be measured. The authority has a comprehensive planning process based on detailed analysis of needs, with national objectives linked to local needs and team planning. It is beginning to use better systems of data collection to inform performance management. The authority has effective financial management control, particularly concerning the provision for local looked after children, with the numbers of looked after children steadily declining. Good use of funding streams enhance the authority’s ability to invest in imaginative and creative service development. The authority is aware that if it is to continue to deliver its good provision it will need sustainable long term funding.

The authority has addressed difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff in key posts effectively through a variety of incentives. For example, a support and training programme has led to low turnover and absenteeism of permanent social workers and teachers.

There are effective partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector and statutory sectors. For example, monthly meetings of the voluntary sector and primary care trust forum include joint training opportunities.

Despite its actions to improve attendance in primary and secondary schools, authorised absences in primary schools and unauthorised absences in secondary schools remain above national averages. The proportions of primary and secondary schools with surplus places are above both the national and statistical neighbour averages. The authority's funding for the youth service is insufficient. The youth service can only maintain its full range of services through high levels of additional funds from external sources.

The authority has a good understanding of its strengths, which are identified in the self assessment. However, the self assessment tended to be more narrative than analytical.

## **Areas for exploration in the joint area review**

### **Being healthy**

*Looked after children's health needs are addressed:*

- Looked after children out of city.

*Healthy lifestyles are promoted for children and young people:*

- the work of the YOT to reduce substance misuse.

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

- CAMHS – response to high level of mental health needs.

### **Staying safe**

*Children and young people are provided with a safe environment.*

*The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:*

- the effectiveness of the authority's strategy to move into early interventions and impact of family centres
- provision for diverse groups.



## **Enjoying and achieving**

*Early years provision promotes children's development and well-being and helps them meet early learning goals:*

- children centres.

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

- attainment of boys at all Key Stages.

*Educational provision is made for children who do not attend school:*

- success of alternative tuition provision and reintegration.

*Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to enjoy and achieve:*

- SEN provision.

## **Making a positive contribution**

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

- case studies on impact of young people's involvement
- the involvement of young people in determining the development of the children's centres.

## **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:*

- range of post-16 provision
- support for teenage mothers.

## 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: Brighton and Hove City Council

Areas for judgement	Final judgements <sup>1</sup>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	<b>3</b>
The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	<b>3</b>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	<b>3</b>
The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people	<b>3</b>

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### 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