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Making Social Care
Better for People



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1 December 2005

Dear Mr Carriline

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF CITY OF BRADFORD COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 14 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

Outcomes for children are variable, but the authority makes a good contribution towards promoting and improving children's health through its separate and joint social care and education functions. However, the authority recognises that much has still to be achieved in an increasingly challenging environment.

Promotion of healthy life-styles begins in the early years with family focused initiatives such as SureStart programmes and social services family centres. Positive parenting schemes in 2005-06 are to be delivered in all family centres and children's centres. Neo- and ante-natal provision provides support within community facilities for families with infants born to drug-using parents. There are established and developing partnerships between key services, which are dealing effectively with children's and young people's health needs. For example, the youth service provides health promotion sessions to young people in partnership with health services.

Although the infant mortality rates remain well above national averages, there is a coordinated strategy to analyse and address needs, which will culminate in a published report by the Infant Mortality Commission in December 2005. Data show that teenage pregnancy figures continue to decline at a significant rate and are now below the national average. The proportion of schools participating in the national healthy schools standard is below target and additional funding has been allocated to accelerate the programme through a contract variation with education Bradford. There is effective

monitoring of the health needs of looked after children. As a result these are met well and indicators exceed national figures.

Bradford has invested significantly in staff resources for child and adolescent mental health services. While this is not an outcome indicator in itself, it does suggest increased activity in the area of meeting the mental health needs of children and young people. However, with respect to the authority's capacity to respond to referrals from the youth offending team, the council's performance is variable. Assessments are commenced promptly for those young people identified as having acute mental health needs, but young people who are identified as having non-acute needs are not being assessed consistently within prescribed timeframes.

Partnerships are well-established and involve the authority's sport and leisure service, the child and adolescent mental health service and the youth service working together to promote the health of children and young people. The authority has made extensive efforts to seek the views of children and young people through various means, including their Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament, which has influenced conferences on drug misuse. This is supported by their own website.

The health needs of looked after children are well monitored and there is effective encouragement of children and young people to participating in leisure facilities, preventive work with respect to drug and alcohol misuse and sex and relationships programmes. The looked after children health team won National Health Service awards in 2004 and 2005 in recognition of their good practice.

Staying safe

Overall the authority is providing good services to ensure safety and protection of children and young people. There are clear plans for managing looked after children within Bradford and this has been the result of the three year strategy which is now beginning to show good results. All child protection indicators show that Bradford is making the necessary arrangements to protect children. The authority ensures that children, who are seen because of child protection concerns, are effectively and promptly assessed, reviewed within prescribed timescales and managed well within their procedures. This represents good practice and compares very favourably with comparator authorities.

The authority has successfully reduced the number of the looked after children. In March 2004 Bradford was responsible for 858 looked after children and in May 2005 that had fallen to 834. Regulatory inspections show that the arrangements are in place to provide safe environments for looked after children and to protect them from abuse and exploitation. However, a high proportion of looked after children are placed with their parents. The authority needs to assure itself that this is an appropriate use of care orders. The authority reports a high rate of adoptions for looked after children. This is good practice and compares well with other authorities.

The 2005 Ofsted inspection judged the authority's support for health, welfare and child protection to be highly satisfactory as was educational provision for looked after children. In the 12 months up to September 2004 a high proportion of childcare providers had significant actions to address at inspection prior to registration. However, the authority provides good overall early years support for providers. It addresses concerns arising on initial registration and offers pre-registration guidance.

Bradford has established several means of engaging children and young people to help in designing services that effectively meet their needs. These have included children contributing to district strategies, participating on social care staff selection panels, commenting on partnership arrangements, meeting with members and electing their own district parliament. There is also the 'seen and heard' project, run by Barnardos and supported by the authority, that draws on the views of the looked after children and disabled children to improve systems and provision such as reviews, advocacy services, and the design of the new children's homes.

Nevertheless there are issues, which the authority needs to continue to focus on in order to assure that services continue to meet the needs of children and families. These include referral, re-referral and care management processes. The authority is aware that high re-referral rates may suggest several shortfalls. It has identified one of these factors being the high incidence of domestic violence and as a result has appointed a specialist worker within their child protection unit to liaise with the police on these matters.

Bradford's Young People's Scrutiny Commission has identified that bullying remains a key concern for children and young people. As a result clear anti-bullying strategies and approaches are being taken forward. Processes for monitoring racial harassment in schools have been improved and a significantly increased number of schools are reporting as required, with the rate of return increasing from 9% in 2003 to 100% in the autumn term of 2004.

Enjoying and achieving

A mixed picture of outcomes emerges from the available information and data. From a very low baseline improvements are evident in a number of areas, but there remains intransigent below average attainment in others. The challenges are significant and the contribution the authority makes to improving children's outcomes in this area is adequate overall.

In the recent Ofsted inspection of the local authority, the overall quality of early years provision was judged highly satisfactory with some strengths. Many children receive a good start to their education and although they generally achieve well in all areas of learning, their attainment remains below that expected in communication, language and literacy.

Test results at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with the national averages in reading and writing but below the national average in mathematics. Pupils' attainments are similar or better to those of statistical neighbours. At the end of Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 pupils' attainments are well below national averages and those of statistical neighbours. The gaps between Bradford's results and those seen nationally or in similar authorities are closing at all key stages, but the progress pupils make between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is below average. Pupils make the best progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, with rising trends and value added measures in line with other similar authorities. Progress between Key Stages 3 and 4 is below average. The authority has provided satisfactory support for national primary initiatives in English and mathematics and good support for the implementation of national strategies at Key Stage 3. Schools targeted for additional support have made more significant progress than others.

In its self-assessment the council reports that attainment of children in care has improved over the past three years, however, because the eligible numbers are low, comparisons against national statistics are unhelpful and can be misleading. There has been also variable performance with respect to the attendance of looked after children to school. Over 13% of looked after children did not attend school for 25 days or more in 2004-05 and this is higher than in the previous year in which it reported 10%. The authority reports it is committed to improving educational standards for looked after children. To this end it has funded schools for each looked after child, guaranteed their first choice of school and funded associated transport costs in order to help ensure improved attendance and attainment by this vulnerable group.

The attainment of minority ethnic pupils is below national averages, particularly at Key Stage 2. At general certificate of secondary of education (GCSE) level pupils of black and Indian heritage are performing in line with pupils in similar authorities but the results for Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage pupils are below the comparator group. However, considerable work has been undertaken to support pupils from minority ethnic groups and targeted activities have led to above average improvements in attainment for Pakistani heritage pupils. Underachievement of boys is most acute for secondary aged white boys from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Attendance rates are in line with the national figures at primary level but well below national averages at secondary level. Rigorous action by the authority means that improvement rates for authorised absence in both phases are above the national trends, although unauthorised absence remains a concern. Permanent exclusion rates have fallen and are in line with national averages. The authority has identified that rates of exclusion for Pakistani heritage pupils and pupils with special educational needs are low, and that they are highest for white United Kingdom heritage boys.

The proportion of schools placed in Ofsted formal categories of concern has been high over a number of years. Although numbers are still high in comparison with those seen

nationally or in similar authorities, the proportion has declined significantly in the past year. Recent carefully targeted initiatives to improve the level of support and challenge to schools, particularly secondary, are now having an impact.

The recent Ofsted inspection of the local authority reports that significant improvements have been made in analysing the progress of the lower attaining 20% of pupils. These pupils make better progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 than the authority's average but well below the national improvement rate for similar groups of pupils. Inspections of schools in 2003–04 show that three quarters of schools are making good or very good provision for children with special educational needs. The council has a clear policy of including special educational needs pupils in mainstream schools without the need for a statutory assessment process and the proportion of new statements issued for those children who are referred is half that of comparator councils.

There is strong support and commitment to provide a good range of recreational and voluntary learning opportunities for children and young people. This includes a large number of family learning and parental involvement initiatives, national opportunity fund projects for physical education and sports and regeneration projects supporting community and extra-curricular activities.

Close working between agencies, including social services and Education Bradford has led to significant improvements in outcomes for looked after children. The proportion of these children with Personal Education Plans is improving, as is school attainment. School absenteeism for looked after children remains a challenge for the authority with 13.4% absent from school for more than 25 days in the year. The authority is carefully monitoring the progress of these children and young people and is confident that this proportion will decrease.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are variable. Overall the authority plays a good part in enabling children and young people to make a positive contribution to services and the community. However, only some children for whom the authority has social care responsibility are served well.

The youth service undertakes a good range of work, such as citizenship projects, to encourage wider community engagement by children and young people and makes positive contributions to children's learning. It also runs projects specifically for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that support their inclusion in mainstream provision. The early years children's service provides good support and child care provision for teenage parents to enable them to continue their education or employment. The quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in most schools.

Bradford is very active in encouraging the participation of young people in community affairs such as the Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament, the Young People's Scrutiny Commission and 'Sound it Out' — an initiative being developed to create a 'panel' of up to 1000 young people who will be consulted by e-mail, phone or post on key issues. Many successful multi-agency initiatives also encourage young people to become involved in decision-making. Within social care services the vast majority of looked after children are able to ensure their views contribute to their statutory review. The authority also makes considerable effort to ensure that looked after young people and young people with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in and contribute to decisions about their care.

The authority's performance in preventing young people offending has been variable. For looked after children this problem is long-standing. Looked after children remain 3.4 times more likely to offend than young people generally. This is a broad indicator as it refers to the population of young people in West Yorkshire and not in Bradford only. Better working practices have been identified that involve the police and social services. Re-offending rates for the cohorts of young people who are tracked over periods of 24 months have been less than that of other authorities in the country. This is good progress and suggests the work of the youth offending team is effective.

Achieving economic well-being

Overall the authority makes a satisfactory contribution to this outcome although the achievements of children and young people varied.

For the 14 to 19 year old age group there is a well-articulated strategy developed in partnership with other agencies and offering a good range of vocational courses.

Improvement rates are good in a number of areas such as entry to higher education for 18–20 year olds and reduction in those not in education, employment or training, although there is still some way to go towards national and sub-regional targets. The engagement of care leavers in education, training and employment has fallen from that which was reported last year. Recent Ofsted inspections have judged two secondary schools and one pupil referral unit as ineffective overall.

In spite of an improving trend, the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment remains significantly higher than comparator and national averages. The 2005 Ofsted report also indicates that attainment at GCSE, while improving to a level above the national floor target of 38%, remains below average, as is the staying on rate at school for the post-16 age group. These are longstanding weaknesses but progress is being made in addressing them.

The authority reports that more people will be using direct payments as a means of purchasing and choosing their services and support but the take-up rate remained low. The reasons for this remain unclear.

SUMMARY

| Strengths | Areas for improvement |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • healthy lifestyles promotion through a range of partnerships • neo- and ante-natal provision and support in the community • information and services from the youth service, sports and leisure and youth offending team • health care arrangements of looked after children and disabled children. | <p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infant mortality rate. |
| <p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adoption of looked after children • good care management for both looked after children and children in the child protection system - includes referral, assessment, review and placement indicators. | <p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high frequency of accidents for young children aged 0 to 4 • re-referrals to social care of children and families within a 12 month period • high proportion of actions for child carers following registration • repeat incidents of children going missing • high proportion of looked after children placed with parents. |
| <p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of child care for three year olds • good support and commitment for recreational and learning opportunities • reducing number of schools causing concern • good support for children with special needs or learning difficulties once statements are issued • good range of vocational courses. | <p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attainment at Key Stage 2 and GCSE – particularly for children and young people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds • high levels of absenteeism amongst looked after children • demonstrate that the needs of all children with special educational needs are being met • education attainment of looked after children. |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for children and young people to participate in decision-making and shaping of the service they receive • vast majority of looked after children able to contribute their views to their reviews. | <p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high offending rates for looked after children • referrals from the youth offending team and promptness of responses from child and adolescent mental health team. |
| <p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well-articulated strategy for the 14 to 19 age group • good range of vocational courses • improvements with respect to entry to higher education for 18 to 20 year olds, reducing numbers of young people not in employment, education or training. | <p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct payments are not being used as a means of delivering services • participation rates for the post-16 year old group in education and training • staying on rates for post-16 at school • engagement of care leavers in education, training and employment. |

Service management

There are a number of strengths evident in the ambition, targeted investment, focused planning and rigorous performance management of the authority. These are reflected in improved outcomes in a number of areas identified in this letter. In addition, the capacity for further improvement in children’s social care is excellent. However, there remain significant risks to overall capacity that arise from contract funding issues. In spite of the fact that the authority has been successful in accessing additional funding sources amounting to in excess of £1.5 million, the long-term financial basis on which the education provision is based is uncertain and additional support is being sought. The potential impact of this uncertainty on sustained improvement is significant. Overall, therefore, the authority’s capacity to improve its services for children and young people is adequate.

The council has a clear vision and strategy for the development of its children services. The authority has strong leadership in children’s services, having brought together its services under one assistant chief executive who is supported by the directors for education and social services and the multi-agency change for children team. Of particular note is one focus of the group — that of developing a children’s workforce strategy in order to create opportunities for children and young people in Bradford.

There is a well-articulated strategy and vision for the social care services for children and families, which have recognised the difficulties and expense involved in paying for external placements and is beginning to show good results. The authority has been

successful in managing its social care budget, reducing the number of looked after children, reducing the reliance on external child placements, providing high quality residential care, running effective adoption and fostering services and effective care management processes for both looked after children and children in the child protection system.

Staffing indicators for both social care and education show a stable workforce with good investment in training and development for staff, reflecting a strong staff base from which to work. Performance management and information systems in Bradford, particularly in social care, are very effective.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Staying safe

Children and young people are provided with a safe environment:

- actions for child care providers following registration.

The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:

- referral and care management with particular focus on re-referrals within 12 months.

Enjoying and achieving

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

- sustainability of growth of full day care.

Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and to achieve highly:

- attainment of all groups of pupils.

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

- ascertain whether children who need particular support are receiving it, given the low proportion of new statements issued.

Making a positive contribution

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

- offending rates of looked after children.

Achieving economic well-being

Action is taken to ensure that 14-19 education and training is planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way, and to ensure that education and training (16-19) is of good quality:

- participation rates for post-16 in education and training.

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

CC: Kath Tunstall - Head of Services to Children, Young People and Families

APA final judgements 2005: Bradford Metropolitan District 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. | 2 |
| The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people. | 2 |
| The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people | 2 |

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 |