

26 November 2007

Ms Sharon Shoesmith
Director of Children and Young People's Service
London Borough of Haringey
48 Station Road
Wood Green
London N22 7TY

Dear Ms Shoesmith

2007 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

This letter summarises the findings of the 2007 annual performance assessment (APA) for your local authority. The judgements in the letter draw on your review of the Children and Young People's Plan, your action plan arising from the joint area review and the evidence and briefings provided by Ofsted, other inspectorates and relevant bodies. The letter comments on progress since the recent joint area review. 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

Haringey Borough Council delivers a good service for children and young people. Since the joint area review in 2006, the council has taken swift and measurable actions to tackle the recommendations in order to improve the life chances of young people. Most of the recommendations raised in the joint area review report are set within a time frame of six months and the progress made within this period is good. Good progress has been made in improving the outcomes for enjoying and achieving at Key Stage 2 and for 5+ A* to C at Key stage 4. The council's contribution to improving outcomes for being healthy and making a positive contribution remain good and its contribution to staying safe and achieving economic well-being, adequate at the time of the joint area review report, are now also good. Its contribution to enjoying and achieving is good.

Haringey's Children and Young People's Plan gives a comprehensive overview of the council's priorities and planned actions to bring about radical changes. The priorities, focused on regenerating deprived wards, lay a strong foundation on which to build and sustain improvement. For instance, the children's networks, a multi-disciplinary base, are used to promote better outcomes for children and young people. While it is too early to evaluate the full impact of all actions outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan, the council's ambition to ensure that changes are sustained is very high.

Being healthy

Grade 3

Summary of strengths and areas for development

The contribution of the council's services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. Two recommendations emerged from the joint area review.

For action in the next six months

- Ensure that young people who offend have prompt access to comprehensive CAMHS.
- Improve access to occupational therapy services.

Good performance identified in the joint area review has been maintained and good action has been taken to address these recommendations. A new appointment has resolved the difficulties in ensuring prompt access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for young people referred by the youth offending service. All young people referred in 2006 were assessed within five working days. Most young people who offend or who are referred with substance misuse needs also receive a prompt service. The council has made very good progress towards providing a comprehensive CAMHS, including for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. On-going work to ensure performance on waiting times is maintained is having a positive impact.

A reorganisation of the service and new appointments has improved access to occupational therapy services which are now good. Good progress is being made in developing more integrated services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for example through developing the Early Support Programme, although Lead Professional arrangements for this group are not yet in place.

Infant mortality rates remain higher than nationally, although they are broadly in line with national benchmark figures. Local data suggest some reduction in the rate in 2006. An action plan is now in place which will target teenage mothers and promote early booking of antenatal care. Good progress is being made in reducing smoking during pregnancy and promoting breast-feeding. Good progress is also being made in reducing rates of teenage conception. These peaked in 2002 but effective action since then has meant rates have fallen faster than in similar authorities and much faster than nationally. Very good action, including raising attainment and aspirations, has ensured low rates of conception among looked after young women and care leavers. Action is now being taken to reduce the number of care leavers who become teenage fathers. The health needs of looked after children and young people are met well, including very good access to CAMHS.

Staying safe

Grade 3

Summary of strengths and areas for development

The contribution of the council's services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. Four recommendations emerged from the joint area review.

For immediate action

- Take appropriate action to clear the backlog of cases within the referral and assessment services.

For action in the next six months

- Improve the recruitment and retention of social workers in all teams.
- Ensure that the work of the referral and assessment services is consistent so that all children and young people are assessed in a timely way in order that their needs can be met.

For action over the longer term

- Improve transition arrangements for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including the handover to adult care services.

Good action has been taken to address these recommendations and there have been improvements in all aspects of social care provision for children. Prompt action ensured the backlog of cases within the referral and assessment services was cleared. Referral and assessment arrangements have been redesigned and one borough-wide service now ensures consistency. Timescales for completing initial assessments have improved and are now better than statistical neighbours and nationally. Numbers of re-referrals have reduced and are broadly in line with national figures and those of statistical neighbours. Timescales for completion of core assessments have also improved significantly and were acceptable for 2006/7 with local data showing further improvement since.

The percentage of vacancies for children and families posts has reduced and is now below that of statistical neighbours. Effective recruitment strategies have resulted in some improvement in the numbers of permanently employed qualified social workers but further improvement is needed.

Transition arrangements for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have improved with further action planned. The number of young people with transition plans has increased to over 90% and quality assurance systems are now in place. There is closer working between children and adult services and the new protocol being developed will improve this further. There have been improvements in assessment processes for children with disabilities and in arrangements for allocating

short breaks and other services, which are supported by greater integrated working for this group of children and young people.

The number of children on the child protection register continues to decrease and is now in line with statistical neighbours. Thorough quality assurance systems are in place and the number of re-registrations demonstrates effective planning for these children. The number of children who were deregistered after being on the register for more than two years increased last year due to a small number of larger sibling groups and local data suggest this will reduce again this year. All children on the child protection register have an allocated social worker and all reviews are held to timescale.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board continues to demonstrate good ownership of the broader safeguarding agenda. There is good partnership working with the Metropolitan Police including effective initiatives to reduce domestic violence and to engage faith communities in safeguarding children. There has been good participation of children and young people in planning new initiatives to reduce the incidence of bullying and a renewed focus on improving community safety and tackling violent crime.

Services continue to make a good contribution to improved outcomes for children and young people who are looked after. The number of looked after children continues to fall in line with the trend for statistical neighbours. Placement stability is good and there has been a good increase in the numbers of children looked after by family and friends. There has been an increase in the number of children adopted from care with further improvement expected this year including appropriate use of Special Guardianship Orders. Timescales for adoption are very good, demonstrating effective care planning for these children. All looked after children and young people are allocated to a qualified social worker and 92% of their reviews are held to the agreed timescale.

Enjoying and achieving

Grade 3

Summary of strengths and areas for development

The contribution of the council's services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The joint area review highlighted two actions.

For action in the next six months

- Secure the momentum of improvement in standards and achievement at Key Stage 2.
- Increase the number of primary and secondary schools in which attendance is in line with the national average and reduce further the rate of absences of looked after children from school.

Following the joint area review, the council has continued to implement a wide range of intensive support strategies to raise achievement and standards at Key Stage 2.

Trends over time show steady improvement in all three subjects, and in English and science at a faster rate than nationally and in similar authorities. In 2006, standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 2 were higher than those achieved in the previous year, though still well below those achieved nationally.

Standards at Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 are also below and often well below national averages and the success of actions to close that gap is variable. At Key Stage 1 and for 5+ A* to C GCSE grades, the rate of improvement over the last five years is good when compared to national data and to similar authorities. However, achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 and the proportion of young people achieving 5+A* to C, including English and mathematics, remains below similar authorities and that found nationally. The proportion of young people leaving school without any qualification remains higher than in similar authorities. The gap in performance between schools in the east and west of the borough by the end of Key Stage 4 has narrowed.

In 2006, outcomes for looked after children at age 16 were above national averages, though well below that of their peers. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieved well as did Black and minority ethnic groups, in particular those of Kurdish descent. Carefully selected programmes tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable groups contributed to this good progress. When compared to the national averages, value-added data indicate that the local authority is successful in building on the prior attainment of pupils, given their low starting points. Pupils' rate of progress from Key Stage 2 to 4 is good. Provisional results for 2007 show that the trend of improvement is being sustained in all key stages particularly at Key Stages 2 and 4.

There was a significant reduction in the numbers of schools below the floor targets in the primary phase; the authority successfully reduced by half the number of schools below because of English and by a third because of mathematics. All secondary schools are performing above floor targets. The numbers of schools in Ofsted categories of concern, though above similar authorities, has fallen significantly since 2005.

In early years settings, most children receive a good start to their education. Although they make satisfactory or better progress, the proportion reaching the early learning goals in the two main areas remains well below average. There has been improvement in developing children's basic skills and Ofsted inspection findings confirm that provision is good overall. The local authority is using an extensive range of programmes to improve outcomes; initiatives to assist parents and carers in helping their children achieve well include for example, the children's networks, specialist staff and the family support strategy. The council recognises that more needs to be done and is working closely with all settings in particular the private, voluntary and independent to improve capacity and provision.

Rigorous systems, including an escalation in legal action during 2005/06, have led to improvements in attendance rates, particularly in secondary schools. In 2006/07 the local authority marginally missed the targets set for primary schools. In comparison with similar authorities, attendance is average in secondary schools but unauthorised

absences remain above average in primary schools and for looked after children; actions to reduce it are unremitting. Good gains in the number of looked after children achieving 96% attendance impacted on their Key Stage 2 results and fully reflect the actions taken to improve their attendance.

Exclusions remain below those in similar authorities. Work to prevent exclusions has been further strengthened by the introduction of the managed moves protocol from September 2007, in preparation for the provision of full-time education from day six of a permanent exclusion.

The local authority has further extended its provision of wider opportunities for recreational, leisure and cultural activities through extended service schools, children's centres and the youth service, as well as enhancing the partnership between mainstream and supplementary and language schools. In addition, the linking of the sport and physical activity, open space and play strategies are supporting greater engagement for all young people in physical activity. Strategic mapping and planning of activities through children's networks together with development of the remit of the music and performing arts service are planned for 2007/8.

Areas for development

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress in early years and at the end of Key Stage 3.
- Increase the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics, and one or more A*-G grade.
- Increase the rate of attendance, particularly in primary schools.

Making a positive contribution

Grade 3

Summary of strengths and areas for development

The contribution of the council's services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good with some strong features. Three recommendations emerged from the joint area review.

For action in the next six months

- Ensure that children and young people are involved systematically in the strategic planning and evaluation of services that concern them.
- Improve the contribution of the youth service to voluntary learning provision for children and young people, particularly for those from vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups.
- Promote more creative ways for children and young people looked after and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to contribute to their reviews

and other key decisions, including promoting the use of the advocacy service by younger children.

The good performance in this area identified in the joint area review has been maintained and further progress has been made, including good action to address these recommendations. The council has made good progress with regard to involving children and young people in strategic planning and decision-making about services that affect their lives. The youth council has recently been established, as has representation at the Youth UK Parliament. Consultation and partnership work with schools and community organisations have ensured that all schools have a school council and there is full representation from the ethnically diverse population, including hard-to-reach groups.

Opportunities have been created to support the most vulnerable families and groups through the children's networks. Initiatives such as the Leading Parent Partnership Award, family learning, peer mentoring, the Early Birds Club for children with autism and seminars targeted at the Somali, African Caribbean and Turkish communities contribute to boosting children and young people's well-being. The council has commissioned action research to identify the impact of these initiatives on improving lives. These developments have led to children and young people being routinely involved with decision makers, including the local MP, and having opportunities to put forward their views on issues that affect them. For example, they have chosen to highlight issues around bullying and safety and are undertaking joint work with the Local Safeguarding Board. Although it is too early to evaluate the impact of this partnership work, evidence indicates that young people have been galvanised to tackle issues that affect their community. Children and young people have been empowered to take a leading role in the anti-bullying campaign and participate in a wide range of initiatives.

Sound progress has been made in increasing the contribution of the youth service to voluntary learning provision. In 2005/06, the participation rate was 29%, this more than doubled to 58% in 2006/07 and the council is on target to exceed the 2007/08 target. The council has ensured that its inclusion policy is understood and implemented through seeking the views of users. Additionally, it has worked well with supplementary and community language schools through the community organisations as part of its aim to raise expectations and increase participation from the wider community. These links are having a positive impact on the academic progress of Black and minority ethnic groups.

Good progress has been made in ensuring that children and young people who are looked after and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can contribute to their reviews and to key decisions that affect them. Altogether, 98% of children and young people who are looked after communicated their views to reviews, which is well above similar authorities and the national average. Good use has been made of Total Respect Training, which is enabling care leavers to have higher expectations and become mentors and advocates. The council's actions to involve children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been creative. For example work has been undertaken with special schools to ensure that children and

young people have access to the technical equipment to communicate their views, and specialist training for inclusion managers has been provided. The council is also working on creating play projects to involve this group of children and young people.

Good action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour of children and young people with a good range of diversionary activity in place, including the much improved youth service provision. There has been a good reduction in the numbers of first time entrants to the criminal justice system, which were below that in similar authorities for 2006, a downward trend that the council has sustained since 2005. Effective targeted work has reduced re-offending, for example only 3 out of 140 young people referred to the Youth Inclusion Support Panel committed further offences during 2005/06.

Achieving economic well-being

Grade 3

Summary of strengths and areas for development

The contribution of the council's services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. Two recommendations emerged from the joint area review.

For action in the next six months

- Improve the provision for young people post-19 with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

For action in the longer term

- Support access to child care provision for parents/carers with low incomes to improve their access to training and employment.

Good progress has been made through the 14-19 strategy in improving the provision for young people post-19 with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The council has adopted a collaborative approach with the College of North London (CoNEL), and other providers including the new sixth form centre, to focus on transition planning and an alternative curriculum. Students now have access to different pathways, including Entry Level and Level 1 courses, which include functional skills. Currently, 58 young people with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities are enrolled on the courses at the new sixth form centre and plans are in place to recruit more. A dedicated member of staff has been appointed to support this work.

A very good start has been made in enabling parents and carers with low incomes and other vulnerable groups such as teenage mothers and asylum seekers to access training and employment. Financial assistance and a multi-disciplinary approach, with a focus on early intervention through the common assessment framework, have improved the quality of provision available to families in the most deprived wards in the borough. Child care facilities linked to the children's centres now offer more

flexibility. The council's employment strategy provides training, advice and opportunities to work with employers as a means of improving parents' confidence, skills and knowledge about employment and training. Initial evaluations of the different facilities and programmes show that training events have been well attended and welcomed.

At the time of the joint area review, the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training were high and despite reductions in 2006/07, the trend remains well above similar authorities and national figures for virtually all ethnic groups. Ambitious targets linked to a range of initiatives are in place to reduce the numbers not in education, employment or training by 2010. The local authority acknowledges that more needs to be done; therefore, forward planning to reduce the high figures is a key priority of the Connexions service. Initiatives include identifying young people moving from employment, education and training to the not in education, employment or training group, prioritising the most serious cases for support and using the 14-19 strategy, as well as the restructured youth service to address not in education, employment or training levels across all services. In 2006, the not in education, employment or training average was comparatively low for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and average for teenage mothers.

The council's successful bid to pilot and offer vocational diplomas and functional skills from September 2007 means that young people will have access to a wider range of courses suitable to their needs. The new sixth form centre is planned to drive the council's 16-19 provision and inclusive policy. Currently, the proportion of young people choosing to pursue further education reflects the national average and similar authorities. The 2006 results for Levels 2 and 3 equalled the national average and that in similar authorities, showing significant improvement on the previous year's performance. Course retention rates match the national average. The council has met its target of 68% care leavers being in employment, education or training. However, there are insufficient employers to participate in work-based learning and, therefore, joint work is being undertaken with the local Learning and Skills Council to increase the numbers of young apprenticeships.

The council's priority to reduce homelessness is indicated in the significant reduction in temporary living accommodations. There has been a steady reduction in the numbers of young people in bed and breakfast but the proportion in hostels is higher than average and similar authorities. Social workers, Connexions advisers and housing professionals are working together to reduce the high figures.

Areas for development

- Consolidate partnership work in order to reduce the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training, in particular, the most vulnerable groups.

Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people

Grade 3

Summary of strengths and areas for development

The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people is good and its management of these services is good. One recommendation emerged from the joint area review.

For action in the next six months

- Ensure that all service and project plans contain outcome-focused targets and that lead responsibilities and resources are clearly identified.

Following the joint area review, the council has continued to develop its capacity to enhance the outcomes for children and young people. Action has been taken to ensure that the good practice demonstrated in the best service plans is extended to all. Nearly all action plans seen have measurable outcome targets.

There have been improvements in many and significant improvements in some areas of the council's provision for children and young people. Performance indicators show that actions taken by the council on its main priorities, early intervention, worklessness and regeneration, are having an impact on many outcomes. Educational performance has been sustained at Key Stage 2 and for five or more A*+ to C at Key Stage 4, and the local authority has used a range of initiatives well to challenge schools to drive improvement, ensuring that progress is faster than similar authorities and the national average.

The council has made good progress in setting up the children's networks. This multi-disciplinary approach has brought together a wide range of providers who work well collaboratively to target coordinated resources to the most vulnerable children and young people in the most deprived wards. The council makes very good use of the Common Assessment Framework to assess and identify needs and allocates a lead professional for children whose needs are assessed through this route. There is strong leadership and clear lines of accountability across the different services, supported by rigorous performance management. Budget management is well focused on the priorities for improvement and plans are in place to align budgets further across service areas. The council recognises that workforce development is incremental and requires further development. Currently, the focus is on multi-agency training to support the children's networks.

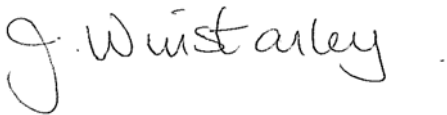
Good progress has been made on many of the council's priorities for education, health and social care and economic development. Further improvement in outcomes for children and young people will be driven through the council's 10 multi-agency areas for development with associated action plans, which will be monitored through the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan. Challenges remain in raising standards further in all schools, reducing the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training, workforce planning, and in making sure that the

well thought out interventions are used as planned to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

Overall, the council has demonstrated good progress in meeting the joint area review recommendations, achieved through a detailed and well monitored action plan, and has shown good capacity to maintain and improve further its services for children and young people.

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 that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager
Local Services Inspection