

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Joint Meeting of the Health And Social Care and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub -Committees
Date:	17 September 2003
Subject:	Review of certain learning disability services by the Audit Commission
Responsible Chief Officer:	Head of Community Care
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	All
Enclosures:	A. Copy of Audit Commission report and action plan B. Copy of Overview and Scrutiny Health and Social Care Sub-Committee report September 19 2002. C. Action Plan Update

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 This report updates the Joint Meeting of progress against the Audit Commission action plan submitted to the Audit Commission in July 2002, following their audit of some aspects of the management of services provided by the Harrow Learning Disability Team (HLDT).

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note current progress.

3. **Relevant Previous Decisions**

- 3.1 The Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub Committee received a copy of the report submitted to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub Committee on September 19, 2002 and requested that a joint meeting of the two committees be held to receive an update on progress on the action plan one year later.

4. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 This report is relevant to the Council's objective of improving the quality of health and social care in Harrow.

5. **Background Information**

- 5.1 As reported last year the Audit Commission was invited by the then Director of Social Services to review the response the Department was taking to contain expenditure on the residential and day care of people suffering from complex learning disabilities including disorders on the autistic spectrum and other cognitive disabilities. At the point of making the request, significant budget overspends in this area were being reported.

- 5.2 Further, performance on the national performance indicators suggested that Harrow was purchasing residential and nursing care at greater cost or more often than other outer London boroughs.
- 5.3 The purpose of the Audit Commission's review was to establish whether the HLDT was tackling these issues in the most cost effective manner, whilst maintaining appropriate professional standards and meeting its legal requirements. The review report was agreed in July 2002 and the action plan was submitted back to the Audit Commission in September last year. This completed the review and there has been no follow up by the Audit Commission since then. It has to be said that the review report did not as hoped address all the issues it was hoped it would.
- 5.4 Since the action plan was completed progress has been made in pursuing some actions but others are awaiting the outcome of a review being undertaken by the National Development Team, a Government sponsored independent agency, which promotes good practice in learning disability services. Although commissioned in the Autumn of last year due to reasons beyond the Council's control the NDT have severely delayed on the production of their review and at the time of drafting this report the NDT report had not been delivered. A verbal update on this will be given at the joint meeting of the Sub Committees. Other matters have also overtaken some of the proposed actions and these are referred to in the action plan update.
- 5.5 In the report to the Health and Social Care Sub Committee in September of last year, a summary of the strengths and weaknesses found in the Audit Commission review was identified. General progress on these issues is also dealt with in the attached action plan update.
- 5.6 It should also be noted that the HLDT is a co-located team with the services provided by the Harrow PCT. Although mandated to concern itself with that part of the HLDT for which the Council was responsible it was inevitable that the findings and recommendations would touch on areas that are the responsibility of the PCT. The responses to the action plan were framed in terms of those matters the Council was responsible for.

6. **Consultation**

- 6.1 The Audit Commission Report was considered by the Learning Disability Partnership Board, which has user and carer representation.

7. **Finance Observations**

- 7.1 There are no immediate budgetary implications arising from this report but the impact of the NDT report will need to be considered as part of this Council's review of the medium term budget strategy.

8. **Legal Observations**

- 8.1 No legal observations

9. **Conclusion**

- 9.1 Progress on the action plan agreed following the Audit Commission has been maintained although some proposed developments have either been delayed or amended as thinking about the future of the HLDT has progressed

10. **Background Papers**

10.1 None

11. **Author**

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