



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

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17<sup>th</sup> September 2004

Mr Paul Clark  
Director of Social Services  
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Dear Mr Clark

## **ANNUAL REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE**

Thank you for arranging our recent annual review meeting. This letter and report set out the Commission for Social Care Inspection's (CSCI) view of the performance of social services in your area during the last year and comment on improvements for the year ahead.

The report is intended to help the Council improve outcomes and the quality of service to service-users and carers. It is also intended to improve the prospects for improved performance ratings in the future.

In assessing performance, CSCI reaches judgements about performance against a set of standards and criteria, drawing on evidence from a number of standard sources. These include:

- the published PAF performance indicators and other statistical data up to 2003/04, plus data supporting planned targets for 2004/05;
- evidence agreed in the course of our monitoring meetings that have been formally recorded; and
- monitoring information from the Delivery and Improvement Statements completed in October 2003 and May 2004.

Details of the standards and criteria have been published, and are available from CSCI, or may be seen on CSCI's performance website. A summary of the evidence used has also been sent to you separately.

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The report is in two parts. The first is a summary of improvement recommendations that highlights the strategic issues for the Council. The second part summarises the strengths of performance over the last year, and the priorities for improvement in the year ahead. These are organised around six standards against which the Council is assessed. The annual review does not attempt to review all aspects of performance, but focuses on the main performance issues for which CSCI has current information.

The report will form part of the performance record for the Council, and will be published on the CSCI website in November. You are asked:

- to present it to an open meeting of the relevant executive committee of the Council, within two months of the date of this letter, and to inform me of the date on which this will take place;
- to make the report available to members of the public at the same time; and
- to copy this letter and report to the Council's appointed auditor, and to NHS and education partners.

Progress will continue to be monitored during the year through our usual processes, and a further annual review meeting will take place during 2005/06.

Performance (Star) Ratings will be confirmed in November, based on an assessment of overall performance using all admissible evidence. The evidence summarised in this letter will be used to help arrive at the rating, but may be updated where further evidence becomes available.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Corré  
Business Relationship Manager

cc. Chief Executive, Harrow Council

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**Performance Review Report for  
LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW  
Social Services: 2004**

***Summary of improvement recommendations***

The review of social services in Harrow has highlighted the following performance issues that need to be addressed over the next twelve months.

Further information about the standards against which Social Services are assessed is contained in the detailed report.

**Child  
and family services**

- the Council needs to ensure that more core assessments of children in need are completed to timescale.
- there is a need to address a number of issues concerning permanency planning for Looked After Children. This includes:
  - increasing the number of Looked After Children placed for adoption within 12 months of the best interest decision;
  - increasing the number of Looked After Children in foster placement or placed for adoption;
  - increasing the number of younger Looked After Children placed for adoption and in foster care; and
  - addressing the low numbers of children placed with family or friends.
- further work with partner agencies is needed to reduce the number of Looked After Children who are not attending school and who receive final warnings with regard to offences;
- issues identified in the Victoria Climbié Self-Audit and which are still outstanding need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

## **Services for adults and older people**

- the Council needs to improve the range and accessibility of services designed to promote the independence of service users who are older people, people with disabilities and people with learning disabilities. In particular, it needs to significantly increase the number of people receiving Direct Payments;
- the Council needs to continue to address the recommendations made in the social services inspection report of people with a physical and sensory disability conducted in November 2003, which will support modernising services to promote independence and provide service users with greater choice;
- further refinement of performance management arrangements are needed especially the integration of performance data, costings and service plans;
- the Council needs to reduce the waiting times for assessments (D55) which failed the Key Threshold; and
- the Council needs to increase the numbers of clients receiving a review of services (40).



## **Performance Review Report 2004**

### **LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW**

#### **SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

The Council has produced a comprehensive strategic plan for Children's Services that has gained widespread ownership throughout the People First Directorate and with partner agencies. This has eight core objectives; Safe and Secure Care, Protection from Abuse and Neglect, Life Chances of Children in Need, Life Chances of Children Looked After, 16+Year Olds In and Leaving Care, Children With Disabilities, Referral and Assessment and Involving Users and Carers

The plan summarises each objective and has clearly defined aims, objectives, and expected outcomes. Responsibility for delivery is clear, as are timescales. In addition, the Council reports that it has established a further nine priorities for Children's Services, as follows; Safeguarding and Protection, Diversity, Accessibility, Performance Management, Workforce Development, Participation, Commissioning Strategy, Integration of Children with Disabilities and Life Chances for Looked After Children. Management information has been improved; key data is published on a monthly basis for Managers, Members and stakeholders on the basis of the Balanced Scorecard model. The capacity and sustainability to achieve intended improvements will require careful attention if outcomes for children and families are to improve.

The Council is performing well in ensuring that reviews of Looked After Children and reviews of children on the Child Protection Register are completed to the required timescales, but needs to consider how it may improve its referral and assessment processes. There has been an improvement in the stability of placements for Looked After Children, but further work needs to be undertaken to increase the numbers of children placed in foster care and for adoption.

## **National priorities and strategic objectives**

### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- looked after Children enjoy more stable placements and increased numbers are being adopted than in 2002/2003;
- performance Indicators show that some education and training outcomes for Looked After Children are generally strong. The number of Looked after Children with access to a computer is exceptionally high;
- the Council is working with partners to improve the effectiveness of the Area Child Protection Committee following its restructuring in 2003, by establishing an Audit Sub-Committee with it's own business and strategic plan. The Council reports that the Audit sub-committee undertakes monthly audits children on the register. A Safeguarding Board is proposed for establishment in October 2004.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- the percentage of young Looked After Children (LAC) placed for adoption or in foster care (PAF C22) is well below the outer London average and performance in this area needs to be improved urgently;
- there has been major slippage on the percentage of children placed with family or friend. The national PPF target is for 15% by December 2004, whilst Harrow are reporting only 5.7% on the Spring Delivery and Improvement Statement (DIS);
- continued effort is needed to respond to the remaining issues identified by the Victoria Climbié Self-Audit;
- the Council has identified the reason for the poor performance on final warnings (PAF C18) of LAC and will need to implement its action plan to address this shortfall;
- the Council recognises they have a high number of LAC absent from school 25 or more days (PAF C24), and is intending to take an integrated approach to the problem by working in partnership with other agencies and through the People First Directorate. However the outcomes will need to be apparent in the forthcoming school year.

## **Cost and efficiency**

### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review**

- the percentage of the budget spent on Children and Family Services has increased and is now more in line with other outer London boroughs. An extra £1.1m was allocated for children and family services in 2003/04, with a further £1.1m being budgeted for 2004/05.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- the Council has recognised the need to recruit more foster carers rather than use external agencies and is proposing to undertake a major recruitment campaign. This should be implemented as soon as possible;
- all unit cost indicators for children services (PAFs B8, B9, and B10) are high and in band 2. This will need to be addressed in future commissioning work;

## **Effectiveness of service delivery and outcomes**

### **Improvements observed since the last review:**

- there has been a marked improvement in reducing the time that children remain on the Child Protection Register (PAF C21). The number of re-registrations onto the Child Protection Register (PAF A3) has also been reduced. This suggests more effective engagement and intervention.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- only 37% of core assessments are being completed to the required timescale. This is considerably lower than the outer London average and is in the lower quartile nationally, leaving childrens' needs potentially poorly understood or met;
- the Council was considerably short of meeting the criteria set out in the Victoria Climbié Self-Audit. Whilst it is recognised that this reflected the position at the time of the Self-Audit, it is essential that the outstanding issues are addressed.

## **Quality of services for users and carers**

### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- the Council is performing well in providing stable placements for Looked After Children (PAF D35), slightly stronger than the outer London average and in ensuring improved educational qualifications for young people leaving care (PAF A2) which is also slightly stronger than the outer London Average;
- all reviews of Looked After Children have been completed on time;
- all children on the Child Protection Register have had reviews completed on time (PAF C20);
- performance is strong on the health of Looked After children (PAFC19).

### **Areas for improvement:**

- improving services for children with disabilities is recognised as a major priority. A Complex Needs Panel and a new Children with Disabilities Team has been established. It is planned that this team will assist in increasing the number of disabled children supported in their families or living in appropriate community settings;
- performance on the number of Looked After Children in foster placements or placed for adoption (B7) is slightly below the out London average and performance on the numbers of children placed for adoption within 12 months of the best interest decision (C22) is the lowest in England; and
- all Looked After Children should be allocated to a qualified Social Worker. Where cases are held by trainees, overall accountability should rest with qualified workers and be clearly defined.

## **Fair Access**

### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- the Council has recognised that the quality of its data on ethnicity and core assessments is insufficiently robust and is taking steps to address this issue.



- a single multi-agency referral form has been introduced across the service, which is intended to promote easier access for service users.
- the Council has published its eligibility criteria for adult community care services and has set its threshold between substantial and moderate needs.

**Areas for improvement:**

- the quality of ethnic monitoring information regarding the take up of services needs to be enhanced.

**Capacity for improvement**

**Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- a comprehensive strategy for Children’s Services has been developed which identifies key areas for improvement. This includes:
  - a working draft of a Children’s Services Commissioning Strategy, together with a quality assurance project;
  - a children’s services procedure manual;
  - a practice evaluation and development tool;
  - a business planning process;
  - a clear set of objectives; and
  - a performance management system.

This is in the process of being disseminated to staff at all levels within the organisation.

- some specific cross-cutting initiatives have been established with other sections of the People First Directorate, such as Education and with partner agencies including the NHS and the police service. These are addressing a number of important issues, for example the lead professional for the group considering the education of Looked After Children is the Principal Educational Psychologist, joint finance is being accessed for the development of two multi-agency children’s centres and a joint ‘wrap around’ team has been developed involving People First and the Police to address non-school attendance and offending by young people.

**Areas for improvement:**

- the quality of data needs to be improved to enable managers and staff to turn the strategy into an operational working document that will result in improved outcomes for children;
- the Council published the Race Relations (Amendment) Act by the revised deadline of 31 August 2004;
- a performance management system is in the process of being developed. Senior managers should strive to embed performance management into the culture of the Department. This should be treated as a matter of urgency as it will have a major impact on the appropriateness and effectiveness of all future initiatives and plans.

## **SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLE**

Harrow `s services for Adults and Older People are in need of considerable modernisation and improvement. In particular, performance needs to be improved in the key area of promoting independence. It had been the intention of the Council to merge services for older people and for people with physical disabilities with the Primary Care Trust in April 2004, but it is now recognised that infrastructure problems have resulted in this having to be postponed. There is a commitment to rebuilding the service and developing appropriate systems for effective service delivery.

The former Social Services Inspectorate carried out a service inspection of services for people with a physical disability in November 2003. This identified a number of issues for improvement including the need for greater participation by service users; their carers, and the need to modernise services by promoting independence, person-centred planning and employment and training opportunities.

The Council's services for people with mental health problems are performing strongly as evidenced by the Mental Health Partnership Board (Local Implementation Team) review of the National Service Framework. The Council should consider this model in developing future joint working initiatives.

### **National priorities and strategic objectives**

#### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- the Council's Community Mental Health Team has made good progress in implementing most of the requirements of the national service framework for people with mental health problems and the local PCT reports positive working relationships in this respect;
- the Council has reduced waiting times for the delivery of care packages (PAF D56) and is well ahead of the outer London average;
- the number of short-term breaks for people with learning disabilities has increased; and
- the Council and Primary Care Trust have disseminated their approach to the Single Assessment Process in appropriate formats and this is published in its Better Care, Higher Standards Charter.

## **Areas for Improvement**

- the quality of the information concerning delayed transfers from Northwick Park Hospital needs to be improved and the Council needs to ensure that data received from partner agencies is accurate and meets their needs;
- the Council needs to do more to promote independence across adult and older people client groups, as evidenced by poor performance on the helped to live at home indicators (PAFs C29, C30, and C32) which are below the outer London average;
- the inspection of services for people with physical and sensory disabilities concluded that these services were in need of modernisation and need to enable people to exercise more choice with a view to promoting their independence. The judgment was that the Council was serving some people well, with uncertain prospects for improvement. The Council needs to continue to implement its improvement plan;
- improvement is needed in the number of older people's assessments started within 48 hours. The indicators suggest that people are waiting a long time for an assessment, but once this is done, services are delivered quickly. However, several targets that had been set by the Council itself have been missed and the percentage of contacts where assessments started within 48 hours and the percentage of assessments completed within four weeks (D55) failed to reach minimum national levels for a Key Threshold; and
- the Council is at the early stages of developing joint commissioning strategies for all of its adult care groups and will need to ensure that they are resourced and implemented as soon as possible.

## **Cost and efficiency**

### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- performance is strong on most unit cost indicators. Notable improvements include a £290 reduction for residential and nursing care for people with mental illnesses (PAF B15), and a £40 reduction for intensive home care for adults and older people (PAF B12);

- plans are in place to improve the commissioning processes and integrate them more closely with operational contracts and financial functions. This should be progressed; and
- the Council increased the base budget for services for older people in 2003/04 by £3.2m. A further £1.2m is budgeted for 2004/05. It is hoped that this large investment will start to improve outcomes for older people in the near-term.

### **Areas for improvement**

- the reliance on residential care, as measured by the proportion of expenditure on residential care to intensive home care remains high. Despite potentially difficult political decisions the Council should continue to shift the balance towards keeping people in their homes for longer; and
- the Council needs to ensure that its commissioning processes are robust and appropriately based on local service user need.

### **Effectiveness of service delivery and service outcomes**

#### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- the Council has achieved short waiting times for the delivery of care packages (PAF D56);
- the Council continues to have few delayed transfers of care and performance is stronger than the outer London average; and
- the Council reports that a joint equipment store has been established.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- the Council needs to better promote independence for all service user groups. In particular, performance needs to improve in the following areas:
  - the number and variety of service users receiving direct payments;
  - the delivery of small items of equipment within seven days (PAF D54), where performance is 52.8% with a national PPF target of 100% by December 2004;

- the percentage of clients receiving a review (PAF D40), where performance has slipped from over 65% in 2002/03 to 42.7% in 2003/04;
- waiting times for assessments of older people, where only 12% are started within 48 hours. This figure is the third lowest in England; and
- in addition to increasing the number and range of direct payments, the Council will need to ensure these clients have access to suitable advice on procuring the required services.

### **Quality of services for users and carers**

#### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- performance is very strong on the provision of single bedded rooms for adults and older people in permanent residential placements (PAF D37); and
- improvements have been noted on the percentage of carers receiving an assessment and performance is now better than the outer London average.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- the number of clients receiving a statement of needs (PAF D39) is below the outer London average and should improve. The national PPF target is for 100% by the end of December 2004;
- the number of clients receiving a review (PAF D40) is very low and requires improvement to ensure that adults' needs are being met;
- a comprehensive service user engagement strategy needs to be developed;
- better quality information for carers needs must be produced and be made readily available; and
- the development of the Single Assessment Process needs to continue.

### **Fair access**

#### **Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- the Council reports that the Fair Access to Care Services Criteria is being rigorously and consistently applied, with eligibility set at critical and substantial levels of need; and

- services, including legal advice and support for family placements, are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Areas for improvement:**

- the Council needs to improve the accessibility of its domiciliary care services to ethnic minority communities; and
- the Council's 'Vitality Profiles' should be used to ensure that services are meeting community needs.

**Capacity for improvement**

**Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- the Council has established an Improvement Plan following the inspection of services for people with a physical or sensory disability. The Council has also recognised that similar modernisation issues to those raised in the inspection, apply to other service user groups;
- there is strong corporate commitment to improving social care and to utilising the opportunities presented by the People First Directorate;
- the Council has produced a community care business plan that establishes clear tasks, outcomes, lead officers and timeframes;
- the Council has continued to improve recruitment and retention and has staff turnover and staff vacancies levels below the outer London averages;
- the Council and its partners have conducted a number of 'Vitality Profiles' which survey resident's needs and should assist in targeting resources;
- members have shown a commitment to improving social services by increasing Council Tax to finance better services for vulnerable residents; and
- performance Indicator Reports are now regularly reviewed by councillors through the scrutiny process.

**Areas for improvement:**

- the community care planning framework needs to be more robust than it's counterpart in children's services;

- further work needs to be undertaken to improve budget allocation to address pressing needs. This will require linking budgets to performance information, unit costs, etc. The Council's plans to procure and install a new system need to be implemented to enable effective operational and resource management;
- there has been a slight increase in the percentage of working days lost due to sickness absence;
- further work needs to be done to improve the quality of performance information;
- commissioning strategies for all adult care groups need to be further developed; and
- the budget review needs to be completed.

Geoff Corré  
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17<sup>th</sup> September 2004