

London Borough of Brent
Report from the Director of Social Services

EXECUTIVE – 21ST JULY 2003

For Action

Name of Wards Affected

ALL

**EVALUATION OF VICTORIA CLIMBIE INQUIRY – BRENT SELF
AUDIT**

1.0 SUMMARY

This report sets out the completed evaluation of Brent's self-audit undertaken by the Social Services Inspectorate in June 2003. This evaluation is a document of public access and there is a requirement to report it to the appropriate committee of the council. In addition to this evaluation there will be recommendations from the recent Tri-partite Inspection of child protection services which took place in May 2003. We will receive the final report on this inspection from the SSI in August/September 2003. This will be reported to the Executive in October.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That members note the evaluation of Brent's self-audit **Serving Some Children Well and Promising Prospects** (Appendix 1).
That members also note that judgement will be taken into account in the star rating process in the autumn and will form a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in the overall performance assessments of Councils.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

In requiring the audit to be completed, the then Secretary of State for health relied upon powers set out in Section 83 of the Children Act. The section places every local authority under a duty to transmit to the Secretary of State such information as he may require with respect to the performance of the local authority their functions under the Children Act. The information is to be provided at such times and in such form as he may direct.

6.0 DETAIL

6.1 The report of the Laming-Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, published on 28 January made 56 practice recommendations for Social Services departments with timescales for implementation of within 3 to 6 months. This was reported to the Executive on 10 February 2003. The Secretary of State announced on 28 January that all councils in England would be required to complete a self-audit of performance against 56 recommendations by 30 April 2003. Health agencies and Police Authorities were asked to undertake a similar exercise.

6.2 In addition, the Secretary of State announced that the 4 local authorities where agencies had had contact with Victoria Climbié would be subject to tripartite inspections to examine whether child protection services were improving.

Brent's inspection took place in May 2003 and the inspection report will be available in August/September 2003.

6.3 The SSI designed an audit framework and asked all councils to audit their current arrangements against the criteria to address areas of weakness and when they were expected to meet the criteria.

6.4 The audit framework grouped the recommendations under key practice and management issues and the SSI evaluated Brent against each one using the PAF:

- not serving people well,
- serving some people well
- serving most people well

and

- overall serving people well
- poor prospects,
- uncertain prospects,
- promising prospects,
- excellent prospects.

The SSI evaluation of Brent's self-audit is: **serving some people well with promising prospects**. This is the same outcome as the Joint Review's assessment of Children's Services in December 2002.

6.5 The Brent self-audit was presented to the Executive Committee on 28 April 2003 prior to submission on 30 April 2003 and considered by the Standing Panel on Children's Social Services on 7 May 2003. Inter-agency inspection findings are also included in the SSI evaluation as evidence to support our self-audit and the SSI evaluation. For example, during the inspection, inspectors saw evidence of files being read by managers and written/decision sheets and this was included as part of the evaluation report.

6.6 The self-audit required each local authority to assess Children's Services against the 54 Social Services recommendations arising from the Victoria

Climbie Inquiry. These recommendations were grouped under 7 standards: Referral, Assessment, Allocation, service provision and closure, Guidance, Training and Development, Organisation and Management and Governance. The evaluation used was the same criteria as in 6.5 above. The full SSI evaluation is at Appendix 1 but in summary the outcomes for Brent are as follows:

Referral	Some
Assessment	Most
Allocation, service provision & closure	Some
Guidance	Promising
Training and Development	Promising
Organisation and Management	Promising
Governance	Promising

6.7 The Victoria Climbie Inter-agency Inspection in Brent took place in May 2003. The Director of Social Services received headline feedback on 4 June 2003. As a result we have taken immediate action to secure more management capacity in West Team, Referral and Assessment Team to enhance management of demand. The Director is to update the Social Services Inspectorate on other actions taken following the inspection headline feedback at the Annual Review Meeting on 8 July 2003.

6.8 The Audit action plan is being implemented to comply with the 3 months and 6 months deadlines. In addition the publication of the Inspection report will be accompanied by an Action Plan that will respond to each of the recommendations. The Inspection and findings will be reported to the Executive Committee in October

7.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The Inquiry into the Death of Victoria Climbie – Report of the DSS to Executive 10 February 2003.
- Post Climbie Assessment and Inspection – Report of the DSS to Executive 28 April 2003.
- Post Climbie Assessment and Inspection – Report to Standing Panel on Children’s Social Services – 7 May 2003
- Brent’s Audit of Services to Children in Need in response to the practical recommendations of the Victoria Climbie Inquiry – April 30, 2000.

Anyone wishing to see the above papers should contact:

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