

London Borough of Brent
EXECUTIVE – 8 DECEMBER 2003
Report from the Director of Social Services
SOCIAL SERVICES PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2003

For Information

Name of Wards Affected
ALL

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report gives an update and progress report on Social Services Performance for 2002/03. It refers to performance as judged by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) and Department of Health in terms of:
- Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) national indicators for Social Care,
 - star ratings which are based on the PAF indicators and other evidence such as inspections and reviews,
 - Annual Review of Performance letter. It is a requirement that this letter is presented to the council's appropriate public committee.
- 1.2 The overall message from the various performance assessments is that Brent Social Services continues to make progress. The department is still rated as a one star authority, but prospects for further improvement in services for both children and adults are now judged as 'promising'.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 This report asks the Executive to:
- note performance assessment judgements as set out in this report and attached appendices
 - note performance against national indicators as set out in Appendix 1
 - note improved judgement in the star ratings as set out in Appendix 2
 - formally accept and note improvements in performance and areas for further improvement as set out in the Annual Review of Performance letter attached at Appendix 3

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A number of growth bids have been put forward for 2004/05 which relate to areas for improvement identified by SSI.

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The performance of all Social Services departments in the country is assessed and reviewed by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) annually. In reaching judgements on the performance of Social Services authorities a number of factors are taken into account by the SSI. These include national indicators as part of the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF), inspections, and monitoring information drawn from various statistical returns and regular meetings with the SSI.
- 6.2 Performance against the PAF indicators was published on November 14th 2003. Appendix 1 sets out Brent's performance and also gives details of performance in previous years as well as including comparison with other councils of a similar type (ie Outer London) and national averages.
- 6.3 Star ratings were introduced for Social Services departments in 2002. These are based on a range of evidence as detailed at 6.1 above. Revised ratings were also published on November 14th 2003. Brent is rated as one star, the same as the previous year. However, improvements have been recognised in the judgement with services for both children and adults now judged as 'promising'. A letter from the SSI on the star rating judgement is attached at Appendix 2.
- 6.4 The SSI is required to review the performance of all Social Services departments on an annual basis. Issues identified are included in the Annual Review of Performance letter which sets out the Inspectorate's view of performance during the last year and improvements planned for the coming year. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 3. The SSI requires this review to be presented to the council's appropriate public committee.

7.0 DETAIL

7.1.1 Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) Indicators

- 7.1.1 The Department of Health Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) sets out fifty performance indicators (PIs) for all Social Services departments in the country. These cover services for children and community care services for adults. Performance figures are allocated 'bandings' and ratings signified thus (●●●●●). The lowest rating is one, the highest is five.
- 7.1.2 Details of performance against all PAF indicators were published on 14th November 2003 and are set out in the tables at Appendix 1. These detail performance in previous years as well as 2002/03 ratings. Comparative figures for similar (ie Outer London) average figures and for national averages are also included. The shaded indicators are 'key performance

indicators' which are given a greater weighting by the SSI when determining overall performance ratings.

- 7.1.3 Performance against national indicators has shown overall improvement during the last year with improved ratings against 14 indicators for Childrens services and 12 indicators for adult Community Care services.
- 7.1.4 Measures to deliver improvements against all indicators which are rated 2●● or below are included in the department's Service Development Plan.

7.2 Star Rating

- 7.2.1 Star ratings for Social Services were first published in 2002. They are formulated by the SSI, drawing on evidence from performance indicators, inspections, reviews and monitoring information for each council, and using a set of published standards as a framework to guide judgement. The ratings are issued in conjunction with an improvement report (see 7.3 below) for each council, and give a rounded picture of each council's performance in carrying out their social services functions. The ratings form a part of the comprehensive performance assessment of local councils, led by the Audit Commission. Star ratings range from zero to three (highest)
- 7.2.2 Separate judgements are given for Childrens Services and Adults (Community Care) services. These consider how well people are served, and the capacity for improvement. Both judgements inform the overall star rating.
- 7.2.3 Brent has been awarded one star.
- 7.2.4 Although the overall star rating in 2003 is the same as in the previous year, the more detailed judgement (attached at Appendix 2) recognises improvements made during the year as both services for children and services for adults the capacity for improvement is now judged to be 'promising'.
- 7.25 The table below gives an indication of the star ratings for other Outer London authorities in West London. All are also ranked as one star.

Borough	Adults' Services		Children's Services	
	Serving People Well	Prospects	Serving People Well	Prospects
Brent	Some	Promising	Some	Promising
Ealing	Some	Uncertain	Most	Promising
Hounslow	Some	Promising	Some	Promising
Harrow	Some	Uncertain	Some	Promising
Hillingdon	Some	Uncertain	Some	Promising

7.3 Annual Review of Performance

- 7.3.1 The SSI has summarised its findings in relation to the performance of Social Services in Brent in an Annual letter (attached at Appendix 3). The letter details improvements and progress made during the year, and identifies areas for further improvement.
- 7.3.2 In reaching its conclusion the SSI takes account of a number of factors including:
- Performance against national PAF indicators (see section 7.1 above)
 - Monitoring information from the position statement completed in June and October 2003 and the delivery and improvement statement completed in May 2003
 - Audit of services to children in need carried out in response to the report of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry
 - Report of a Joint Review carried out in April 2002
 - Inter-agency Inspection of Child Protection Services undertaken in May 2003
- 7.3.3 In general the SSI noted a significant number of improvements and areas of good performance across the department. These include:
- Political and corporate leadership which demonstrates a clear commitment to improving services for children and adults
 - Increase in the base budget for Social Services and improvements to financial monitoring systems
 - Development of service strategies based on delivering key priorities within available resources
 - Establishment of Joint Commissioning structures with the Primary Care Trust
 - Integration of equalities into the work of the department
- 7.3.4 Specific improvements in services for children and families are also noted including continued positive work with care leavers, good joint working with education services which is having a significant impact in improving educational attainment, substantial improvements to systems to safeguard children and in the quality of assessments undertaken.
- 7.3.5 In terms of Community Care services for adults, improvements and progress were noted in relation to the provision of intensive home care for older people, good performance in promoting independence for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems and in the number of people with physical disabilities helped to live at home, reduction in waiting times for occupational therapy assessments and an above average number of breaks provided for carers.
- 7.3.6 A number of areas for improvement are also noted. These include:
- Ensuring a wider range of services are available to children in need
 - Ensuring a rigorous approach to permanency planning for looked after children and increasing the numbers of children adopted if possible
 - Increasing the numbers of people receiving a statement of their needs

- Improving performance data
- Developing a more strategic approach to the involvement of users and carers

7.3.7 Actions to address the identified areas for improvement are set out in the department's Service Development Plan for 2004-05. Work is already underway to improve performance in a number of areas, for example the development and implementation of a family support strategy which will address issues relating to children in need.

7.4 Overall comments

7.4.1 The overall judgement of the SSI concerning Social Services performance demonstrates that progress continues to be made in all areas. Performance has improved against twenty six of the fifty national PIs, significant improvements and progress are noted in the Annual Review of Performance, and the capacity for continued improvement is recognised as promising in the revised star ratings judgement.

8.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Performance Ratings for Social Services in England – Department of Health, November 2003
- Annual Review of Performance letter – SSI, September 2003
- Social Services PAF Indicators 2002-03 – Department of Health November 2003

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