

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**Meeting of the Executive - 15 November 2004****Report from the Director of Social Services**

For information

Wards affected:
All**Report Title: Social Services Annual Review of Performance**

Forward Plan ref: SS-04/05-19

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The report provides the Social Services Performance Review Report 2004 to members for information.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Note the Social Services Performance Review Report 2004 produced by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.
- 2.2 Note the significant number of improvements observed in Social Services performance since the last Performance Review Report in 2003.
- 2.3 Note the areas for further improvement as set out in the Performance Review Report.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The performance of all Social Services Departments in the country is assessed and reviewed by the Commission of Social Care Inspection (CSCI, formally know as the Social Services Inspectorate or the SSI). There is an annual Performance Review cycle and an important milestone is the production of the Performance Review Report in September. This leads to issuing of the Social Services star rating in November 2004.

In reaching judgements on the performance of Social Services Authorities a number of factors are taken into account by the CSCI. These include National Indicators as part of the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF), Inspections and monitoring information from various statistical returns and regular meetings with the CSCI.

3.2 The end Review Report produced by the CSCI sets out the Inspectorates view of Social Services performance during the last year and indicates of the improvements that have been made in the service and identifies areas where continued improvement is required. A copy of the report is appended. The CSCI requires this report to be presented to open meeting of the relevant Executive Committee of the Council within 2 months of issuing the letter to the Social Services Department. The report was issued to the Social Services Department in Brent on the 17th September. This year the star ratings will be published on the 18th November and the publication of these will be reported to the Executive in December.

3.3 **Improvements since the Annual Review of Performance in 2003**

The CSCI have noted a significant number of improvements across the department. These include:

- Political and Corporate support and Leadership which demonstrates a clear commitment to improving services for children and adults.
- Strong member involvement
- Delivery of a balance budget for 2003/4
- Improved systems for client information, finance and Human Resources.
- Continued improvement in Partnership Working and the delivery of Joint services with Health.
- Delivery of all actions identified in the Victoria Climbié self audit.
- More vulnerable people helped to live at home.
- Robust service strategies and plans clearly linked to Corporate priorities.

3.4 **Areas for Improvements**

The Performance Review Report 2004 notes a number of areas for improvement and these are summarised in the front of the Performance Review Report (Appendix 1). These areas are incorporated into the Social Services Departmental Plan, improvement plans and detailed action plans for the department so that Social Services within Brent continues to improve as part of the Councils drive for excellence.

4.0 ***Financial Implications***

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, when preparing growth bids for 2005/06 officers worked with the key areas for improvement identified in the ARM letter, examined options to deliver

improvements, and submitted growth bids for the cost of delivering those improvements.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 This report recognizes the good progress in respect of Equality and Diversity issues within the delivery of Social Services and thereby contributes to the improvement of life chances for our diverse community.

Background Papers

Social Services Local Improvement Plan. "Improving Life Chances for a diverse community"

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LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Social Services: 2004

Summary of improvement recommendations

The review of Social Services in Brent Council has highlighted the following performance issues that need to be addressed over the next 12 months. Further information about the standards against which social services are assessed is contained in the detailed report.

Child and family services

- a small number of children on the child protection register (1.6%) did not have an allocated key worker at the time of the Delivery Information Statement;
- the Council must continue with its action plan to ensure that all child protection cases are reviewed (PAF C20);
- the Council needs to address some issues concerning permanency planning for looked after children (PAF D35); the number of children placed in foster care or for adoption has decreased as has the percentage of looked after children who were placed for adoption within twelve months of the best interest decision being made. Whilst the number of adoptions has increased, there is still a need for further improvement;
- there has been good progress on improving the number of care leavers engaged in employment, education or training at the age of 19 (PAF A4), which is just below the national target, but the current figure is still below the outer London average. It is acknowledged that the Council faces particular challenges due to its high number of older unaccompanied refugee children who do not have English as their first language and this has implications for their educational performance; and

- too few children looked after are receiving reviews according to the established timeframes. Performance on initial reviews needs to improve to the level of the high performance on six and twelve monthly reviews.

Services for adults and older people

- the Council should ensure that adults and older people are receiving prompt assessments (PAF D55) and that services are then delivered in a timely manner (PAF D56);
- in order to promote independence, the take up of Direct Payments needs to improve (PAF C51); and
- too few adults and older service users are receiving reviews (PAF D40). The Council must have effective systems in place to ensure services are appropriate to clients' needs.



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Performance Review Report 2004

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Council has delivered all the action identified in the Victoria Climbié self-audit criteria. It spends more on family support services as a proportion of its budget than most other councils in outer London, and its services to children in need are used by children and families from a variety of backgrounds, reflecting the ethnic composition of the area.

Performance is strong on meeting assessment timescales. Life chances for looked after children continue to improve, with a reduction in the numbers of children missing school, and a reduction in the numbers receiving a final warning or reprimand. All looked after children have a named social worker, but too few reviews are completed on time. There have been some improvements in the areas of education, training and health, but there remains room for further improvement. Action is also needed to improve the long-term stability of looked after children and permanency planning. The percentage of reviews of looked after children completed on time has failed to improve from last year and remains an area of concern.

The Council acknowledges that it needs to continue to build on the progress made in developing its child protection services.

National priorities and strategic objectives

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- the Area Child Protection Committee has produced new multi-agency procedures, and audits all cases on the Register. A Safer Parenting Handbook and Safer Carers' Handbook have been introduced.

Areas For Improvement

- the Council needs to examine why it has a low number of children re-registered onto the Child Protection Register (PAF A3), and to take any necessary action as a result; and
- most of the indicators concerning the life chances of looked after children are improving, but the Council remains below the national average on some targets. Although there has been an increase since last year in the number of young people leaving care engaged in employment, education or training at the age of 19 (PAF A4), the figures remain below the outer London average and the national target of 75% of those achieved by other young people in the area. Similarly, the numbers of looked after children leaving care with at least one GCSE (PAF A2), has increased but remains below the national target of 75%, and those with five GCSEs has also increased, but remains below the national target of 75%. The Council acknowledges the need to improve its performance in these areas and has since created an Improving Outcomes Manager for looked after children.

Cost and efficiency

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- there has been a 41% increase in the Council's budget allocation to Children's Services to keep up with increased demand and to achieve national standards. Staffing has been increased by 10%;
- there has been a decrease in the unit costs of foster care placements (PAF B10) from an average weekly cost of £810 in 2002/03 to £460 in 2003/04; and
- expenditure on residential placements fell which is attributed to the establishment of a joint Placements Panel, attended by representatives from social services, health and education. Discussion continues about establishing a pooled budget.

Areas for Improvement

None

Effectiveness of service delivery and service outcomes

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- all looked after children have an allocated social worker. This compares well with an outer London average of 96.2%; and
- the number of looked after children placed with friends or family continues to increase and is currently at 11% compared to an outer London average of 9.1%.

Areas for Improvement

- a small number of children (1.6%) on the Child Protection Register were not allocated to a key worker. Whilst awaiting allocation, the duty team undertakes any necessary action. The Council should ensure that all children on the register are allocated to a key worker; and
- 93.3% of cases on the Child Protection Register were reviewed (PAF C20), compared to an outer London average of 97.9%. All cases on the Child Protection Register must be reviewed within the timeframe to ensure that the children's protection plan remains up to date.

Quality of services for users and carers

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- the Council has developed, with partners, a local preventative strategy to improve the level of support to families. It has also established a Family Support Team whose role is to provide services to prevent the need for children to be looked after; and
- the indicators show that children and families' needs are being assessed soon after they have been referred, with 86% receiving an assessment within 7 days, compared with an outer London average of 65.4%. In addition, a further 58% of assessments are completed within 35 working days, which is above the outer London average of 55.6%. Overall, this shows that families are able to access services in a timely manner.

Areas for improvement

- the Council needs to consider how it can improve permanency planning particularly for older children. The number of Looked After Children placed in foster care or for adoption (PAF B7) has reduced, and this may reflect the fact that the Council reports an increase in the number of looked after children over the age of 12. The number of looked

after children who have been adopted as a percentage of children looked after (PAF C23) is 4.6 compared to an outer London average of 6.1. It is recognised that Brent's looked after children population is predominantly aged ten or over and that this presents particular difficulties with regard to adoption; and

- the percentage of reviews of looked after children completed on time remains at 75%, which is the same as last year, and below the outer London average of 90.5%. This is the second worst in outer London, and the Council needs to ensure that urgent steps are taken to improve performance in this area. The numbers of initial reviews needs to match those of three monthly and six monthly reviews.

Fair access

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- the Council has produced an annual report on equality and diversity in service delivery entitled Confronting Inequality and has attained Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and has a strategy to achieve all five levels;
- the Council is conducting Equality Impact Assessments on its policies, practices and procedures to ensure there is no adverse impact on different groups, in accordance with the requirement under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act;
- a number of corporate events have been organised which celebrate the cultural diversity within the Borough; and
- the proportion of children in need who are from minority ethnic groups, (PAF E45) indicates that services are representative of the ethnic composition of the area and indicates that services are accessible.

Capacity for improvement

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- the Investors in People Award has been achieved for the social services department and the Council as a whole;
- the Council has recently revised its strategy for social services, which was summarised in a published paper "Improving Life Chances for a Diverse Community". This sets out a number of priorities under the headings; Mainstreaming Service Improvement, Targeted Improvement Activity, Strengthening Performance management, Creating A Customer

Driven Organisation, Promoting and mainstreaming diversity, Increasing staff and managerial Capacity and Supporting the Democratic Process;

- a new client database system was introduced on 5th April 2004. Its implementation, together with that of the new financial system, will need to be closely monitored;
- new finance systems were also implemented in April 2004;
- the Social Services Department delivered a balanced budget for 2003/04;
- councillors and senior managers meet on a regular basis to review the quality of services. This is in addition to the role of the Scrutiny Committee;
- the Family Placements Service is now fully staffed. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Grant was used to promote recruitment, and so delivered a better placement service to looked after children; and
- an estimated 4.9% of the Department's budget has been allocated to training. It is hoped that this will result in more staff attaining NVQ Level 3 or PQ1 in childcare.

Areas for improvement

- additional measures need to be taken to recruit permanent managers and social workers in mainstream child care services. The percentage of directly employed staff that left over the previous year was 10.58% and the percentage of vacancies has reduced from the previous year's figure of 6% to 4%, but the percentage expenditure on agency staff remains high at 53.7% of the total of qualified social workers and managers;
- the Children's Commissioning strategy needs to be finalised, and further work needs to be continued with partner agencies to establish joint commissioning strategies; and
- too few childcare workers have earned level 3 NVQ or the PQ1 award for childcare. In both instances the Council is performing below the outer London average.

SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLE

Strong relationships with partner agencies have assisted in the effective promotion of independence across adult client groups. All of the independence indicators (PAF C29, C30, C31 and C32) are good and have improved since last year, so that more people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health problems and older people are being helped to live at home. This needs to be further enhanced by increasing the uptake of Direct Payments, an important area for improvement in the coming year. In addition, it is important that the Council's new provider of intensive home care is able to deliver the level of service that is needed.

Services for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems are fully integrated with health.

More work is needed to ensure that service users receive timely assessments, statements of needs and reviews of services. Assessments, particularly for older people, need to be started and completed more quickly and more carers need to receive an assessment of their need.

National priorities and strategic objectives

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- the Social Services Service Improvement Plan sets out its objectives to promote independence, to work in partnership and to develop and establish joint funding arrangements with key partners;
- positive partnership working has enabled the Council to make good progress on national priorities, such as reducing the number of delayed discharges of care, implementing the National Service Framework on Mental Health, and the establishment of a pooled budget with the Primary Care Trust for a Community Equipment Store. The Council's partnership working has been recognised by a number of external agencies, for example the CSCI for its Adult Protection policy, and the National Development Team for its Learning Disability Service;
- the Council plans to enhance its Intermediate Care service by increasing the number of carers trained to provide services and so reduce the need for hospital admission; and
- a Care Coordination scheme has been established with GPs.

Areas for Improvement

None

Cost and efficiency

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- the Council has invested an additional 11% expenditure into significant parts Adult Care Services. This includes £3.7 million for older people's services, £1 million for services for people with physical disabilities and £1.6 million on services for people with learning disabilities;
- new financial management systems have been implemented that will better integrate information on commissioning, service user need, unit costs and performance; and
- notable improvements have been made in the unit cost indicators for nursing and residential care in the following areas; learning disability costs have decreased by £46 per week (PAF B14); mental health costs have decreased by £378 per week (PAF B15); physical and sensory disability costs have decreased by £67 per week (PAF B16).

Areas for improvement

- negotiations with the Brent Primary Care Trust on proposals for pooled budgets for older people's services need to continue.

Effectiveness of service delivery and service outcomes

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- more people are being helped to live at home than was the case in the previous year (PAF C29, C30, C31 and C32) and rates of admissions for people of all ages to care homes continues to decrease (C26 and C27);
- the number of people with a physical disability helped to live at home is 3.8 per thousand of the population (the outer London average is 3.7);
- the number of people with a learning disability helped to live at home is also just above the outer London average of 2.2 per thousand, at 2.4 per 1,000;
- the numbers of older people helped to live at home has increased to 88.7 per thousand from last year's figure of 72 per thousand, but remains below the outer London average of 91.9 per thousand. People with mental health problems helped to live at home is 2.51 per thousand, compared to an outer London average of 3.8 per thousand, but this still represents a high performance; and
- indicators relating to the balance of services demonstrate that the emphasis has shifted from traditional models of residential care to support in the community.

Areas for improvement

- too few people are in receipt of Direct Payments. More input needs to be made to ensure that a greater number of service users and carers are made aware of this service and enabled to experience its benefits. The Council needs to continue the work it has undertaken to make improvements in this area.

Quality of services for users and carers

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- effective performance has been achieved on increasing the number of assessments of older people completed within two weeks (95%, compared with an outer London average of 50.9%) and within four weeks (96%, compared with an outer London average of 63.4%). On both indicators, the Council has achieved the second highest performance in outer London;
- there has been an improvement in the percentage of equipment delivered within seven days (D54), with 93.3% of equipment delivered within seven days, compared with an outer London average of 79.6%. This has been achieved through good joint working on the Integrated Community Equipment Service;
- effective performance has been achieved on carers' assessments (D42), at 33% compared with an outer London average of 23.6%;
- continued improvement has been noted on reducing the numbers of delayed transfers of care from hospital. This also indicates the Council's positive approach to working in partnership with colleagues in the health service; and
- the number of older people who receive a service within four weeks of an assessment has increased to 81%, compared with an out London average of 75.7%.

Areas for improvement

- the Council needs to increase the numbers of assessments for older people started within 48 hours of first contact. Only 27% were started within this timescale, compared with an outer London average of 43.8%. It has acknowledged that it needs to consider its target in this regard for the forthcoming year, which has been set at 30%, which is well below the outer London average; and
- the Council needs to increase the number of older people who receive a service within four weeks of an assessment from its current level of 68%, which is below the outer London average of 75.7%. The Council should also consider increasing its target of 74% for the coming year.

Fair access

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- the improvements identified above for children apply equally to adult services; and
- the fair access to care criteria was implemented in April 2003, and information regarding eligibility criteria is provided at One Stop Shops.

Areas for improvement

- the evidence indicates that more work is needed to improve access for Black and Ethnic Minority service users to assessments, although the Council is performing well in delivering a service following an assessment, but there may be an issue with regard to how the data is collected. The Council needs to analyse it's data more accurately; and
- joint reviews of people receiving services under fair access to care need to be undertaken.

Capacity for improvement

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- there is very strong evidence of corporate support to improve social care in the borough. This is evidenced by the Local Strategic Partnership, which provides a joint planning function with the Primary Care Trust on crosscutting issues, and the support of the Chief Executive and other senior managers, which is epitomised by the term "putting a corporate arm around Social Services". Scrutiny is carried out by the Social Care Scrutiny Panel;
- there is also strong evidence of councillors involvement and support, such as attendance at Corporate Strategy Road Shows and service unit visits as well as regular meetings with the Director of Social Services and the Departmental Management Team. In addition, the Portfolio Holder chairs a Councillors' Social Care Panel and is involved in a peer pilot scheme with the London Borough of Croydon;
- the Council has issued "Improving Brent", its action plan for 2004/2006, which includes a section devoted to the Councils commitment to implement a number of improvements, including an increase in the number of people receiving Direct Payments to 100 by March 2007, increase the number of people with physical disabilities helped to live at home to 700 by March 2005 and increase the proportion of adaptations and items of equipment delivered within 7 days to 95% by March 2005;
- the social services department has produced its own strategy entitled "Improving Life Chances for a Diverse Community ", which sets out its improvement plan, including its vision, values, model of service and priorities;
- the Council has published its Performance Plan for 2004/05, which has the full support of staff and Councillors, and aims to build on the strategy

in "Improving Brent". This sets out the Council's vision, values and key priorities;

- the Council has produced a strategy to improve the recruitment and retention of qualified social care staff, and is involved with a research study at Oxford University to examine the skill mix in social care. (Details of current staffing information may be found in the child and family section);
- the Council has revised and re-issued its Sickness Absence Procedures and the Social Services Department has introduced a new strategy entitled SHARE in order to better manage attendance at work and to tackle the issue sickness absence; and
- a Health and Social Care Partnership Board has been established, with Priority Action Groups for each service area, each of which is developing a Joint Commissioning Strategy, supported by a Joint Commissioning Manager.

Areas for improvement

- the additional financial commitment to staff training needs to manifest itself in the number of practice learning days provided to staff (PAF D59).

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