



Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 8 December 2011 at 7.00 pm
Committee Rooms 1 and 2, Brent Town Hall, Forty
Lane, Wembley, HA9 9HD

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Gladbaum (Chair)
Matthews (Vice-Chair)
Aden
Al-Ebadi
Green
Harrison
Mitchell Murray
HM Patel

First alternates

Councillors:

S Choudhary
Clues
Oladapo
Mashari
Sneddon
Hirani
Daly
Baker

Second alternates

Councillors:

Hector
Allie
Oladapo
RS Patel
Ashraf
Hossain
Denselow
Kansagra

Statutory Co-optees

Mrs Shabna Abbasi
Alloysius Frederick
Dr Nanda Kumar
Elsie Points

Non-statutory Co-optees

Mrs Hawra Imame
Dr J Levison

Observers

Mr A Carter
Ms J Cooper
Mrs L Gouldbourne
Ms C Jolinon
Mr B Patel
Brent Youth Parliament
representatives

For further information contact: Bryony Gibbs, Democratic Services Officer
020 8937 1355 bryony.gibbs@brent.gov.uk

For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit: www.brent.gov.uk/committees

The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Item	Page
1 Declaration of personal and prejudicial interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting any relevant financial or other interest in the items on the agenda.	
2 Deputations (if any)	
3 Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 October 2011	1 - 12
4 Brent Youth Parliament Update	
A verbal update regarding the Brent Youth Parliament will be provided to the committee by Brent Youth Parliament representatives.	
5 Results of Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked After children Services Inspection	13 - 64
This report provides members with an update on the outcome of the Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection which took place between 3 and 14 October 2011.	
Ward Affected: All Wards	Contact Officer: Graham Genoni Assistant Director Social Care Tel: 0208 937 4091 graham.genoni@brent.gov.uk
6 Adoption Services in Brent	65 - 68
The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the key issues relating to adoption in Brent and to give members an opportunity to ask questions in relation to adoption services.	
Ward Affected: All Wards	Contact Officer: Graham Genoni Assistant Director Social Care Tel: 0208 937 4091 graham.genoni@brent.gov.uk

7 Review of policy for the provision of early years full time places 69 - 76

This report responds to matters raised by members of the Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 6th October 2011.

Ward Affected: All Wards **Contact Officer:** Graham Genoni
Assistant Director Social Care
Tel: 0208 937 4091
graham.genoni@brent.gov.uk

8 School places update

A verbal update will be provided to the committee.

9 Provision of services for children with learning and physical disabilities

A verbal update will be provided to the committee.

10 Items from the Forward Plan and Work Programme 77 - 86

Ward Affected: All Wards **Contact Officer:** Andrew Davies, Policy
and Performance
Tel: 020 8937 1609
andrew.davies@brent.gov.uk

11 Feedback from One Community, Many Voices Event 87 - 96

The One Community Many Voices event was held during Local Democracy Week on the 10th October. Feedback from the event is attached for members' information.

12 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny meeting is scheduled for 2 February 2012.

13 Any other urgent business

Notice of items raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Democratic Services Manager or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.



Please remember to *SWITCH OFF* your mobile phone during the meeting.

- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.
- Toilets are available on the second floor.
- Catering facilities can be found on the first floor near the Paul Daisley Hall.
- A public telephone is located in the foyer on the ground floor, opposite the Porters' Lodge



MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 6 October 2011 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Gladbaum (Chair), Aden, Al-Ebadi, Harrison and Mr A Frederick, Ms E Points, Mrs H Imame, Dr J Levison and Mrs L Gouldbourne

Also Present: Councillors Arnold, S Choudhary and Lorber

Apologies were received from: Councillors Green, Mitchell Murray, Mrs Abassi, Ms J Cooper, Ms C Jolinon and Brent Youth Parliament representatives

1. Declaration of personal and prejudicial interests

Councillor Harrison declared an interest with regard to the item on the Strategy to Provide Primary School Places in Brent up to 2014/15. She advised that she was a governor for Preston Park Primary School, which had been identified for expansion in the report.

Councillor Gladbaum also declared an interest with regard to this item as she was a governor for Capital City Academy.

Councillor Arnold advised that she was a governor for Kilburn Park School.

2. Deputations (if any)

There were no deputations.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 12 July 2011

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 July 2011 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments: -

- i. Ms Elsie Points to be included in the list of those present
- ii. Mr Hank Roberts to be included in the list of those present and it to be recorded that he was attending in place of Mrs L Goudbourne and Ms C Jolinon.

4. Matters arising

Councillor Aden queried whether the recommendations of the Youth Offending task group had been adopted by the Executive. The Chair advised that they recommendations of the task group had been approved by the Executive at its meeting on 19 September 2011.

Councillor Aden further noted that the committee had agreed that a school places update should be a standing item on the work programme but that there was no such item on the agenda for the current meeting. Rik Boxer (Assistant Director, Inclusion and Achievement) explained that he would include this update in the report on the Strategy to Provide Primary School Places in Brent up to 2014/15.

5. **Brent Youth Parliament Update (Verbal Report)**

The Chair advised that the representatives of Brent Youth Parliament were unable to attend the meeting and a written report would be circulated during the meeting.

The written update report was tabled at the end of the meeting for the committee's information.

6. **Review of the Policy for the Provision of Early Years Full Time Places**

Sue Gates (Head of Integrated and Extended Services) presented a report to the committee on the implementation of the council policy on the allocation of full time Early Years places to disadvantaged children. This policy had been agreed by the Executive in February 2010 and as titled, set out criteria to ensure that full time Early Years places (education places for children aged three to four years old) were offered to disadvantaged children. Prior to this time, the criteria for allocating Early Years places had been determined by each school separately. This had often resulted in Early Years places simply being provided to those who were first to apply, with no prioritisation for disadvantaged children.

Sue Gates explained that the implementation of the new policy had initially been delayed following the receipt of advice from the School Admissions Forum that a wider consultation needed to be conducted. A further delay had resulted from the introduction of a new statutory duty placed on local authorities requiring them to offer places to all children aged two years old who were deemed vulnerable. It had been determined that there were not enough of these places currently available in Brent to meet the estimated demand. Consequently, several options exploring how the Council would meet this requirement were considered and it had been proposed that children aged three to four years old would only be offered places based on their statutory entitlement of fifteen hours per week in order to free up capacity. However, following consultation with the Schools Forum in June 2011 and in consideration of its strong view against the suggested action, the proposal had been rejected in favour of maintaining provision of full time Early Years places for disadvantaged children. Alternative proposals to ensure that the council was able to meet its statutory duty with respect to vulnerable two year olds were currently being explored

Sue Gates further elucidated that following these delays, the implementation of the Early Years places policy was now underway. It was intended that the policy would be in place for September 2012 and Brent schools were currently being consulted on the proposed arrangements for the admissions process. In particular, views were being sought on what role the local authority should take in administering the policy. Responses to this consultation were pending. The proposed admissions process would allow schools to administer the process of managing full-time admissions themselves with minimal central involvement. A summary of the

process and an indicative timetable were set out in the report. The timetable aligned the process with that for statutory school age admissions. If a schools full time Early Years places were not oversubscribed, the proposals set out several options of provision including that of offering of mixed provision of full and part-time places and the switching to part-time provision only. Governing bodies, however, would be encouraged to consider the financial and operational implications of these options before deciding on the type of provision to offer parents from September 2012.

In the subsequent discussion members raised several issues. Councillor Harrison sought clarification on the admissions criteria set out in the admissions process. Sue Gates advised that the first criterion that would have to be met was the one of deprivation. If there were still places remaining after this, there were three further categories by which applications would be prioritised. It was important to note that not every school offered full time Early Years places and several schools had actively opted out from the scheme. Councillor Harrison queried what safeguards were proposed to ensure that the council was meeting its statutory duty. Sue Gates clarified that it was only a statutory duty to offer places to children aged two years old who were deemed vulnerable. She added that there were several mechanisms in place to ensure that the local authority had the necessary information to determine whether it was meeting its statutory requirements and noted that schools were required to provide a certain amount of information to the council for this purpose.

With reference to the report, the Chair noted that parents would have no statutory right of appeal against the decision of the school and expressed her concern at the possible inequality which could result from this arrangement. Sue Gates advised that as the provision of full time Early Years places to disadvantaged children aged three to four years was not a statutory duty, the local authority had no power to implement a statutory right of appeal. Rather, any appeals against a decision to refuse a full time Early Years Place would have to be dealt with by the internal procedures of the school in question. Sue Gates added that the council did not have the staffing to monitor its provision of this non-statutory service. The Chair queried whether the application forms for Early Years places would be provided in a variety of languages to accommodate those families for whom English was not their first language. Sue Gates clarified that application forms would be provided by the schools. The Committee was further advised that the council did not have the resources to provide application forms in several languages.

Mrs Elsie Points sought clarification as to whether all children of the appropriate age would be offered their fifteen hour entitlement. Sue Gates explained that whilst all three to four year olds would be given an education place for their fifteen hour a week entitlement, not every child would be given the often preferred place in a school.

In response to a further query by the Chair, Sue Gates advised that the consultation with Brent schools would conclude in three weeks' time. The consultation document had only just been recently sent to schools and the total consultation period would be quite short.

The Chair reiterated concerns regarding the equality of access to the full time Early Years places provision. Councillor Arnold, Lead Member for Children and Families, acknowledged these concerns but noted that currently there were no mechanisms

in place to ensure prioritisation for disadvantaged children. In order to ensure that the most vulnerable families were aware of the policy and would apply for places, the policy could be promoted via children's centres. Sue Gates added that front line staff such as social workers and family support workers would be asked to promote the policy to families in need. In response to a query, Sue Gates explained that the council would monitor that the places were being given to disadvantaged children via information collected by the schools during the application process.

Following a query from Dr Levison, Sue Gates advised that the council could not ensure equality in the provision of full time Early Years places to disadvantaged children because the number of places available was not and had never been sufficient to meet the demand. Councillor Arnold added that it was good that the council was still able to offer full-time places for disadvantaged three and four year olds, in the current financial climate.

In light of the queries and concerns raised by the Committee, the Chair suggested that a further report be presented to the Committee at its next meeting setting out the following: -

- The outcome of the consultation with Brent schools
- The views of the Schools Forum
- Projections for the provision of places for vulnerable children aged two years old, including the expected demand and the use of children's centres as a natural provider.
- An overarching perspective of the development/implementation of the policy for full time Early Years' places, including the embedding of safeguards and how an equal opportunity of access would be ensured. The Chair added that if an equality of opportunity regarding access to the places could not be achieved this should be stated in the report along with the implications of this.

RESOLVED: -

- i. That the report be noted
- ii. That a further report be presented to the committee at its next meeting setting out the following: -
 - The outcome of the consultation with Brent schools
 - The views of the Schools Forum
 - An overarching perspective of the development/implementation of the policy for full time Early Years' places, including the embedding of safeguards and how an equal opportunity of access would be ensured. The Chair added that if an equality of opportunity regarding access to the places could not be achieved this should be stated in the report along with the implications of this.
 - Projections for the provision of places for vulnerable children aged two years old, including the expected demand and the use of children's centres as a natural provider.

7. Strategy to Provide Primary School Places in Brent up to 2014/15

Rik Boxer (Assistant Director Achievement and Inclusion) introduced a report to the committee detailing the severe shortage of primary school places in Brent and the measures required to address the shortfall. It was noted that this deficit of primary school places in Brent echoed a national trend and one which was particularly acute in London. The report proposed a three pronged approach to this issue, encompassing a robust lobbying campaign to central government, a medium term to deliver a fit for purpose school portfolio, and a short term strategy to maximise the capacity of the existing portfolio. This report had been considered by the Executive on 17 August 2011, at which time the recommendations set out in the report had been agreed.

Rik Boxer advised that it was modestly estimated that by 2014/15, a further fifteen forms of entry would be required in Brent; by 2020 this deficit was predicted to rise to twenty three. It had been determined that £52m of capital would be necessary to meet the predicted shortfall for 2014/15. At its meeting on 17 August 2011, the Executive had agreed that £20m of the required £52m would be provided via the Council's Main Capital Programme and from Section 106 Capital Receipts. It was highlighted to the Committee that the government had announced that an additional £500m would be allocated to fund more school places in areas of greatest need; however, an allocation model had not yet been provided and it was possible that these funds might prove insufficient. Consequently, the Council would be lobbying central government, along with the GLA and London Councils to emphasise the acute nature of the problem and to ensure Brent's case was made with respect to the additional funds to be supplied by the government.

In providing further detail of the council's approach to the issue of the deficit of primary school places, Rik Boxer advised that for the short term the council was prioritising schools to be considered for permanent expansion by September 2012. A short list of schools (included at Appendix 6 to the report) had been compiled based on criteria including risk, shortage of places in the local area and availability of funding. Of these, four schools had been selected as being most suitable for expansion and would be subject to feasibility studies. These plans for short term expansion were being developed in the context of the council's longer term strategy for providing primary school places. This strategy would be underpinned by a set of proposed planning principles, set out at paragraph 8.19 of the report, and would include a review of the entire education portfolio and consideration of new models for schools, including five form entry primary schools, all-through schools and 'urban' style schools.

Rik Boxer concluded his introduction to the report by drawing members' attention to the recommendations agreed by the Executive at its meeting on 17 August 2011, set out at paragraph 2 of the report.

During members' discussion several queries were raised. The Chair sought an update on the implementation of the recommendations agreed by the Executive on 17 August 2011. Rajesh Sinha (Interim Programme Manager) advised that the feasibility studies for the four schools shortlisted for potential expansion had commenced. It was estimated that decisions as to whether to proceed with the expansion schemes would be made by early November. Discussions had already been held with the governing body of Fryent Primary School, which had indicated

that it was in support of expanding the school. Following receipt of the results of the feasibility studies, where the results were positive the council would liaise with the governing bodies of those schools to seek their approval. It was emphasised that the school expansion schemes were required to be completed by September 2012; however, it was possible due to the restricted timescales involved, that a partial result in which the reception year classes would be completed but other facilities and classrooms would follow, may be achieved.

Rajesh Sinha added that recommendation 2.10, the allocation of £150k from the Council's Main Capital Programme for updating the information on school condition and cad database, was underway. Data collected via this process had already revealed that the number of pupils on roll at many schools exceeded the respective net capacity figures. It was suggested that this was due to the acute pressure on school places which had led to various short term solutions including the addition of bulge classes. With regard to the allocation of the total sum of £20m from the council's Main Capital Programme and the Section 106 Capital Receipts, these funds had yet to be received and the latter source was dependent on the finalisation of the Section 106 agreements.

Councillor Harrison queried whether any of Brent's schools had expressed an interest in becoming all-through schools. The committee was advised that Wembley High School and Capital City Academy had expressed an interest in becoming all-through schools. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) added that a thorough consultation on the various models of schools would be conducted. In addition, a wider audit of all of Brent's Schools would be undertaken. In response to a further query, Rik Boxer advised that a report would be brought to the committee setting out the evidence base for the different models of schools. Rik Boxer clarified that urban style schools were those which occupied sites of a limited size and which made innovative uses of the space available. An urban style school would make use of tall buildings and complementary facilities such as a play spaces located on the roof. Rajesh Sinha added that such schools might also focus on providing only statutory facilities, for example, by choosing to establish an agreement with a local leisure centre rather than providing a play space on site. Arrangements of these types had already started to be implemented in Free Schools.

Councillor Al-Ebadi queried whether consideration had been given to purchasing spaces in private schools in Brent, as he knew of at least one school where there were approximately one hundred places available. Rik Boxer advised that he was not aware that this was an area which had been explored and that a cost analysis would be required to ascertain whether this was a viable option.

Councillor Lorber advised that he was a school governor for Barham Primary School which was one of the four schools identified in the report as being most suitable for permanent expansion. He explained that the governing body had in recent years twice rejected proposals to expand the school and had just completed an alternative project to establish a nursery. Rajesh Sinha advised that discussions had been held with the head teacher of Barham Primary School. Once the feasibility studies had been completed, detailed proposals would be presented to the selected schools. Inherent within the process was the opportunity for the selected schools to obtain some improved facilities and it was in this aspect that it

was felt interest might be expressed by those schools which might otherwise reject proposals to expand.

Councillor Lorber commented that previous school development projects, particularly those for Wembley Park Primary and Sudbury Primary school had resulted in a significant overspend and that the council needed to ensure that similar circumstances did not arise. Rik Boxer noted that there had been good examples of recent school development projects as well but added that the comments would be taken on board.

Dr Levison queried whether the expansion projects encompassed the addition of supporting facilities or if they just included extra classrooms. Rajesh Sinha explained that the council had taken a holistic view to the projects and depending on the needs of each school had added additional facilities such as halls, staff rooms and food preparation and dining areas. Rajesh Sinha added that traffic assessments would also be conducted prior to expansion.

Following members' initial discussion, Rik Boxer provided a brief update to the committee on school places in Brent. For 2011, 4200 applications for reception year places had been received. Of these, 3439 had been on time and 561 had been received after the deadline. This latter figure was indicative of the number of new arrivals to the borough, and Rik Boxer advised that this figure increased daily. Despite the provision of an additional 260 reception year places for September 2011, there were at present 241 unplaced children for this year group, with 60 reception year vacancies across the whole of Brent; however, these vacancies were not necessarily in the required areas. A further 60 vacancies would become available in November 2011 following the completion of a current school expansion project. There were also unplaced children in years 1, 2, 3 and 4 and as of 30 September 2011 there were 707 unplaced children across the system and 370 vacancies. It was highlighted that the pressure on school places was slowly working its way through the year groups.

Councillor S Choudhary queried whether the limit of 30 children per class could be raised to allow larger class sizes to accommodate all of the unplaced children in Brent. Rik Boxer advised that all Council maintained schools were subject to statutory legislation which stipulated that class sizes for Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2 could not exceed 30 pupils. In some limited circumstances the council had approached the school to request that it exceed this limit but the council did not have the authority to enforce such measures. Mrs Gouldbourne expressed that large class sizes would impair the ability of the teachers to meet the different needs of their pupils.

The Chair requested an update on the expansion of Newfield Primary school and Brentfield Primary school. The committee was advised that phase one of the Newfield Primary school project would be finished by 27 October 2011 and phase two, by 9 December 2011. The project would be complete before Christmas 2011. There had been severe delays to the delivery of the Brentfield Primary school expansion project due to the discovery of asbestos. Phase-one of this project would now be delivered by 18 November 2011, with a final completion date set for the second week of December 2011. The expansion project for Preston Manor primary school was still on-going and phase-one was scheduled to be finished by 19 November 2011 and phase-two, by 16 December 2011. These projects had been

delivered in 12 to 14 months but would usually be expected to take 48 to 50 months.

Councillor Lorber noted that there was a significant number of late applications and queried why this was. Rik Boxer clarified that the deadline for applications had been in January 2011 and therefore, the 500 late applications principally reflected the number of families which had moved into the area since that time. Councillor Al-Ebadi commented that it would be important to consider that due to the housing reforms there would be more people moving in to Brent from areas such as Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea. Rik Boxer explained that in forming the projections of the number of school places that would be required by 2014/15, several factors had been considered including the changing housing situation and a housing expert had been secured for this purpose.

The Chair thanked the officers for their report.

RESOLVED: -

That the report be noted.

8. **2011 Education Standards (Verbal Report)**

Faira Ellks (Head of Services to Schools) provided a verbal report to the committee outlining the educational standards achieved for 2011 in Brent Schools. A supporting document was tabled for members' information. Faira Ellks noted that educational achievement in 2011 had been largely good. The committee received a brief overview of achievement for each educational stage from Early Years Foundation stage to Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 5. Faira Ellks also provided the committee with an analysis of educational attainment by ethnic group and for those children in receipt of free school meals.

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

Faira Ellks advised that there had been a significant improvement in EYFS outcomes in 2011 against the two main performance indicators. The first of these performance indicators examined the percentage of children scoring 78 points or more across all areas of learning. Performance against this indicator had improved from 43% in 2010 to 57% in 2011, which brought Brent in line with the 2010 national average (the 2011 national average was not yet available). The second key indicator measured the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the remaining results. This gap had narrowed from 35.2 in 2010 to 32.1 in 2011, representing a significant improvement. The national average in 2010 was 32.7.

Faira Ellks noted that key priorities for EYFS for 2011/12 and the measures required to achieve these, were set out on page 3 of the supporting document.

- **Key Stage 1**

The committee was advised that performance at Key Stage 1 had improved, with attainment for Level 2 broadly in line with national averages. Whilst attainment for Level 2B remained slightly below the national average, it was

highlighted that improvement was evident across all three areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Faira Ellks added that achievement at Level 2 was a good indicator of achievement at Level 4. For instance, it had been found that those children who achieved well at Level 2 were likely to achieve a Level 4 in Year 6.

- Key Stage 2

Faira Ellks noted that the number of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in both English and mathematics had fallen from the unusually high figure of 77%, achieved in 2010, to 73% in 2011. When this figure was adjusted to account for recent arrivals to Brent schools, it was expected that it would rise to bring Brent in line with the national average of 75% for 2011. In addition, progress rates from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 were at 85% for English and 83% for mathematics, as calculated under the new formula introduced for 2011 by the Department for Education (DfE); these figures were above the national averages for 2011.

- Key Stage 3

Faira Ellks advised that children were not required at this stage to take a statutory test and therefore, progress at Key Stage 3 was measured via teacher assessment. Consequently, due to a high degree of variation in the assessments conducted, this data did not create an accurate overview of performance in Brent at Key Stage 3. Currently, the data indicated that Brent's performance for English, Mathematics and Science were all below the national averages, although results had improved from 2010.

- Key Stage 4

The key performance indicator for Key Stage 4 measured the percentage of pupils who gained five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. Brent was likely to be above the national average having achieved 63% for 2011, compared to 60% in 2010. Another performance indicator measured the percentage of pupils who gained five A* to C grades in any subjects. Against this performance indicator, Brent had achieved 81% which was an increase of 6 percentage points from 2010.

- Key Stage 5

Faira Ellks informed the committee that there were two main performance indicators for Key Stage 5 which focussed on A level average point score per pupil and average point score per entry. For the latter of these, Brent continued to perform above the national average. For the former, Brent's performance had improved incrementally in recent years and the gap between Brent's performance and the national average was now minimal.

- Performance by ethnicity / free school meals (FSM)

Faira Ellks highlighted some of the trends evident from the analysis of the data on educational attainment by ethnicity and noted that there was an uneven

pattern overall. However, whilst there were still significant gaps between the performance of all Brent pupils and that of the three ethnic groups whose performance in recent years had caused the greatest concern (White Other, Somali and Black Caribbean), there had been significant improvements. The performance of children on FSM had also improved considerably.

Specifically, Fairra Ellks noted that outcomes for Somali pupils at Key Stage 2 had been poor but had improved at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4, the gap between the performance of Black Caribbean pupils and all Brent pupils had widened. The attainment of White Other pupils had improved reducing the overall gap between their performance and that of all Brent pupils. Outcomes for pupils on FSM were below those of non-FSM pupils at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4; however, this group performed better than their counterparts nationally at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

During members' discussion Councillor S Choudhary queried why educational attainment had fallen for Black Caribbean pupils at Key Stage 2, noting that English would not be a second language for children of that ethnicity. Fairra Ellks advised that there were many contributing factors that could be considered. An 'improving outcomes working group' had been established to identify such factors and devise measures to improve performance. It was also important to note that performance varied considerably across schools. Rik Boxer (Assistant Director, Achievement and Inclusion) reiterated that there were a variety of factors including poverty and peer pressure, which could affect educational attainment. However, lessons could be learnt from how the best performing schools supported pupils and monitored performance.

In response to several queries by the committee, Fairra Ellks advised that there were many different measures in place in schools to improve performance. In particular, good monitoring procedures in schools allowed interventions, such as one to one tutoring, to be appropriately targeted. Monitoring the overall performance of schools was a key function of the service offered by the council. The council worked intensively with schools to help identify problem areas and put appropriate measures in place; however, raising a school's performance took time. Responding to a concern that parents needed to be involved and made aware of bad schools, Fairra Ellks explained that there were not really any bad schools in Brent and noted that the role of the head teacher in encouraging parental involvement and creating a positive educational climate was key. She added that not all head teachers would be outstanding in this area. It was highlighted that governors would also play a key role in encouraging parental involvement.

The Chair thanked the officers for their contributions.

RESOLVED: - That the verbal report be noted.

9. Provision of Services for Children with Disabilities (Verbal Report)

A verbal update report was presented to the committee by Rik Boxer (Assistant Director, Achievement and Inclusion) on the provision of services for children with disabilities. Rik Boxer noted that this item had been added as a standing item on the committee's work programme, following the decision taken by the Executive at

its meeting on 23 May 2011 to restructure the short term break offer provided by the Council. The restructure of the service encompassed the closure of the centre at Crawford Avenue and the provision of an enhanced service at the centre on Clement Close. He further clarified that the report did not aim to revisit the decision of the Executive but rather to update members on the implementation of the decision.

Rik Boxer informed the committee that on 23 August 2011 a judicial review had been filed against the decision of the Executive to close the centre at Crawford Avenue and restructure the provision of services for children with disabilities. The judicial review had since been concluded and notice of the outcome was expected imminently.

The schedule for implementation of the Executive's decision had been delayed as a result of the judicial review. It had been intended that the expanded service at Clement Close would be in place by October 2011 and in order to achieve this, a comprehensive staff training programme and a series of capital works had been planned. However, until the results of the judicial review were known, the centre at Crawford Avenue had remained open and the staff training programme and capital works had been put on hold. As part of the implementation of the Executive's decision, it had been intended to secure an independent adviser to provide advice and guidance to parents in choosing the most appropriate service options for their children. The committee was advised that an independent adviser was now in place.

The committee was reminded that the restructure of these services reflected the council's longer term strategy to concentrate the council's short break service for children with disabilities in a single site, namely that of the Village School. This centre was due to be open in late 2012 and the development of the site was currently on schedule. The building would be finished by early 2012 to allow sufficient time for the required Ofsted inspection to be conducted, which could take up to six months to complete.

During members' discussion, Councillor Harrison sought further information with respect to the implications of the staff at Crawford Avenue having been notified of their redundancy but the centre currently remaining open. Rik Boxer confirmed that the redundancy notices were issued to staff prior to the judicial review being submitted. The nine members of staff to whom these notices had been issued currently had the option to take their redundancy and discussions had been held with each staff member. Any individuals that did leave whilst the centre remained open would have to be replaced in order to maintain service delivery and a decision as to the best way to do this would have to be made.

RESOLVED: - that the verbal report be noted.

10. Items on the Forward Plan in relation to Children and Young People

Andrew Davies (Policy and Performance Officer) advised that the attached issue of the Forward Plan showed those items of relevance to the committee. He added that a new issue of the Forward Plan had been published since the agenda for the committee had been distributed.

The Chair sought further details regarding the report entitled 'future of Children's Centre childcare provision'. Councillor Arnold noted that a consultation was currently being held and a report would be brought to the Executive in December 2011 for a decision.

RESOLVED: -

That the items on the Forward Plan of relevance to the committee be noted.

11. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Andrew Davies (Policy and Performance Officer) noted that there were several items listed for the next meeting of the Panel and suggested that a meeting be held with the Chair and Rik Boxer to agree which reports should be included on the agenda for the next meeting. The Chair added that there were a number of additional reports, arising out of the current meeting which would also need to be added to the agenda for the next meeting and/or the work programme.

Rik Boxer advised that the council was currently subject to an inspection around looked after children and safeguarding. The outcome of this inspection would be available by the next meeting of the committee. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member for Children and Families) advised that the council had also recently had an inspection on Youth Offending which might be of interest to the committee.

RESOLVED: - that the work programme be noted.

12. Date of next meeting


Several members of the committee noted that they may not be able to attend the next meeting scheduled for 7 December 2011 as it clashed with a meeting of the Schools Forum. It was subsequently agreed that the date of the next meeting would be changed to avoid a clash of dates with the Schools Forum meeting.

13. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

H GLADBAUM
Chair

	<p style="text-align: center;">Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8 December 2011</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Director of Children and Families</p>
For information	Wards Affected: ALL
Safeguarding and Looked After Children Service Inspection	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the outcome of the Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection which took place between 3-14 October 2011. The detail is contained within the attached full inspection report and the associated papers

2. Detail

- 2.1 There is a nationally established inspection regime for children's social care which whilst subject to regular change, operates on a rolling 3yr programme of inspection. The last inspection in Brent was a Joint Area Review in 2006. The current Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection (SLAC) is the first since that date. It is also the last in the current format as they are being amended following recommendations from the Munro review.
- 2.2 The inspection provides two separate judgements, one for safeguarding and one for services to looked after children. The judgement scale runs from Outstanding to Inadequate. Brent was judged to be adequate for both which is the grade for 46% of Local Authorities for Safeguarding and 53% of authorities for looked after children, based on the most recent Ofsted report on "Local authority children's service inspections and outcomes".
- 2.3 Children were judged to be safe in Brent and thresholds for child protection intervention were judged to be appropriate. There were a number of recommendations included in the report which will now form the basis of an improvement plan.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.
- 3.2 Officers from the Children and Families Department will attend the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide a more detailed update and answer questions on the report.

Background Papers

1. Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services. London Borough of Brent. Published by Ofsted 18 November 2011
2. PowerPoint presentation including information on grade descriptors.

Contact Officer –

Graham Genoni, Assistant Director Children's Social Care

Tel - 020 8937 4091

Email – graham.genoni@brent.gov.uk

Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services

London Borough of Brent

Inspection dates: 3 – 14 October 2011

Reporting inspector: Lynn Radley HMI

Age group: All

Published: 18 November 2011

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the local authority or at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Contents

About this inspection	2
The inspection judgements and what they mean	3
Service information	3
Safeguarding services	6
Overall effectiveness	6
Capacity for improvement	6
Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people	10
Children and young people are safe and feel safe	10
Quality of provision	11
The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe	11
Ambition and prioritisation	16
Leadership and management	16
Performance management and quality assurance	17
Partnership working	18
Services for looked after children	20
Overall effectiveness	20
Capacity for improvement	21
How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?	23
Being healthy	23
Staying safe	24
Enjoying and achieving	25
Making a positive contribution, including user engagement	26
Economic well-being	27
Quality of provision	28
Ambition and prioritisation	30
Leadership and management	30
Performance management and quality assurance	31
Record of main findings	33

About this inspection

1. The purpose of the inspection is to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the local area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The inspection team consisted of four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one inspector from the Care Quality Commission. The inspection was carried out under the Children Act 2004.
2. The evidence evaluated by inspectors included:
 - discussions with children and young people receiving services, front line staff and managers, senior officers including the Director of Children's Services and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, elected members and a range of community representatives
 - analysing and evaluating reports from a variety of sources including a review of the Children and Young People's Plan, performance data, information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day care provision, and the evaluation of a serious case review undertaken by Ofsted in accordance with *'Working Together To Safeguard Children'*, 2010
 - a review of 53 case files for children and young people with a range of need. This gave a view of services provided over time and the quality of reporting, recording and decision making undertaken
 - the outcomes of the most recent annual unannounced inspection of local authority contact, referral and assessment arrangements undertaken in November 2010
 - interviews and focus groups with front line professionals, managers and senior staff from North West London Hospitals Trust (NWLHT), Northwick Park Hospital site and Central Middlesex Hospital, NHS Brent, Brent Community Services (part of Ealing Hospital NHS Trust) and Central and North West London Health Foundation Trust (CNWL).

The inspection judgements and what they mean

3. All inspection judgements are made using the following four point scale.

Outstanding (Grade 1)	A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Good (Grade 2)	A service that exceeds minimum requirements
Adequate (Grade 3)	A service that only meets minimum requirements
Inadequate (Grade 4)	A service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

4. London Borough of Brent has a resident population of approximately 74,000 children and young people aged 0 to 18, representing 23% of the total population of the area. In 2011, 91.7% of the school population was classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British, compared to 22.5% in England overall. About 60% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Gujarati, Somalian and Arabic are recorded as the most commonly spoken community languages in Brent schools. Large and established communities of Indian, Black Caribbean and Irish people live in Brent. However, the proportion of children from these backgrounds is decreasing. The numbers of children from Somali and other Black African groups, Eastern European, Afghanistani, Iraqi and Hispanic backgrounds are increasing.
5. Brent has 83 schools comprising 60 primary schools, 15 secondary schools, a number of academies including an all-through academy, four special schools and four pupil referral units. Early years service provision is delivered predominantly through the private and voluntary sector in over 100 settings, and the local authority maintains four nurseries.
6. The Brent Children's Partnership, which was originally constituted in 2005 under former Children's Trust arrangements brings together key agencies within the public, community and voluntary sectors who have responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Brent Children and Young People's Plan. A Partnership Board is responsible for the development and monitoring of the plan. A Partnership Forum, which includes agencies such as the police, Brent Primary Care Trust, the probation service and Brent Youth Parliament, has responsibility for the delivery of the plan. The Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) became independently chaired in 2006, bringing together the main

organisations working with children, young people and families in the area that provide safeguarding services.

7. Brent social care services for children have 105 in house foster carers, two respite care units and a range of externally commissioned services such as fostering and residential care placements for looked after children. Community-based children's services have been provided since January 2009 by five locality teams; two care planning teams; two young people in care teams; one crisis intervention and support team; three children with a disability teams; one youth offending team; two adoption teams (pre and post teams); two fostering teams which recruit, assess, train and support foster carers, and a commissioning and resources service. An emergency out of hours service provides cover for Brent. Other family support services are delivered through children's centres and extended services in schools.
8. At the time of the inspection 384 children were looked after, comprising 64 children of less than five years of age, 198 children of school age (5–16), 122 post-16 young people and a total of 153 with care leaver status, of which 30 are currently at university.
9. At the time of the inspection 240 children (107 females, 131 males and two unborn children) were subject to a child protection plan, and this figure has increased over the last two years. Some 34% of these children are aged under five, 1% are unborn, 48% are aged five to 11 and 17% are aged 12 years or older. The highest categories of registration are emotional abuse at 55% and neglect at 38%, with physical abuse at 5% and sexual abuse at 2%.
10. Commissioning and planning of health services and primary care are carried out by NHS Brent, with the main delivery of community health services being through Brent Community Services (part of Ealing Hospital NHS Trust). The main provider of acute hospital services is North West London Hospital Trust. Community-based child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are provided by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust. In-patient CAMHS (Tier 4 services) are externally commissioned by NHS Brent. The Primary Care Trust (PCT) recently joined with NHS Harrow to form a sub-cluster with the overall North West London cluster of eight PCTs.
11. Universal services such as health visiting, school nursing and paediatric therapies are delivered primarily by Brent Community Services Directorate of the Ealing Hospital NHS Trust. The service was managed by NHS Brent until March 2011, merging with Ealing Hospital Trust from April 2011.
12. The acute hospital providing accident and emergency services for children and young people in Brent is North West London Hospitals Trust (NWLHT). Accident and emergency services are provided at the Northwick Park Hospital site and Central Middlesex Hospital. Maternity and newborn

services are provided by NWLHT and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. Children and families access primary care services through one of 70 GP practices, walk-in centres (including the walk in service at the Wembley Centre for Health and Care) and urgent care centres/minor injury centres at Northwick Park Hospital (provided by Ealing Hospital NHS Trust) and Central Middlesex Hospital (provided by Care UK).

13. Services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who have complex health needs services are provided by Brent Community Services.

Safeguarding services

Overall effectiveness

Grade 3 (adequate)

14. The overall effectiveness of the council and its partners in safeguarding children and young people is adequate. The council has improved service provision from a low base by implementing a successful recruitment and retention strategy, resulting in a stable and qualified workforce who offer a range of appropriate interventions and provide a solid foundation from which the council can grow and develop. However, supervision of social workers is not occurring with sufficient regularity and the quality of supervision records is not routinely good enough. Brent council and its partners are meeting their statutory responsibilities and senior managers have made progress in raising awareness of safeguarding responsibilities across agencies. The council takes prompt action to safeguard children and young people. However, processes in relation to managing the timeliness of child protection enquiries from the point of initiation to the holding of an initial child protection case conference are not consistently understood or implemented by staff and managers. Assessments are variable in quality and analysis of risk and protective factors was not evident in all cases examined by inspectors. Robust cross-directorate management of finance is in place and regular monitoring meetings chaired by the Chief Executive ensure effective use of resources. Recent budget cuts have led to reduced capacity within youth offending and early intervention services. However, it is too early to evaluate impact.
15. The use of the common assessment framework (CAF) demonstrates that partnership involvement with early intervention processes is established and leads to the provision of services to support and safeguard children and young people in the community. However, the number of completed common assessments is reducing, with limited contribution of health practitioners to this level of intervention, and no evaluation of the impact or quality of the CAF has been undertaken. The council takes the views of children and young people into account and assessments provide evidence that the wishes and needs of individual children are identified and often acted upon in individual cases. However, there is little evidence that their views inform service development or contribute to evaluating service effectiveness.

Capacity for improvement

Grade 3 (adequate)

16. The local authority, health agencies and their partners have an adequate capacity for improvement. The council undertook a programme of reconfiguration in 2010 to respond to a more constrained financial environment, at a time when children's social care services were at an early stage of their journey of improvement. The impact of this changed environment is that the linkages between corporate and departmental

strategies, plans and performance management are neither clear nor robust. At an operational level the safeguarding action plan 2011–12 goes some way to mitigate this. Implementation of a more robust performance management framework which links finance and performance using a council-wide scorecard system has begun. The children and families directorate has not yet completed a cycle of reporting, evaluation and challenge so it is too early to be able to evidence any sustained improvement. Senior managers and elected members have ensured that they have protected core services in relation to safeguarding and child protection, despite cuts to council resources. The council and its partners have broadly addressed the areas for development from the unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in November 2010. The quality of analysis in assessments has not been raised to a high enough standard in all cases, but managers are aware of this and have plans in place for ongoing staff development, audit and review.

17. Service user engagement, particularly with parents and carers, is poor and there appear to be few, if any, formal mechanisms of effective survey or aggregation of these views to inform service improvements. The new 'strengthening families' focused approach to child protection conference arrangements aims to improve this, but to date there is little evidence of any impact. However, to improve parental involvement in decision making about their children, the number of family group conferences held this year has been increased.
18. Improvement has been seen in the timeliness of assessments; for example 89% of initial assessments are completed within 10 working days set against a target of 75% and the number of core assessments completed within 35 working days has risen to 90% from 83% last year. However, Brent Children's Partnership acknowledged in July 2011 that from their 43 key performance indicators, 18 identified targets, which equates to 40%, were not yet met and the performance report is limited in its effectiveness as it does not include an underpinning analysis of why this is the case.
19. Workforce planning and development have been effective in retaining and recruiting qualified social workers and this shows evidence of the council's ability to implement a programme of improvement. However, the workforce is now weighted with relatively inexperienced staff who need focused professional support and development to consolidate the council's initial success and drive standards of practice and service delivery forward. In addition to this, practice is extremely variable in undertaking and recording formal supervision of staff, which is a weakness in maximising the benefits of the successful recruitment strategy. The workforce is diverse and is representative of the local community.

Areas for improvement

20. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in Brent, the local authority and its partners should take the following action.

Immediately:

- ensure that timely, supportive and reflective supervision is provided for social care staff by managers and that this is recorded promptly and to a high standard
- ensure that supervision files are subject to a regular system of audit and review by senior managers.

Within three months:

- fully implement a system of qualitative as well as quantitative performance management which links to their auditing processes
- develop effective systems for obtaining and aggregating service user views, to include key themes from complaints and advocacy services, with the purpose of informing service improvement and development
- ensure that the quality of child in need and child protection plans is improved so that timely, measureable and achievable outcomes for safeguarding are clear and effective
- the LSCB to ensure that thresholds and 'step up, step down' processes are fully understood and effectively shared across agencies in relation to children who no longer require a child protection plan
- NW London NHS Trust to ensure that safeguarding thresholds are clearly understood. The Trust also to ensure that appropriate child protection and safeguarding training and regular updates are in place for all staff, and that attendance and impact on practice are monitored effectively
- NHS Brent to put in place a performance management framework to fully encompass providers' safeguarding activity and outcomes and monitor this routinely through effective clinical governance arrangements
- Ealing Hospital NHS Trust to develop a workforce development plan for the health visitor service which aligns with national 2015 targets
- NHS Brent to ensure that general practitioners are fully engaged with multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) arrangements

- Brent children's social care services, NHS Brent and Ealing Hospital NHS Trust to put in place consistent and effective arrangements to ensure the prompt sharing of information about children subject to child protection plans and children who are looked after
- Brent children's social care services, NHS Brent and Ealing Hospital NHS Trust to ensure that disabled children and young people and their parents/carers are actively engaged in the quality assurance and development of services.

Within six months:

- Brent children and families' directorate and Brent children's partnership to strengthen the coordination and integration of strategic plans, underpinning them by appropriate performance management arrangements to monitor and drive improvement.

Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people

Children and young people are safe and feel safe

Grade 3 (adequate)

21. Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people are adequate. The role and function of the local authority designated officer (LADO) is established within Brent with regard to addressing concerns about the conduct of adults working with children, although changes in personnel have had an adverse affect on the role being utilised in the fullest way. In most cases lead agencies respond appropriately to child protection concerns and allegations, and immediate safeguarding needs are usually accurately identified. As yet there are insufficient monitoring and evaluation processes in place. This results in service development not being informed by learning from the work of the LADO. Children's services respond promptly to complaints, often resolving these at an early stage, although there is no clear aggregation of learning taking place to inform service planning. Safeguarding provision is identified as good or better in Ofsted inspections of local authority fostering and adoption services and private fostering arrangements, and at least satisfactory in the most recent inspections of local authority children's homes.
22. Appropriate procedures for safe recruitment are in place and in most cases are observed. However, in two cases examined there was evidence that where applicants had criminal record bureau disclosures that gave rise for concern, the council did not follow its own policy and the decisions to appoint staff were poorly managed and recorded. The council has acknowledged this is not acceptable and has plans to strengthen procedures and data retention by November 2011.
23. Children's social care services positively engage with and listen to children and young people and in most cases act upon their views. However, there are few, if any, formal systems or surveys which aggregate their views to regularly inform service development or improvements, even within the recently implemented 'strengthening families' approach to child protection conferences. Young carers highly value the emotional support provided by an effective young carers' group. While there is a generally strong understanding and sensitivity to the individual needs and diversity of families, children's social care audits consistently identify that when children are subject to child protection plans those needs become of secondary focus rather than being incorporated in the primary aims of work being done. Services are highly effective in closing the gap educationally for those children subject to economic deprivation, with achievement being particularly pronounced for children who have arrived in the area seeking asylum. Effective anti-bullying guidance, which includes cyber and homophobic bullying, is in place for schools in the

borough. An anti-bullying council of young people from secondary schools meets regularly, which leads to the production of educational media and lesson plans.

Quality of provision

Grade 3 (adequate)

24. The quality of provision is adequate. Early intervention processes are established and lead to the provision of services to support children and young people in the community. Although the total number of common assessments is declining schools have engaged well with the CAF and health practitioners who have been less likely to initiate common assessments, do participate in team around the child meetings. The more recent addition of the crisis intervention support team is proving particularly successful for children with acute vulnerability to becoming looked after. The development of a 'step up, step down' approach, enabling children to move between different levels of assessed need and services, is beginning to be implemented to positive effect and examples were seen by inspectors where agencies had successfully escalated intervention when children's circumstances were deteriorating.
25. Parents who had received services as a result of the CAF had achieved some positive outcomes and valued the help they received. The support provided was matched well to their individual needs and they had gained a range of skills and knowledge to better understand their children's behaviour, as well as developing practical parenting techniques and strategies. While it is not satisfactory that there is no formal evaluation of the impact of CAF on children, young people and their families, individual services, agencies and practitioners can articulate outcomes achieved and know where strengths exist as well as areas for development. The new early support service is bringing together multi-professional health teams drawn from a range of disciplines and this service, which supports families long-term, is beginning to develop parents as peer key workers for other parents.
26. Access to interpreters for children and their families for a wide range of languages is quickly accessible when needed to support assessment and direct work. Community-based services such as the Asian Women's Domestic Violence Service and the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation are used regularly in cases where honour-based violence, forced marriage and domestic violence are issues for women and children from these communities.
27. Clear contact and referral systems are in place that are understood and straightforward to operate at the 'front door' of children's social care. Referrals are dealt with in a timely manner and cases are allocated to workers that are appropriate to their skill and experience. Within children's social care services the statutory guidance on the timescale for holding an initial child protection conference following the undertaking of child

protection enquiries is not consistently followed, leading at times to unacceptable delay.

28. Most assessments show an improvement in the quality of analysis but this is recent and the focus on analysing risk and protective factors is insufficient. Core assessments are largely completed in a timely way but to a variable standard of quality. Cases are reviewed regularly, although the rigour being applied in driving plans forward within timescales appropriate to the child is variable.
29. The circumstances of many children are improved as a consequence of focused activity leading from their child protection plan and some cases seen show evidence of recent, assertive practice. Some practitioners seen exhibited high levels of skill, insight and sensitivity in relation to the individual children on their caseload. However, the progress of plans to fully meet the needs of some children who experience or are at risk from chronic neglect or emotional abuse have at times been subject to drift. At times this has been the result of social workers and managers not fully understanding or taking account of the impact of biographical factors and a family's historical responses to intervention - for example, parents who exhibit clear and extensive histories of resistance to achieving and sustaining change for their children. Inspectors also saw cases where children were no longer at risk of significant harm but remained subject to child protection plans.
30. Improvements to the quality of children in need plans are underway, although many of those seen by inspectors were of variable quality and had a limited focus on identifying specific and timely objectives. The intended outcomes were not consistently clear. The recently adopted practice of holding one plan per sibling group has been developed to lessen bureaucracy for social workers, but the impact of benefits balanced against inherent risks in the system has yet to be seen. Recording of work is timely in most cases, although the practice of 'cloning' records between siblings in the same family who are children in need is not appropriate and can lead to the individual needs of each sibling not being accurately or fully identified.
31. Some child protection plans are insufficiently specific about what would make the real difference to improving the safety and wellbeing of the child. Many plans seen by inspectors contained numerous activity-focused, generic tasks, so that clear evaluation of the impact of the plan in direct relation to risk to a child was unable to be seen. More effective oversight by managers and child protection review chairs has led to recent improved practice focusing on driving plans forward and achieving desired outcomes.

The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe

Grade 3 (adequate)

32. The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe is adequate. Most staff working in health services are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and are able to identify risks and appropriately make referrals arising from their contacts with children and young people. Practitioners are increasingly participating in child protection processes, with community midwives being individually supported by the specialist midwife for safeguarding. Thresholds for child protection referrals are generally understood and accident and emergency staff appropriately use the out of hours emergency duty team for consultation and advice when required. While safeguarding training at the appropriate levels is in place for the most part, there are some gaps identified at the acute hospital trust where not all non-clinical front line staff have received recent update training, although there is no evidence of children being put at risk as a result of this. Managers within the acute trust are aware of these gaps and plans are in place to secure the required training. Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place for clinical staff, as are arrangements for regular reflective practice sessions, but these do not address the needs of non-clinical staff.
33. The designated doctor and nurse appropriately supervise named professionals in provider services, and are accessible and regarded as being able to give reliable safeguarding advice and support. Named professionals engage positively with provider services in acute, community, mental health and primary care practices and also work closely with their colleagues in neighbouring boroughs to develop a model of collaborative working. Since NHS Brent has moved into a more commissioning -focused role, a positive step has been to increase capacity in the safeguarding team and the delivery of training for and increased engagement of general practitioners, dentists, opticians and other primary care services is a priority area of work. A performance management framework to encompass safeguarding activity and outcomes is planned by NHS Brent, but this is not yet in place. Commissioners are aware of areas in need of development such as recognising the need to strengthen performance management and are taking action to address it by building safeguarding expectations and requirements into all new contracts with health providers.
34. Health visitors prioritise child protection activity, have a high level of awareness about risk assessment and take appropriate action to ensure that children are safe. Attendance at core groups and conferences is good but in order to achieve this staff are working excess hours during evenings and at weekends due to high vacancy rates within the service. Managers have taken steps to improve recruitment and there has been a recent good uptake of student health visitor places. Skill-mixing is a positive development within the service, extending the roles and skills of nursery

nurses to take on some accident prevention work as a result of lessons learnt from serious case reviews. Work is at an early stage to map current services against needs in order to develop a strategy to build capacity and deliver on national 2015 targets.

35. Pre-birth planning is improving although there is work to do to achieve consistently effective action across all areas of the borough. There are examples of good practice where early planning has achieved positive outcomes such as midwives being present at all pre-birth planning meetings since December 2010.
36. MARAC meetings are well-attended by health agencies and existing arrangements work well. The acute trust's health visitor liaison service acts as the health link on MARAC. However, some general practitioners and primary care services are unaware of MARAC and are not engaged with the MARAC arrangements, despite rising awareness in primary care of domestic violence and the impact it has on children. The safeguarding designated and named professionals effectively disseminate information and briefings from LSCB and the Child Death Overview Panel and there is evidence of lessons learned from serious incidents nationally and locally informing the development of improved front line safeguarding practice. However, these drivers to improving practice do not have high profiles and not all front line staff in acute, community and primary care are aware of them.
37. Adult mental health services staff supporting adults with mental health or substance misuse issues are appropriately aware of the risks of hidden harm to children within these households. They work effectively with social care colleagues, who regularly attend their team meetings where child safeguarding is a standing agenda item. In-patient adult mental health services are also well-attuned to issues around the potential for hidden harm to young people and have effective policies in place in relation to children visiting adult in-patients.
38. CAMHS are of high quality and are well-regarded across the partnership. Operational cooperation between CAMHS and adult services is positive with a number of case examples demonstrating effective working to safeguard children. There is a protocol for out of hours services to children needing CAMHS assessments although these arrangements are being reviewed by commissioners in a multi-agency partnership as part of the overall review of paediatric pathways following the imminently expected closure of paediatric services at Central Middlesex Hospital. The Tier 4 in-patient provision operates across a number of boroughs in a consortium arrangement under contract at The Priory in Roehampton. Transitions from children's service into adult provision generally work well for young people with rarer conditions such as sickle cell anaemia, for which pathways may not be clear and which are scrutinised by the LSCB.

Planning for transition in CAMHS starts six months prior to transfer and liaison with adult services on individual children is effective.

39. The contract at Central Middlesex Hospital with Care UK to provide 24/7 Urgent Care Centre (UCC) services has been in place since March 2011. Overall, this has been a success, effectively treating nine in 10 of all children coming to hospital for an emergency with less than one child per day then being admitted to the paediatric assessment unit, representing an 88% reduction in admission rates under previous arrangements. A baseline audit of UCC performance was taken by the designated nurse in April and will be repeated annually. The effective health visitor liaison (HVL) service which operates across both acute hospital sites has been extended to include the UCC. Activity and outcomes arising from the health visitor liaison are reported through the Community Services Brent annual report. When the liaison health visitor is absent, staff are aware of how to raise concerns and seek advice but no backfill cover is in place to maintain the level of quality assurance across the three sites.
40. Child health outcomes are generally improving. Priority has been given to improving performance around child immunisations, which are still low. Young people needing immunisations are fast tracked at GP practices. There is a good range of sexual health services; GUM services are delivered by North West London Hospitals Trust, community based sexual health services delivered by Central and North West London Foundation Trust as well as others commissioned from the voluntary sector. Performance is improving and mostly positive. Schools are well-engaged with the sexual health agenda and there are some specialist services working with specific community groups to address locally identified issues such as female genital mutilation.
41. Young people's engagement in health commissioning is insufficiently developed and whilst there has been engagement and consultation in specific service areas, there is significant scope to improve. There has been no Young Inspectors or mystery shopping programme to evaluate services against the You're Welcome criteria and young people are not engaged in the training or recruitment of health personnel.
42. While there is some evidence that hearing impaired children have positive experiences of health services, parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders and those who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder do not feel their children are well-supported by health and social care services with the exception of services from CAMHS. Examples cited include: difficulties in accessing occupational therapy assessments for inclusion in statements; lack of effective transfer of information about their child's needs between hospital services; and the lack of effectiveness of health passports for those who have them. There is no evidence of an effective approach to coordinated health planning between disciplines, which would enable multiple interventions routinely to

be achieved under a single appointment or anaesthetic. Parents spoken to do not feel engaged in any meaningful discussions with health or social care about service development to meet the needs of their children more sensitively or effectively. Workers are able to present individual complex needs cases to a resources panel which has recently become multi-agency with the inclusion of the lead paediatric physiotherapist for children who require additional resources. However, assessments brought to panel are not always fully comprehensive or multi-disciplinary, potentially reducing the likelihood of the best outcome for the child.

Ambition and prioritisation

Grade 3 (adequate)

43. Ambition and prioritisation are adequate. Elected members champion the needs of all children and young people and this is evident in the commitment they make to hearing and taking seriously their views, such as by having three members of Brent Youth Parliament sitting regularly on Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Also, the council has undertaken to provide permanent accommodation for the Youth Parliament in their new Civic Centre.
44. Operational managers of safeguarding services are ambitious to improve standards and quality of practice in the borough and have a clear understanding of many of the key challenges to be addressed. Their priorities appropriately include improving the quality of assessments and the implementation of qualitative audit tools to gain a greater understanding of work being undertaken and to accurately inform service development. However, this is not reflected at a strategic management level, where priorities and ambitions lack coherence and are not clearly articulated. For example LSCB's 26 wide-ranging priorities for this year do not link clearly to the priorities of Brent Children's Partnership or Brent's Child Poverty Strategy.
45. Operational planning priorities are well-supported by the established and developing Advanced Practitioner role in locality teams. This provides skilled and flexible targeted input at practitioner level into specifically identified issues such as in dealing with the impact of domestic violence on children. The role is also effectively utilised to develop working relationships with partner agencies, such as schools, and building their confidence in appropriately dealing with safeguarding concerns.

Leadership and management

Grade 3 (adequate)

46. Leadership and management are adequate. Social care teams are appropriately established and sufficiently staffed by permanent, qualified social workers as a result of an effective workforce strategy that tackled poor recruitment and retention. The morale and motivation of staff across children's social care are high, with practitioners expressing an equally high regard for their immediate and senior managers. The profile of the

workforce suitably addresses the needs of the local community, with additional support from, and high level of use of, accessible translation and interpretation services. Appropriate training and development opportunities are available for the social care workforce and include more specialised and valued training available via the West London Alliance for front line managers. Staff are clear about the messages from local serious case reviews and the implications for their practice, and the role of the Advanced Practitioner supports and promotes this. The Advanced Practitioner role is highly regarded and has much influence and value for locality teams and key partners. The council and partner agencies in responding to reduced budgets have reduced the workforce, and have ended projects such as the Youth Offending Service's targeted early intervention programme. It is too early to assess the full impact on young people of this reduction in services. A range of prevention and early intervention services are experiencing challenges as a result of cuts to their financial capacity, and although this impacts on service provision core safeguarding services are presently protected. The balance of maximising efficiencies in resources with care planning, risk management and oversight of commissioned services is taking place appropriately within the council and being reported through to the corporate centre and the Chief Executive.

47. User engagement in service planning and development is at a rudimentary stage and this has been recognised by managers, who are keen to establish more effective communication and consultation with the wealth of communities in the area. The contracting of the Victoria Climbié Foundation to assist in the understanding of and consultation with minority ethnic and cultural groups in the area is an example of this. While much data is available about service user characteristics, analysis and evaluation mechanisms to aid or drive service planning and improvement remain in development. Complaints present as being few in number and are efficiently resolved at the lowest level, although again there is no aggregation of messages from complaints to inform service improvement.

Performance management and quality assurance

Grade 3 (adequate)

48. Performance management and quality assurance systems are adequate and are established at strategic and operational levels. Improvements in key performance measures, mainly in relation to timeliness or numbers of assessments completed, are reported as being achieved in recent years. These improvements are reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, although shortfalls and areas for development identified in inspections are not strongly profiled. A wealth of data is monitored, but evidence of this being used to inform and target improvements is limited. For example, there has been no effective evaluation of the impact of the CAF and early intervention services. Senior operational managers are clear that further improvements are required to increase the focus on qualitative measures

of performance. Existing audit processes attempt to evaluate the quality of some work as well as the quantity, but to date have had limited effectiveness in practice.

49. Managers at operational level are accessible to staff, exercising sufficient oversight of the work of their teams. They have addressed issues of poor conduct and performance of some staff and are increasingly clear about the high levels of performance they expect from the individuals in their teams, but as yet this has not led to an appreciable rise in the quality of service delivery. Although staff reported positive levels of satisfaction with the supervision process, evidence of supervision is extremely variable, ranging from poor to excellent, with limited reference to the timeliness of meetings, reflectiveness within the sessions, references to casework decision making or specific detailed focus on learning and development. In some cases the lengthy periods between supervision sessions are unacceptable and evidence was seen where no supervision had been recorded for several months.
50. The wide ranging oversight in relation to the overview and detail of the child protection service by child protection chairs is satisfactory. Although there are good arrangements for raising and escalating concerns about cases using a 'CP Alert' to the Head of Service, and despite them being in place for the past year, no data are available and no evaluation of the arrangements has been undertaken. Monitoring of agency attendance at and contribution to conferences is in place and has contributed to improvements in the attendance of some partner agencies, particularly by police and some health professionals. Data collected by the child protection service are quantitative and appropriately contribute to the suite of wider management information, but senior operational managers acknowledge its limitations and have plans to further develop qualitative performance measures to extend beyond those identifying simple compliance.

Partnership working

Grade 3 (adequate)

51. Partnership working is adequate. The LSCB has an independent chair and appropriate governance arrangements are in place to ensure regular communication between the LSCB and the Brent Children's Partnership. The LSCB has an appropriate overview of safeguarding issues across the borough and at times its influence is effective. The recently reconfigured strategic partnership presents as committed to improving outcomes for children and young people in Brent and has deliberately adopted a strategy of building strength and resilience in universal services with the aim of reducing or containing the demand for more costly targeted and specialist services. Evidence of the success or effectiveness of this strategy has yet to emerge. There is a small amount of evidence that the LSCB, coming from a low base, has achieved improvement in raising its profile with operational staff within public services, but front line health staff still

have no awareness of the board, the Child Death Overview Panel or the serious case review sub-committee. Concerns about the variable commitment to and attendance at child protection core groups by partner agencies have been successfully tackled in most respects and are an example of the recent use of a 'challenge and support' mechanism by the LSCB in pursuing the commitment and contribution of all key partners. The board has also effectively formally challenged Brent Children's Partnership in response to their concern about services for children affected by domestic violence and secured some degree of success such as in the retention of funding to MARAC for a year. However, the board acknowledges they are not effectively engaged with the community they serve and have not as yet been able to recruit any lay members.

52. Effective partnerships are in place with voluntary sector organisations such as the Freeman Family Centre and Kids Company, which are both commissioned services and work on a time limited basis to support families and vulnerable children. Evidence was seen of this having a positive effect on behaviour and familial relationships.
53. Some effective operational partnership arrangements are in place, such as the positive relationship between children's social care and the police child abuse investigation team. Although partners (apart from the police) are not routinely involved in strategy discussions even when there has been significant involvement with a family, neither the LSCB nor the strategic partnership has been effective in making the necessary improvements to practice. Operational relationships between agencies in relation to children affected by gang activity are established. Schools are engaged in processes to protect children and are supported through the role of the Advanced Practitioner as well as at locality practitioner forums. Most cases seen by inspectors showed evidence that thresholds of need are mostly understood and consistently applied where children are at risk of significant harm, although it is less clear that the 'stepping down' to child in need takes place at appropriate times when risks are sufficiently reduced.
54. Out of hours services are well-established and benefit from practitioners with skill and experience. Relationships with daytime social care services are effective and clear arrangements are in place for information sharing and communication as well as between the key emergency services. While the out of hours service has limited capacity and is managed by adult social care services, management liaison arrangements are effective.

Services for looked after children

Overall effectiveness

Grade 3 (adequate)

55. The overall effectiveness of services for looked after children is adequate. Statutory requirements are met by the local authority and its partners and some improvements in performance are being achieved such as sustaining low rates of looked after children who are involved in offending and a growth in numbers of looked after children attending university. Partnership working is generally well-established but health services for looked after children are inadequate. Senior managers in both the primary care and provider trusts acknowledge this and have already developed an action plan for approval by the primary care trust to address deficits. Some health assessments have not been completed and have not been reviewed, which is unacceptable. The quality of health assessments for looked after children varies from inadequate to good, with some being very superficial even when carried out by consultant paediatricians. Health plans are not sufficiently or consistently outcome focused, and in the most part simply identify tasks to be undertaken such as attending clinics. No comprehensive performance management framework is in place to ensure Brent Community Services' effective governance of and the delivery of the Being Healthy outcome, and actions identified in health plans are not monitored effectively.
56. The majority of in-house residential care provision for looked after children and young people is judged to be good or better in Ofsted inspection reports and no services are judged to be inadequate. The most recent inspection of fostering services found overall care to be good with the exception of outcomes for 'Enjoying and Achieving', which were judged to be outstanding. Assessment and care planning for looked after children are not consistently robust and are too variable in quality; plans are not being progressed with sufficient drive and planning for contingencies is not considered in enough detail. However, the leadership and management of services for looked after children are generally effective, with senior managers across the partnership having set ambitious targets and priorities for developing and improving services. Resources are used effectively and work with the West London Alliance adoption and fostering consortium has been developed to provide substantial savings in placement costs without compromising quality or choice of placements.
57. The council has effectively implemented a successful recruitment and retention strategy which has resulted in children experiencing fewer changes of social worker, and placements providing looked after children with a sense of stability and security. The workforce in Brent is diverse and is reflective of the community it serves.

Capacity for improvement

Grade 2 (good)

58. The capacity for improvement is good. The council has sustained improvement in performance in key outcome areas such as the number of care leavers who are in employment, education or training and their increased use of special guardianship orders as well as adoption to secure permanency for children. Performance in securing good quality stable accommodation for care leavers overseen by the children's social care transformation project is good and has led to positive outcomes for young people. Brent Looked After Children Strategy 2011–14, launched in May 2011, demonstrates a clear, coherent and ambitious vision for looked after children involving partner agencies, taking account of the views of young people and prioritising objectives that contribute to improved outcomes. The council and its partners understand their strengths and weaknesses and the strategy evidences their commitment to taking appropriate action to address them.
59. Good progress in safeguarding the welfare of looked after children has been achieved by the development and implementation of robust placement commissioning and contracting arrangements in conjunction with other local authorities. Work to drive forward progress is underway and the recruitment of specialised staff will further strengthen contracting and procurement arrangements.
60. Looked after children and young people are represented in a very effective Brent Youth Parliament, which participates in formal structures such as Overview and Scrutiny Panel and meets regularly with senior officers and elected members. Care in Action, the children in care council, has an enthusiastic and committed core group who have worked extremely hard to develop a children's pledge and to review progress against a set of 20 promises. A framework that ensures children have access to the senior management team including corporate parents is in place and secure. The views of looked after children are sought and understood and this is now beginning to have an impact upon service development and delivery.

Areas for improvement

61. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in Brent, the local authority and its partners should take the following action.

Immediately:

- NHS Brent to provide an effective health service to looked after children:
 - to ensure the timely completion of all health assessments and reviews

- to develop a robust approach to monitoring actions identified in health plans
 - to improve information exchange between health and social care professionals
 - to provide age appropriate and comprehensive health information for looked after children
 - where appropriate, to ensure that health professionals are invited to or able to contribute effectively to looked after children reviews
- The council to ensure timely notifications of all newly looked after children to partner agencies, and to inform them of other significant changes to placement arrangements.

Within three months:

- The council to draw up robust pathway and transition plans in conjunction with all those young people leaving care or who have left care
- The council to ensure that all social workers benefit from regular, good quality formal supervision that provides appropriate management oversight of case work planning
- The council to ensure that care plans and assessments for looked after children are focused, specific and include the consideration of all relevant background information
- The council to ensure that action is taken to improve school attendance for looked after children and reduce the numbers that are subject to fixed-term and multiple school exclusions.

Within six months:

- The council to ensure progress is made in providing stable placements for children on admission to care, and the timely provision of permanent homes for children with a plan for adoption
- The council to improve monitoring arrangements for individual children to measure educational progress relative to their starting points.

How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?

Being healthy

Grade 4 (inadequate)

62. Health outcomes for looked after children and young people are inadequate. A significant failure in the completion of initial and review health assessments for looked after children led to 179 assessments being overdue by October 2010. Increased capacity within the looked after children health team and action planning has resulted in a current backlog of 39 health reviews for looked after children; this remains unacceptable. Although performance is improving there remain significant areas for development, not least in achieving accurate and agreed data with social care. A further deficit arising from the backlog is that no targeted public health programmes are being delivered for looked after children due to the priority given to improving performance in completing health assessments. No comprehensive performance management framework is in place to ensure that the Brent Community Services directorate of Ealing Hospital NHS Trust effectively manages the delivery of the Being Healthy outcome. However, changes to governance arrangements in April 2011 are intended to deliver a greater level of oversight.
63. The designated doctor and named nurse do not have access to the children's social care looked after children health database and it is of concern that the administration of the health assessment system is dependent on one individual administrator. Poor arrangements for information sharing and lack of mutual access to databases between children's social care and health staff lead to difficulties in maintaining an accurate profile of the health needs of looked after children. Where children are placed outside of the borough there is effective liaison across boundaries to ensure a child's health needs are identified and met. Reviewing and assessment arrangements between children's social care services and health professionals are disconnected, with designated health staff not being routinely informed of looked after children's reviews. This is particularly of concern where a child may have complex health issues that would benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach. Health records show little evidence that the participation or voice of the child is taken into account and more generally the quality of recording practice is not at an acceptable standard.
64. Some effective specialist psychological CAMHS are in place for looked after children. Valued, supportive programmes for foster carers and social workers are provided by CAMHS, which are successful at sustaining placements where risk of breakdown has been identified. Health support to care leavers overall is at an early stage of development and although care leavers who have a disability can be supported until age 23, it is a matter of concern that there is no comprehensive health information yet

available in a user friendly format or which young people have helped to develop. Further evidence of the lack of engagement with young people is that looked after children are not involved in the recruitment or training of key health practitioners. Teenage pregnancy figures for looked after children and care leavers are high, with 40% of female care leavers in the 18–21 age range being either pregnant or already mothers.

Staying safe

Grade 2 (good)

65. Staying safe outcomes for looked after children are good. Looked after children and care leavers met during the inspection and in a survey undertaken by Care in Action say that they feel safe or fairly safe within their placements, and are able to identify at least one adult whom they trust, with the majority confident that their carers would respond appropriately to any safeguarding concerns they might have.
66. The proportion of children in care in the borough is in line with comparators, and has been at a similar level for the last five years. When a child needs to be received into care or their home circumstances are fragile, robust and well-understood procedures are in place. These include a placement panel which also considers and reviews decision making to ensure an early return home if at all viable and to review the quality of placement matches. The number and timeliness of children being placed for adoption is slowly improving and performance targets are included within the looked after children strategy.
67. Collaborative work to commission placements on a cost for volume basis with other local authorities through the West London Alliance adoption and fostering consortium is ongoing and placements with independent providers are only made in provision that is judged by Ofsted as good or better. The majority of in-house residential provision is good or better and no services are inadequate. The most recent inspection of fostering services in October 2009 found overall care to be good and staying safe to be good; the adoption service was judged as good in March 2008 with staying safe judged as satisfactory. Stability of longer-term placements is improving and in this area performance is better than comparator councils and the national average, although too many children experience three or more placement moves in the 12 months following their admission into care. Senior managers are aware of this problem and have introduced a number of initiatives which include support from a dedicated looked after children's CAMHS and the crisis intervention support team, who provide support to children and foster carers. However, improved stability has yet to be consistently achieved. Good and effective arrangements are in place to monitor children's placements including the significant number who are placed out of the borough. Regular meetings with independent providers ensure placement planning is outcome focused and that any placement drift is challenged assertively and largely avoided.

68. All looked after children are allocated to a suitably qualified social worker and children report that they have positive relationships with them. Brent foster carers receive appropriate support in keeping children safe and in addition they receive specialised support from CAMHS, which increases their knowledge and understanding of the needs of young people and is highly valued by carers who describe this as a responsive and flexible service. In addition social workers make good use of the specialist support and consultation available via a child psychologist and play therapist attached to the placements team, when planning direct work with children.
69. Children missing from care are managed appropriately within the terms of a joint agency protocol and a multi-agency management board has more recently been established to oversee practice and risk management in individual cases. However, further work is required before the board will be able to effectively analyse any patterns or trends that are emerging and the board has yet to submit a report to the LSCB for scrutiny and challenge.
70. The needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are addressed effectively by a knowledgeable and committed group of staff. Processes for their management within children's social care are well-established and referrals are directed immediately to care planning teams where all social workers undertaking age assessments are appropriately trained. Advocates and interpreters are easily accessible and are used throughout the age assessment process. Issues relating to individual experiences and wellbeing are well-considered. Young people are accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act and are accorded full status as looked after children. They are placed in a range of appropriate placements such as foster care or semi independent living, according to their age, individual and cultural needs. Support from CAMHS, which includes a worker in the care planning team, is available to address the emotional or mental health needs of asylum seeking young people.

Enjoying and achieving

Grade 3 (adequate)

71. Outcomes for enjoying and achieving are adequate. Educational achievements for looked after children in Brent are improving although achievement at Key Stage 2 has fluctuated year-on-year with improvements in 2011 leading to 67% of children attaining Level 4 or above in English and mathematics as compared to 73% for Brent children overall. The education for looked after children team (EDLAC) focuses clearly on supporting children when they move to secondary school. Although a greater proportion of young people at Key Stage 4 achieve 5 GCSEs including English and mathematics than comparable areas which is positive performance, the proportion of looked after children doing so has declined over the last three years. The gap in attainment between looked after children and all pupils at Key Stage 2 has narrowed but remains wide

at Key Stage 4. While the EDLAC team has gathered information and data on the cohort, staff are not yet in a position to judge how well individual children make progress from their starting points. The team has refocused its resources to better support those pupils at Key Stage 4. The team works with children's social care services to effectively identify and target those in the post-16 cohort for additional support if required, including those in education and training. Young asylum seeking people are achieving well, and comprise 52% of the 30 looked after children aged 18 and over who are presently attending university.

72. In the cases examined by inspectors, looked after children and young people are making satisfactory progress and enjoying school. Their educational needs are being met and they are developing personal, social and academic abilities. However, absences from school for Brent's looked after children are higher than comparable areas and the England average and this has been identified as a priority in the looked after children strategy. Too many young people have meetings arranged during school hours and both fixed-term and multiple exclusions are higher than comparable areas and the England average, although permanent exclusions are low. The EDLAC team ensures that educational support, including resources and tuition, are available where necessary for those pupils out of school, for example on fixed term exclusions. Looked after children and young people are encouraged to develop their wider interests and enjoy extra-curricular activities such as football and drama, which support the growth of their confidence and ability to communicate well. A good range of activities is in place including theatre trips, university taster days, outdoor pursuits and a well-attended high profile celebration of achievement awards event. Those children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support and are placed in specialist settings if required. Personal education plans are in the most part up to date, sufficiently detailed, and subject to effective oversight by the EDLAC team. Personal education allowances are aligned to the learning goals of children and young people who are placed both in Brent and outside the borough and the EDLAC team is proactive in monitoring progress of children placed outside of Brent through liaison with schools and local authorities.

Making a positive contribution, including user engagement

Grade 2 (good)

73. Outcomes for looked after children and young people in making a positive contribution are good. The views of looked after children have an impact upon service development and delivery and looked after children and young people take an active part in shaping the services that they receive, for example in the development of care planning and children in care services. Good links for communication are in place between Care in Action and the corporate parenting panel, as well as regular meetings between looked after children and the Director of Children's Services.

Additionally, looked after children meet with a range of council staff such as those from leisure services to share their views and exchange information and they are being trained to effectively participate in the recruitment of social workers

74. A pledge setting out what children in care can expect from the council is in place and was developed in conjunction with looked after children. It has been effectively reviewed by Care In Action through two surveys with children, social workers and managers. Where expectations have not been met, Care In Action has recommended that actions to resolve matters are included in the objectives of the looked after children strategy, and this has been raised with senior officers. However, the strategy review group has yet to meet so it is not possible to evaluate the impact. Most looked after children contribute to their reviews and children report that their views are appropriately considered by professionals and reviewing officers. Commissioned advocacy services are accessible for those who wish it but no detailed evaluation of the service's impact has been undertaken as yet. Effective processes are in place for resolving complaints and the majority are resolved at an early stage, with only a small proportion of complaints being escalated. This success is supported by the service manager, who adopts a proactive approach in meeting directly with children and young people to seek a resolution. Where improvements to services are identified as a result of a complaint these are considered appropriately by the complaints manager and the senior management team.
75. The sustained good performance in relation to looked after children involved in offending, with lower rates than similar areas and the England average, is underpinned by effective multi-agency work between children's social care services, the youth offending service and the EDLAC team, which includes information sharing, liaison, and assessment of individual needs. The triage system used in Brent is successfully preventing offending by young people who are looked after; approximately 85% of those who do enter the criminal justice system do not re-offend.

Economic well-being

Grade 3 (adequate)

76. Economic well-being outcomes are adequate. The proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training is higher than the national average and a range of agencies provides appropriate support to ensure that looked after children achieve well after they have left school. Support from the EDLAC team has been extended and they provide one-to-one support for those in education; the number of care leavers studying at university has increased to 30 in 2011. Care leavers report good levels of support to help them achieve their goals and they are guided well in making positive choices about their next steps in education, employment and training. The 'Teenagers to Work' programme provides valuable opportunities for a small number of care leavers to gain work experience

and develop employability skills such as communication, customer service and time-management.

77. The quality of pathway planning is inconsistent and most cases inspected were of inadequate quality. Although assessment of need is timely, too many plans that are in place do not include sufficient analysis of the practical and other skills necessary for young people to live independently. While increasing numbers of care leavers have a pathway plan, in August 2011 14% did not. Plans seen by inspectors lack sufficient detail to identify the support available for young people to sustain and build social relationships, and insufficient attention is given to planning for contingencies. In some cases plans remained incomplete six months prior to young people's leaving care dates and therefore did not offer coherent, focused direction to complete the necessary work for young people to be appropriately prepared.
78. Increasing numbers of care leavers are in suitable accommodation and multi-agency work to secure a range of housing options for care leavers is effective, with targets to accommodate care leavers being exceeded. Placements are carefully matched to the needs of individual young people and care leavers are appropriately prioritised for accommodation. Where appropriate, care leavers are supported well to remain in foster care.

Quality of provision

Grade 3 (adequate)

79. The quality of provision for looked after children and young people is adequate. Appropriate and well-understood procedures are in place that inform practitioners of the circumstances in which children should be received into care. Despite this, some cases seen by inspectors contained evidence of initial delay in convening strategy meetings, resulting in delay in assessing the degree to which children were at risk of harm. However, once a strategy meeting had taken place, decisive action was taken and young people were appropriately brought into care. The targeted use of the crisis intervention and support team, using solution focused and accredited parenting programmes, along with the expanding use of family group conferencing, is successful at maintaining children on the edge of care at home and therefore reducing the necessity for care, at least in the short term. However, there is no longitudinal review to evaluate effectiveness.
80. A kinship care team is now established and has made progress in raising awareness of the need to consider a child's wider extended network when looking at accommodation or permanence plans among professionals. Processes to manage the quality of viability assessments have improved and the kinship care team now meets statutory requirements in that no child is placed prior to an assessment being completed and authorised by a senior manager. Although a high proportion of young people remain in residential care and are placed out of borough, the inspection found no

evidence to suggest that these placements were inappropriate. Overall, children benefit from placements that are stable and placement matching is appropriate in terms of skills and experience of carers. A successful foster carer recruitment campaign has increased placement choice and placement commissioning strategies are becoming more effective, with further improvements anticipated through Brent's participation in the West London Alliance.

81. In Brent all looked after children have care and placement plans and all have an allocated social worker. However, the quality of assessments and plans remains too variable. In half of the assessments seen by inspectors there appears to be little regard to significant background factors and limited evidence that the children's holistic needs have been fully assessed and well-understood. Care planning in some cases, particularly where parallel plans are in place, is passive, with social workers allowing their progress to be driven by court timescales and requirements; care planning is not routinely comprehensive and fails to drive work forward in an assertive way, resulting in drift and uncertainty for children and young people. Generally, assessments and case planning demonstrate that satisfactory attention is paid to disability, culture and gender and in the majority of cases a suitable placement match is identified. However, at times placement matching is not as comprehensive as it could be and assumptions that placing a child with a foster carer of the same ethnicity or cultural background will meet his or her needs results in care or placement plans not always fully articulating the individual needs of the child.
82. Case work supervision and management oversight are clearly provided in looked after children's services but evidence is very limited of significant impact other than in directing short-term action planning. Formal auditing systems are in place but have, as yet, not ensured that required improvements in the quality of assessments and care planning are consistently achieved. Children spoken to during the inspection report that they have positive relationships with social workers, that they are regularly visited and that social workers listen to them. Case recording is generally up to date although in some cases there are multiple entries of routine visits occurring on the same date and chronologies are not always up to date or sufficiently clear, making it difficult to obtain a clear overview of the case history.
83. Performance in relation to the timeliness of reviews of looked after children is positive and independent reviewing officers (IROs), who know children well, are consistent and knowledgeable. The role of the IRO is broadly effective in monitoring and helping direct care planning, although their high caseloads compounded by significant travel to out of borough placements and limited access to the electronic case file system, severely restrict their capacity and impact. While an appropriate escalation policy is in place, this has not been used in the last 12 months and not all

reviewing officers are familiar with it. Most of the IRO team are agency workers and although they chair the majority of looked after children reviews, their views were not sought or used to inform the latest annual report of their service, which is not satisfactory. IROs are innovative in their approach and ensure that children regularly participate in their reviews, but they do not routinely invite contributions from colleagues in health, even where there are significant health concerns. Also, health professionals do not routinely receive copies of minutes from reviews, which undermines the effectiveness of care planning and progress in individual cases. Outcome focused meetings with external placement providers complement the looked after children review process and are effective in holding providers to account, ensuring that key milestones in children's care plans are reached.

Ambition and prioritisation

Grade 3 (adequate)

84. Ambition and prioritisation are adequate. The children's social care transformation project, part of Brent's One Council programme, seeks to drive forward an improvement agenda and is on course to meet its financial targets. The resulting strategy puts in place a set of multi-agency objectives to ensure that children are placed in provision best suited to their needs and supported by effective services. Implementation of the strategy has started and although a framework to review progress has been agreed, the project group tasked with reviewing progress has yet to meet so it is not possible to evaluate its impact. Work is continuing to reduce and monitor the use of residential care, out of borough placements and placements with independent fostering agencies. Clear objectives such as growth of in-house foster placements to 40% by 2014 and a 7% reduction in the use of residential placements have been set and adequate progress is being made towards meeting these targets.
85. The LSCB has acted to promote the welfare of looked after children by prioritising a specific issue, such as health, and requesting that health partners produce an action plan to address the delay in completing initial and review health assessments, but so far this has not been fully effective or led to improved outcomes for looked after children. Elected members and corporate parents are committed to promoting positive outcomes for looked after children and have been influential in establishing work based apprenticeships for looked after children and summer work placements within the library service.

Leadership and management

Grade 3 (adequate)

86. Leadership and management are adequate. Under the remit of the children's social care transformation project the council has developed a clear strategy to manage demand and maximise resources and efficiencies, with the result that the placements budget is on target to be balanced in this financial year. Despite recent developments in the

management of services for looked after children, several areas remain where required actions have not been taken to ensure improvements in outcomes for children and young people. These include lack of rigour and quality of audit processes, the effectiveness and quality of supervision, infrequent use of the escalation process by IROs where they have identified concerns, and in securing appropriate health provision for looked after children.

87. The commissioning of placements is improving, with efficiencies achieved through more effective contracting and collaboration with neighbouring authorities through the West London Alliance. Commissioning activity is now driven by the need to meet challenging financial targets set within the children's social care transformation project. The number of looked after children placed within the borough is increasing, and the number of approved Brent foster carers has grown in-line with targets, but further work is still required to ensure that a sufficient range of placements is available within a reasonable distance of Brent. A service development steering group with input from care leavers has effectively overseen the expansion of the Brent Shared Housing Scheme, which offers stability through improved quality of housing to care leavers.
88. Social workers have manageable caseloads, enabling statutory duties to be carried out and meaningful relationships to be developed and sustained with children and young people. However, while locality teams have benefitted from Approved Practitioner posts, the role has not been included within care planning teams and so practitioners do not have the same opportunities to develop expertise in such a focused manner. The proportion of permanent staff is now 75% across all teams working with looked after children and care-leavers. This has been achieved through a revised recruitment campaign and incentives including Newly Qualified Social Worker and early professional development programmes. These initiatives have helped to ensure that the workforce largely reflects the diversity of the local population, and they are well-regarded by staff.

Performance management and quality assurance

Grade 3 (adequate)

89. Performance management and quality assurance are adequate. A culture of performance management is emerging in relation to services for looked after children and links are clear between strategic priorities, performance data collected and the objectives of the strategy for looked after children. However, present arrangements for accountability, monitoring and challenge of the looked after children strategy are not sufficiently robust as there is no line of report or accountability to the Brent Children's Partnership or other strategic forum. Performance is improving across a number of indicators; for example an improved rate of completion of personal education plans and the increasing percentage of young people in education, employment, or training. In the fostering service, targets are

being met to increase the number of high quality in-house foster-placements. However, the council recognises and acknowledges that performance in relation to adoption and placement stability is not meeting targets and needs focused work to progress improvement. A regular case file audit process, which only recently has included a qualitative element, is in place. However, it is too early to assess whether it has had a positive impact on standards of practice.

90. The quality and frequency of formal supervision offered to social workers, including newly qualified social workers, are too variable. In too many of the cases reviewed by inspectors, formal supervision had not been provided for significant periods of time. Some notes of meetings lack sufficient detail, are repetitive and do not include clear actions that are tracked through to support on-going professional development and improve the quality of service provision.

Record of main findings:

Safeguarding services	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate
Capacity for improvement	Adequate
Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people	
Children and young people are safe and feel safe	Adequate
Quality of provision	Adequate
The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe	Adequate
Services for looked after children	
Ambition and prioritisation	Adequate
Leadership and management	Adequate
Performance management and quality assurance	Adequate
Partnership working	Adequate
Equality and diversity	Good
Services for looked after children	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate
Capacity for improvement	Good
How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?	
Being healthy	Inadequate
Staying safe	Good
Enjoying and achieving	Adequate
Making a positive contribution, including user engagement	Good
Economic well-being	Adequate
Quality of provision	Adequate
Services for looked after children	
Ambition and prioritisation	Adequate
Leadership and management	Adequate
Performance management and quality assurance	Adequate
Equality and diversity	Good

This page is intentionally left blank

Children & Families Inspection feedback

8th December 2011

Background

- Last Joint Area Review – 2006
- Safeguarding and Looked After Children- separate judgements
- 1st and last Safeguarding / Looked After Children inspection
- New inspection regime being piloted

Judgement

- Adequate across safeguarding and looked after children
- Some good judgements in Looked After Children, including capacity to improve

Key Messages

Positive

- Children are protected and are safe
- Child Protection thresholds are appropriate
- “Has improved service provision from a low base..”
- Improvements in recruitment and retention of staff
- Corporate parenting and Care in Action
- Good LAC strategy and Safeguarding Action plan

Key Messages Positive

- Role of Advanced Practitioner
- Staff morale
- Managers are accessible with sufficient oversight
- Partnerships with Child Abuse Investigation Team, Freeman Centre

Observations

- Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessments are low and limited health engagement
- Query around early intervention
- Auditing-in place but not yet sufficiently well developed. Links to quality improvement
- Timescales-S47 to conference
- Service reductions

Areas for improvement

- Links between strategies, plans and performance management
- Strategic articulation of vision
- Service user views
- Health of LAC - inadequate (immediate)

Areas for improvement

- Assessments
 - Variable quality
 - Not taking account of family history
 - Limited contingency planning for LAC
- Child Protection / Child in Need plans are not sufficiently SMART
- Supervision of staff - quality is too variable (immediate)

Areas for improvement

- Pathway plans
- Placement stability
- Adoption and permanency
- Safe recruitment

Overall

- Developing from a low base
- On a journey but have further to go
- Many of the issues were known
- Next steps-
 - immediates under way already
 - An accelerated comprehensive programme of improvements
 - Action plan

Grade descriptors

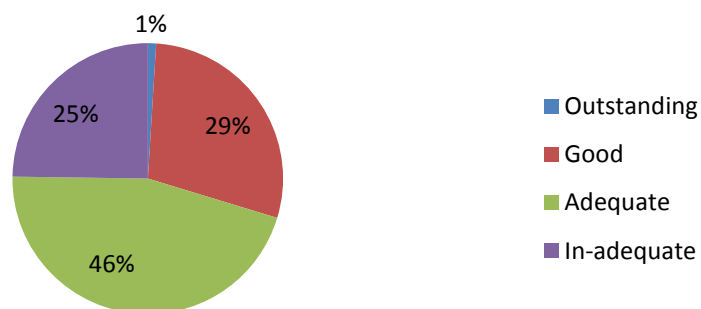
Overall effectiveness

<p>Outstanding Grade: 1</p> <p>1% of LA's for Safeguarding</p> <p>0% of LA's for Looked after children</p>	<p>Overall effectiveness is likely to be outstanding when leadership at all levels across the partnership is active, visible and effective in sustaining high-quality safeguarding services and outcomes for children and young people. Change is implemented very effectively and delivers clear benefits to service users. Quality assurance and performance management are comprehensive, systematic and demonstrably effective. There are the people, skills and capability in place (including sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced social workers) throughout safeguarding and child protection services to maintain high-quality services. Partnership with stakeholders, community groups and commissioned services are effective across all aspects of safeguarding provision. All children and young people receiving services are aware of how to complain and make representations and have easy access to advocacy services. There is highly effective use of resources.</p>
<p>Good Grade: 2</p> <p>29% of LA's for safeguarding</p> <p>43% of LA's for Looked after children</p>	<p>Overall effectiveness is likely to be good when those responsible for the leadership and management of safeguarding and child protection have identified and secured demonstrable improvements to services which contribute to improving outcomes for children and young people. Leadership results in a shared vision and agreed priorities for improvement. Targets for improving services are ambitious and most are met. Change is implemented effectively and delivers clear benefits to service users. Quality assurance and performance management systems have led to improvements in service provision. Workforce planning and knowledge, learning and development are effective in securing a skilled, capable and knowledgeable workforce (including sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced social workers). The views of children and young people and their parents and carers contribute routinely to planning and evaluating the effectiveness of provision and inform service improvements. Partnership with stakeholders, community groups and commissioned services are effective. There is sustained satisfaction from service users with the quality of service delivery. There is effective use of resources.</p>
<p>Adequate Grade: 3</p> <p>46% of LA's</p> <p>53% of LA's for Looked after children</p>	<p>Overall effectiveness is likely to be adequate when statutory requirements are at least met and managers have a track record of achieving some improvements in service provision. No services are deteriorating. Effective plans are in place to improve the contribution by the council and its partners to better outcomes for children and young people. Quality assurance and performance management processes are effective. The views of children and young people contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of some provision and inform service improvements. Staffing resources, including the number of qualified and experienced social workers, are sufficient to deliver the service area priorities. Processes for recruitment and retention of staff are effective. Knowledge, learning and development</p>

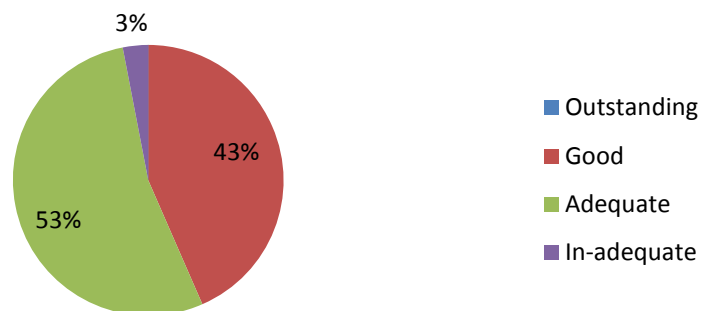
	meet the development needs of the majority of staff. Partnerships with stakeholders, community groups and commissioned services are effective. Financial plans are in place.
<p>Inadequate Grade: 4</p> <p>25% of LA's for safeguarding</p> <p>3% of LA's for Looked after children</p>	<p>The overall effectiveness judgement is likely to be inadequate if it fails to meet the requirements for an adequate judgement, or if there are significant failures to comply with requirements and as a result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ children and young people are inadequately protected and at risk of significant harm.

Overall judgements given for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections between 1 June 2009 and 30 June 2011


Overall judgement for safeguarding inspections 1 June 2009 to 30 June 2011



Overall judgement for looked after children inspections 1 June 2009 to 30 June 2011



This page is intentionally left blank

 <p>The logo of Brent Council, featuring a central coat of arms with a shield, a crown, and two lions, surrounded by the words 'BRENT COUNCIL' in a circular arrangement.</p>	<p>Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8 December 2011</p> <p>Report from the Director of Children and Families</p>
For Action	Wards Affected: ALL
<p>Adoption Services in Brent</p>	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has asked officers to prepare a report in response to information released by the Department for Education on adoptions in England. The information was released in early November and members will recall that at the time there was significant press coverage on the timeliness of adoptions. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the key issues relating to adoption in Brent and to give members an opportunity to ask questions in relation to adoption services.

2. Report

- 2.1 The DfE released a suite of information on the performance of Local Authorities (2009-2011), relating to looked after children. This included:
- Placement stability
 - How close looked after children were placed to their host authority
 - Adoption and special guardianship
 - Timeliness of adoption
 - Educational outcomes for school age looked after children
 - School absences
 - Outcomes for care leavers (children who were looked after) at 19, measured by engagement in education, training, employment, attendance at higher education establishments, placements in suitable accommodation.
- 2.2 Despite the considerable amount of data released, attention has focussed on the timeliness of adoptions. Taking the indicators as whole, there were areas where Brent's performance for looked after children was very good (e.g. 5+ A*-C GCSE grades including English and Maths), areas where we performed in the middle banding (e.g. proximity of placement to Brent) and there were areas where there was significant room for improvement (e.g. timeliness of adoptions).
- 2.3 The indicator around timeliness of adoptions measures the percentage of children placed for adoption within 12 months of a decision (that adoption is in their best

interests) being made. The issues around this indicator are complicated and are influenced by the following factors:

- The age of the child; it is a myth that there are lots of babies waiting to be adopted. In most cases babies (when they are available) are placed quickly and any delays usually result from protracted court processes.
- Sibling groups; we follow best established practice and endeavour, where possible, to keep siblings together but often have to balance further delays in placement against the option of separating them.
- Length of legal proceedings; legal proceedings for children have lengthened inexorably over recent years, as courts become more wary of separating babies from their parents and as more and more experts are involved in advising the Courts. It is increasingly recognised by local authorities that even where parents have had previous children removed and where the concerns remain, that the Courts are invariably ordering further lengthy and expensive assessments. The Family Justice Review group has just released its final report which recognises this and recommends urgent action to reduce the average length of legal proceedings from over 1 yr to 6 months or less.
- Complexity of the needs of children; unfortunately, many children requiring adoption have highly complex needs and this makes the process of identifying suitable placements for them difficult. In most circumstances, we will try to pursue an adoption plan but if it becomes clear after a set period, that this is unlikely to succeed and that the children are beginning to “drift” we will adapt the plan to something more likely to succeed.

2.4 The timeliness of the adoption placement is however only one component in the drive towards placing children permanently with alternative carers. The number of children placed is the other and there are two ways that this can be achieved. Adoption is the first, the most well known and probably the most secure. Many children are however placed with permanent carers under what is called a Special Guardianship Order. This has a similar effect to adoption but does not remove the birth parents’ rights in quite the same way. It is an option that is often popular both with prospective carers and young people (especially the older ones) as it does not completely remove the birth parent from the child’s life. This, along with placements with family and friends is one of a range of options that allow us to carefully match the needs of the children with those of carers and provides a wider potential pool of carers. Over the last two years, on the combined adoption and Special Guardianship indicator, we have performed above our statistical neighbours in this area, which is a very positive outcome.

2.5 The national picture mirrors what is happening in Brent with aggregated figures over the last 5 years indicating that whilst the numbers of adoptions have decreased, Special Guardianship Orders have increased. The combined figure (adoptions and SGO’s) indicates that approximately 25% more children are being placed permanently now than was the case 5 years ago.

2.6 The data quoted in the released information relates to the timeliness of adoption placements between 2009 and 2011 and on that basis Brent performed poorly. We recognised this some time ago and have put into place a range of responses to address this, which have resulted in the current situation whereby we anticipate that for 2011 close to 80% of children with a plan for adoption will be placed within 12 months of that decision being made.

2.9 However, in the current year there are 4 children with highly complex needs that cannot be adopted and these counted against us in the data return used by DfE

for 2010-2011. They illustrate very clearly the issues of complexity outlined earlier including severe behavioural difficulties (including sexualised behaviour), children born of incestuous relations, parental mental health issues (there is a strong correlation between parental mental health issues and its development in children) and global developmental delay. The plans for these children will now have to be changed as we have been unable to identify prospective adopters within a reasonable timeframe.

- 2.10 We have recognised the need to identify more prospective adopters for Brent children and are currently assessing 21 prospective families against a figure of 9 in the previous year. These prospective adopters will become available for Brent children soon. We are also working more closely with neighbouring boroughs to ensure that Brent children are placed in a timely manner.
- 2.11 Finally, whilst timeliness and numbers of placements are important, ensuring that the right children are placed with the right carers is crucial in achieving the best outcomes for the child. In the last two years in Brent only one adoptive placement has broken down and this reflects the careful matching that is undertaken.

3. Conclusions


- 3.1 The information released by the Department for Education covered a range of areas relating to looked after children and adoption services. However, it is important that this information is seen in context, with an informed commentary on the local circumstances influencing service performance. Unfortunately the published information didn't contain this, and focussed on one or two indicators where Brent hasn't been performing well, compared to other boroughs. Importantly the council has recognised this and put in place steps to improve performance which should be reflected when further information is published by DfE in December 2011.
- 3.2 Officers from the Children and Families Department will attend the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to answer questions on adoption services in Brent.

Background Papers - Children in Care and Adoption Performance Tables –
Published by the Department for Education, 1st November 2011

Contact Officer –

Graham Genoni,
Assistant Director Children's Social Care
Tel - 020 8937 4091
Email – graham.genoni@brent.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

	<p>Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee 8 December 2011</p> <p>Report from the Director of Children & Families</p>
<p>For Information Wards Affected: ALL</p>	
<p>Update on Provision of Full Time Nursery Places</p>	

1.0 Summary

This report responds to matters raised by members of the Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 6th October 2011. Members requested that a further report be presented setting out:

1. The outcome of the consultation with Brent schools
2. The views of the schools forum
3. Projections for the provision of places for vulnerable children aged two years old, including the expected demand and the use of children's centres as a natural provider
4. Safeguards to ensure the most vulnerable children are able to access places for 3 and 4 year olds
5. Information on the number of disadvantaged children in Brent and the number of full time nursery places available for them
6. An overarching perspective of the development and implementation of the policy for full time early years places including the embedding of safeguards and how an equal opportunity of access would be ensured.

2.0 Background and Chronology

- 2.1 During 2008, the Council was a pathfinder for the extension of the free entitlement to early years provision from 12.5 to 15 hours. This was to be universally introduced for all children from September 2010. In addition the Government wanted all councils to develop and implement a new Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) to underpin the delivery of the extended free entitlement.
- 2.2 The development and implementation of the EYSFF offered an opportunity to review the way full-time places (FT) were currently funded and offered in Brent. Government grant only funded part time (PT) places so the additional

costs of full-time places had to be absorbed within the Dedicated Schools Grant. This effectively meant that other schools in Brent would receive less funding in order to subsidise the cost of FT provision.

- 2.3 Work commenced later in 2008 on drafting options for the continued funding of FT places. The Schools Forum were fully consulted as the work progressed and a report was taken to the Executive in February 2010.
- 2.4 The decision made by Executive in February 2010 was to provide a mix of PT and FT places across the sector with FT places being based on need.
- 2.5 Following the Executive's decision, work commenced on the development and implementation of the new policy. The Executive agreed on 15th October 2010 to delay implementation until September 2012 to accommodate parental consultation. This consultation was carried out in December 2010 (see Appendix A for summary of parental responses).
- 2.6 In the course of 2011, an alternative proposal was developed to offer PT places only in light of the anticipated growth in demand for 2 and 3 year old places across the early years sector. This proposal was taken to the Schools Forum on 22nd June 2011 but was not supported.
- 2.7 Work then re-commenced on the implementation of the original Executive decision of February 2010. An Early Years Funding sub-group proposed that schools should still use their own local admissions criteria to allocate a nursery place and that a two stage process be introduced as follows,
- Stage 1: Schools select nursery children using their local admissions criteria
- Stage 2: Children selected via Stage 1 would be eligible for a funded FT place if
- They live in Brent
 - A parent met any one of the six free school meals criteria
- 2.8 Consultation took place on the two stage process in October 2011. Only 7 schools with FT places responded to the consultation. Some of the main feedback was as follows.
- i) Most were happy to manage the process locally and merge it with normal admissions practice
 - ii) There were some concerns regarding the additional administration arrangements
 - iii) Advice would be required on validating eligibility claims including providing some examples of relevant documents.
 - iv) Guidance would be required on dealing with appeals.
- 2.9 Appropriate changes have been made to the nursery admissions form template to accommodate Stage 2 and some schools have sought assistance from the council on changes to their administrative arrangements. Whilst the response from the consultation was low the feedback was helpful and officers

will address their issues and provide appropriate advice over the next few months to support the process.

- 2.10 In light of this new policy a number of FT place schools have decided to change to PT provision only from September 2012. The full impact of these changes will not be known until January 2012.
- 2.11 Nursery education is non statutory and therefore the admissions process is managed entirely by the schools who can set their own admissions criteria. This tends to follow the admissions criteria used for statutory age children (i.e. from reception age). The council offered assistance to community schools regarding a suitable template for an application form and schools are free to decide how best to use this template as well as develop any translations as necessary.
- 2.12 As nursery provision is non statutory there is no right of appeal to the Council open to parents should a school not offer an applicant a place. Parents would need to appeal directly to the school who would deal with the matter under their own rules and procedures.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Responses to the specific requests arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6th October 2011 are provided below.

Outcome of the consultation with Brent schools

- 3.2 Consultation on the proposals with Brent's schools took place in the autumn of 2009 with the outcomes presented to the December 2009 Schools Forum. The outcomes were:
- a. It should be delayed for a year to allow admissions and eligibility processes to be developed
 - b. Parents need to be consulted and informed of the proposals so they can assess the implications
- 3.3 The outcome of the consultation with schools in October 2011 is set out in Section 2.8 of this report.

The views of the schools forum

- 3.4 Over the period from April 2009 to June 2011, the Schools Forum was consulted on the development and implementation of a new policy for the allocation and funding of FT nursery places in schools. Their views are contained in section 2 above.

Projections for the provision of places for vulnerable children aged two years old, including the expected demand and the use of children's centres as a natural provider

- 3.5 Based on the latest GP lists Brent has 4,971 2 year olds resident in the Borough. The number of these children who would be deemed vulnerable is more difficult to assess against the proposed criteria (eligibility for free school meals) that the government are currently consulting on. The new scheme will commence in September 2013 and will offer eligible children 15 hours of free childcare integrated with early education.
- 3.6 To gauge the level of eligibility, the number of children resident in the most deprived parts of Brent can be used as a proxy.

Age Group	Total population per GP list	Population in most deprived areas
Age 2	4,971	2,926

- 3.7 The analysis suggests there could be around 3,000 eligible 2 year olds. Mindful of the government's intentions, the Head of Integrated and Extended Services introduced a strategy at the beginning of 2011 to improve the quality of PVIs and childminders to ensure the sufficiency of supply for September 2013. At a minimum the government propose that only 'good' and 'outstanding' Ofsted rated providers should offer the 2 year old provision. In addition 'satisfactory' rated providers will need to demonstrate a commitment to improving their quality.
- 3.8 Children's centres as a natural provider will have to meet the quality requirements outlined above. Currently the three council based centres have the following Ofsted ratings:
- Willows: Satisfactory
 - Tree Tops: Good
 - Harmony: Good

- 3.9 The latest 'refresh' of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) estimates the number of available PVI childcare places to be 5,330, excluding schools. Around 2500 of these places are taken up by 3 and 4 year olds accessing the 15 hour free entitlement. In addition, there are around 950 'baby' places for Under 2s. This leaves 1880 places that could be available for disadvantaged 2 year olds. A comparison with the potentially eligible 2 year olds indicates a shortfall of around 1000 places as follows:

1. Available PVI places (all ages)	5,330
2. Less	
a. 3 and 4 year old places	-2,500
b. Baby places	-950
3. Available places	1,880
4. Potentially eligible 2 year olds	2,900
5. Potential shortfall in places	1,020

3.10 There are childminder vacancies that would augment the available places to reduce the shortfall. However, this provision is not popular with many parents and will require considerable additional training of childminders.

Safeguards to ensure the most vulnerable children are able to access places for 3 and 4 year olds

3.11 The current number of FT places is 1,120 across 4 nursery and 25 primary schools based on the summer 2011 census. It is not possible to predict the future number of places as schools are currently deciding whether to offer these places from September 2012. It is known that a number of current FT place schools have decided not to offer these places from September 2012. The best estimate at the time of writing this report is there will be less than 1,000 FT places on offer.

3.12 The table below summarises the possible eligible 3 year olds using a proxy measure of vulnerable children.

Age Group	Total population per GP list	Population in most deprived areas
Age 3	4,658	2,720

3.13 The analysis indicates that there will not be sufficient places to cater for the potentially eligible children

3.14 The proposed admissions process will require schools to validate applications where a parent has indicated on their application form they are eligible for one of the Free School Meal eligibility criteria. The termly school census will reveal the numbers of eligible children so the council will have an overview as to how many FT places have been taken up. Given the way the proposed admissions process will be applied, safeguards to ensure the most vulnerable children only receive a FT place are built into the process through the eligibility criteria.

Information on the number of disadvantaged children in Brent and the number of full time nursery places available for them

3.15 This information is provided in the previous section.

An overarching perspective of the development and implementation of the policy for full time early years places including the embedding of safeguards and how an equal opportunity of access would be ensured

3.16 A perspective on the development and implementation of the new policy is provided in the earlier paragraphs.

3.17 A key focus of the Integrated and Extended Services team is to ensure that parents are aware of their entitlement to a free PT early years place at either a school or a PVI provider. This supports the council's statutory duty under

the 2006 Childcare Act to ensure the sufficiency of places to meet the demand.

- 3.18 Where a child is not accessing a PT place the parent would be made aware of their entitlement as well as where an available place might exist in the PVI sector based on the Children and Families Information Service's database. Parents would approach schools directly should they want a place in a school and schools would make the parents aware of whether they offer PT or FT places. FT places are not funded in the PVI sector.

Background Papers

- 1) 15 February Executive Report – Introduction of Early Years Single Funding Formula and Changes to the Allocation and Funding of Early years Full Time Places.

Contact Officers

Graham Genoni
Assistant Director Social Care
Chesterfield House
9 Park Lane
Wembley Middlesex HA9 7RW
Tel: 020 8 937 4091
Email: graham.genoni@brent.gov.uk

Sue Gates
Head of Integrated and Extended Services
Chesterfield House
9 Park Lane
Wembley Middlesex HA9 7RW
Tel: 020 8 937 3355
Email: sue.gates@brent.gov.uk

Krutika Pau
Director of Children and Families.

Outcomes from the December 2010 Parental Consultation on changes to the allocation of nursery places in Brent.

A consultation was carried out last autumn between 27th October and 17th December to seek views on changes to the allocation of full time nursery places. The proposal was to offer full time places based on need and deprivation. The launch of the consultation was through the Brent Magazine. The survey was available via the consultation web pages, paper surveys were available on request, with sample copies sent to schools. Posters and fliers were produced and circulated to raise awareness of the consultation, and distributed widely. Copies of the posters and fliers were sent to all schools, Brent Libraries, the One Stop Shop's, doctors' surgeries and medical centres and faith centres. Information was circulated to the voluntary sector via BRAVA. Copies of the posters, fliers and surveys were sent to Brent Private and voluntary Nurseries.

The consultation was overseen by Brent's consultation team, and completed surveys were collated and analysed.

A total of 73 survey responses were received;

39 paper surveys
34 on line surveys

The following questions were asked

- 1. Please indicate in what capacity are you responding as a parent or carer**
 - a. The highest responses were from parents/carers who either had a full time place, or who were looking for a place.
 - b. 23 people (32.4%) who responded to this question currently had a free full time place for their child.
 - c. 39 (55%) were looking for a nursery place for their child.

- 2. Do you feel we have clearly explained to you the proposed changes?**
 - a. 44 people (71%) thought it was explained well, but a significant number 18 (29%) were unsure.
 - b. Comments received include
 - i. 'Full time free nursery places should be available to all children'
 - ii. Part time spaces are an inconvenience'
 - iii. Nursery places should be allocated on proximity to the school.
 - iv. What about working parents not on high wages but having to pay the full costs of nursery places?

- 3. If you were to meet the criteria would you have concerns about being offered a full time place in a private nursery if a school place is unavailable?**
- a. 22 (37.3%) would have concerns, but 37 (62.7%) would not be concerned
 - b. Comments include
 - i. 'Cannot afford private fees'
 - ii. 'It needs to be clear if the place in the private nursery is free or not'
 - iii. 'I would prefer a place in a school'.
- 4. Do you have any concerns about your child not being eligible for a full time place under the new proposals?**
- a. 45 (72.6%) had concerns, but 17 (27.4%) were not concerned.
 - b. This question received the highest number of comments which included concerns expressed that working families are disadvantaged.
 - c. Affordability of childcare is a problem identified by several respondents. Several comments that parents currently accessing a full time place for their child, or looking for a place in the future would not be eligible.
- 5. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?**
- a. 33 (45.2) wanted to comment and 40 (54.8) skipped this question
 - b. The comments focussed on the perceived unfairness of the proposal, and the specific impact on working families.
 - i. 'All children should have fair access, not right to discriminate'.
 - ii. 'To have children close together is a matter of personal choice, but is not necessarily linked to deprivation'.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 2011/2

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome
12 th July 2011	Tribute and thanks to retiring head teachers	This has been placed on the agenda at the request of the Chair. Details of the head teachers retiring in Brent at the end of the school year will be provided for the committee.	Report noted. The chair will write to retiring head teachers to express her thanks for their hard work on behalf of the committee.
	Brent Youth Parliament Update	Standing item – BYP members will update the committee on their work and campaigns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute Mid Year Progress Report • Show Shisha DVD 	Update from the BYP noted.
	Provision of services for children with disabilities	The chair of the committee has asked that a regular item on the provision of services for children with disabilities be included on each agenda. This follows the decision to close the short break service at Crawford Avenue and restructure services for children with disabilities at Clement Close.	It was agreed that this issue would become a standing item for the committee. Rik Boxer was asked to provide information for the next meeting on the range of service provision that parents are using for respite services, as an alternative to Crawford Avenue and Clement Close.
	Impact of the budget on future service delivery (including schools budget)	The committee will receive a report on the impact that the CSR and local government settlement will have on children’s services, including the Brent schools budget, which is listed separately in the council’s forward plan.	Report noted
	The implications of the Government’s policy on academies and Free Schools in Brent	The committee will consider a report looking at the impact of Free Schools and academies in Brent and the implications for the council and school pupils.	The committee agreed the report’s recommendations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the council’s collaborative and inclusive approach to working with local schools within a mixed economy of

			<p>provision to meet the needs of local children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Local Government Association in its lobbying during the committee stage of the Education Bill with regard to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the central importance of local authorities in the strategic planning of school places and the regulation of fair admissions procedures. ○ the vital role of elected member as representative on schools governing bodies whatever their status. ○ the need for a fair funding allocation for all schools which does not disadvantage maintained schools in favour of academies and free schools. • note the work of the One Council SEN project to develop a strategic and affordable approach to the provision and commissioning of appropriate SEN places. • note the need to develop a more commercially viable approach to the future provision of school improvement services in the light of the provisions contained within the Education Bill which will significantly increase competition in this market.
	Youth Offending Task Group	The final report of the task group will be presented to members for approval.	The report was agreed and will be submitted to the Executive for approval in September 2011.
	School places update	Standing item, in the form of a verbal report on school places in the borough.	Report noted.
	Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work	For information and to give members an opportunity to suggest items for the work programme.	Report noted.

	Programme		
--	-----------	--	--

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome
6 th October 2011	Brent Youth Parliament	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.	Report noted
	Review of policy for the provision of early years full time places	The chair of the committee has asked for a report to come to the committee on the plan to reverse the policy agreed in February 2010 regarding the allocation of full time early years places. This is currently in the Forward Plan, with a decision due in October 2011. The chair of the committee would like to consider this issue before the decision is taken.	The committee has asked for a report to their next meeting, which should include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome of the consultation with schools on the process for offering full time nursery places to 3 and 4 year olds • The opinion of the Schools Forum on this issue • A projection on how the requirement for 2 year olds will be met, including the role for children's centres in meeting this requirement • Safeguards to ensure the most vulnerable children are able to take up the places for 3 to 4 year olds • Information on the number of disadvantaged children in Brent and the number of full time nursery places available for them
	Strategy to provide primary school places in Brent up to 2014/15	The chair of the committee has asked for this report to be presented to members. It was originally considered by the Executive	Report noted

		in August 2011, and sets out the challenges faced by the council in providing adequate numbers of primary school places in the borough up to 2014/15, due to increasing demand in Brent.	
	2011 Education Standards	Verbal update on 2011 education standards.	Report noted. The full results will be presented at a future meeting, once they have been verified.
	Provision of services for children with disabilities	<p>The chair of the committee has asked that a regular item on the provision of services for children with disabilities be included on each agenda. This follows the decision to close the short break service at Crawford Avenue and restructure services for children with disabilities at Clement Close.</p> <p>For the meeting in October, the committee has specifically asked for information on the range of service provision that parents are using for respite services, as an alternative to Crawford Avenue and Clement Close.</p>	Report noted.
	Items on the Forward Plan in relation to Children and Young People	The committee will receive a summary of the items on the Forward Plan that relate to services for children and young people. The committee should consider whether there are any items they wish to call to scrutiny.	Report noted

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome
8 th December 2011	Brent Youth Parliament Update	BYP will give a verbal update on their work over the previous 2 to 3 months, since the committee last met.	
	Results of Safeguarding Inspection	The Council's Safeguarding and Looked After Children Teams have been inspected by Ofsted (October 2011). The results of the inspection, plus the council's response will be presented to the committee.	
	Adoption Services in Brent	The chair of the committee has asked officers to prepare a paper setting out how Brent is working to address the issues relating to adoption services highlighted in figures published by the DoE on the adoption of children in care.	
	Review of policy for the provision of early years full time places	<p>The committee has asked for another report on this issue, which should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome of the consultation with schools on the process for offering full time nursery places to 3 and 4 year olds • The opinion of the Schools Forum on this issue • A projection on how the requirement for 2 year olds will be met, including the role for children's centres in meeting this requirement • Safeguards to ensure the most vulnerable children are able to take up the places for 3 to 4 year olds • Information on the number of disadvantaged children in Brent and the number of full time nursery places available for them 	

	School places update	Verbal report on the shortage of school places in the borough, a standing item on the committee's agenda.	
	Provision of services for children with learning and physical disabilities	The committee has asked that a standing item on the provision of services for children with learning and physical disabilities is included on each meeting agenda. The results of the Judicial Review hearing into the closure of Crawford Avenue will be reported to members.	
	Items from the Forward Plan and Work Programme	The committee will consider items from the Forward Plan relating to Children and Young People as well as the committee's work programme.	

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome
2 nd February 2012	Children's Centre Nursery restructure and fees increase	This item is in the Forward Plan, with a decision due in December 2011. The chair of the committee would like members to consider this issue and comment on the restructure prior to the Executive taking the decision.	
	Youth Offending Team Inspection	The results of the inspection of the Youth Offending Team will be presented to the committee for scrutiny.	
	Underachievement in Brent Schools	It has been suggested that the Children and Young People Committee considers a report on the underachievement of pupils in Brent schools, particularly Somali pupils.	

		The focus of the report should be on the services that are in place to help underachieving groups, rather than looking at statistics on performance.	
	Youth service review update	As requested by the committee in October 2010, the committee will receive an update on the progress of the ongoing youth services review, being carried out by the Children's Trust Sub Group.	
	Domestic Violence – Children's Partnership Project	The committee will consider the Children's Partnership report on domestic violence in Brent, following up previous presentations to the committee on this issue.	
	All through schools	The committee was interested in considering the merits of all through schools and whether Brent should be pursuing this as a viable option in any school expansion strategy. A report on this issue will be presented to the committee for discussion.	
	Special Educational Needs	The committee will consider an update on the SEN One Council project and new developments relating to SEN services, both in place and planned.	
	PE and Sports in Brent Schools	A review has been carried out to look at the quality of PE and sport provided by Brent schools. The committee will consider the outcomes from this and how the recommendations from the review are being taken forward.	
	Implications of the Munro Review	The committee will receive a report setting out the implications of the Munro Review on child protection arrangements in Brent.	

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome
29 th March 2012			

Items to be timetabled

Item	Issue for the committee to consider
Emerging legislation	To look at the impact of emerging legislation on work within the children and families department, following the formation of a new government.

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

THE FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

for the four month period 1st November to 29th February 2012

The Forward Plan sets out the **key decisions** and other decisions **that the Executive intends to take over the following four months**, together with key decisions by officers. Briefly, a Key Decision is defined by Regulations as an Executive decision which is likely to result in significant expenditure or savings, or have a significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards. In Brent the council will treat as a key decision all decisions taken at a meeting of the Executive whether or not the decision would be classed as a key decision according to the statutory definition.

Decisions made by the Executive are subject to a call-in provision. If any item is called in, the Forward Plan Select Committee (a sub-committee of the Scrutiny Committee, made up of councillors not on the Executive) will meet to consider the item. Following this, the Executive will meet and take into account the recommendations of the select committee. This will usually take place within 4-6 weeks of the original decision. The Executive may then implement or change its decision as it sees fit. The exact date when the recommendations of the Select Committee on a matter are to be considered by the Executive can be obtained from Democratic Services. The Plan is updated monthly. Copies can also be obtained from Democratic Services, Room 106, Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 9HD, telephone 020 8937 1366 or via e-mail at committee@brent.gov.uk.

Members of the public are entitled to see the reports that will be relied on when the decision is taken unless they contain confidential or exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972 as amended. These are listed in column 3 and will be published on the council's website five clear working days before the date the decision is due to be taken. Paper copies will be made available via Democratic Services as detailed above. The council's Access to Information Rules set out the entitlement of the public to see documents and reports.

Anyone who wishes to make representations regarding any of the matters listed in the Forward Plan can do so by forwarding a written submission to Democratic Services using the above address/telephone number up to one week before the date the decision is to be taken (see column 4). Where a specific decision date has yet to be identified, contact Democratic Services who will forward representations to the Lead Officer.

The current membership of the Executive is as follows:

Cllr John (Corporate Strategy and Policy Co-ordination)
Cllr Butt (Resources)
Cllr Long (Housing)
Cllr J Moher (Highways and Transportation)
Cllr R Moher (Adults and Health)
Cllr Crane (Regeneration and Major Projects)
Cllr Beswick (Crime and Public Safety)
Cllr Jones (Customers and Citizens)
Cllr Powney (Environment and Neighbourhoods)
Cllr Arnold (Children and Families)

Publication Date: October 2011

Contact Officer: Anne Reid
email: anne.reid@brent.gov.uk
Tel: 020 8937 1359
Fax: 020 8937 1360

Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant report from	Expected date of decision	Those to be consulted and how	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
Future of Children's Centre childcare provision - To agree the future of children's centre childcare provision.	Executive	Director of Children and Families	16 Jan 2012	Internal	Director of Children and Families Tel: 020 8937 3126 krutika.pau@brent.gov.uk
Islamia Primary School - Primary Capital Programme Funding To agree funding arrangements for the Islamia Primary School Primary Capital project.	Executive	Director of Regeneration and Major Projects	Between 1 Nov 2011 and 31 Dec 2011	School governors	Property and Asset Management Tel: 020 8937 3118 christine.moore@brent.gov.uk

One Community Many Voices Event 10th October 2011

Feedback from the table top sessions

The One Community Many Voices event was held during Local Democracy Week on the 10th October. Participants were invited to take part in table top facilitated discussion sessions on a variety of subjects. They were also encouraged to write their own comments on the flip chart paper provided. Comments from the event are set out below and will be fed back to participants and will be sent to the council's overview & scrutiny committees to inform their work programmes.

Employment, Skills and Economic Opportunities

- We need to encourage more local venture and businesses
- How can we use the strength of having a multi-lingual population?
- Empty properties – how can young people be trained to help renovate them.
- Harrow link – job creation
- More training for adults on how to access employment
- How can we encourage investment in green industry in Brent?
- Need to find the unique selling point for to attract business / industry into the borough
- Better use of the business units available in Brent
- How do we encourage entrepreneurial areas in the borough?
- Encouraging local procurement
- Encourage businesses to provide school and work experience
- Schools are now making work experience optional – how do we help to promote the value of this
- Volunteering opportunities for young people that provide work experience with rewards
- Are we providing too much money for children in care – too much freedom?
- Work with employers to identify the skills needed by people to gain employment
- Identify what skills will be most relevant in the future
- Marketing / Selling Brent – improve image
- Design centre
- More support in schools for young people on applying for jobs, CV writing and interviews.
- Good quality careers advice
- More apprenticeships, employer networks and business associations.
- Opportunities in Park Royal - linking support to local people and support for businesses in difficulties.
- Invest in local shopping centres
- Transport link to employment opportunities
- Training for young people from an early age – the minimum wage is a problem for small and medium size companies. Lobby government
- Link young people's development with the most successful companies
- Employer partnership supply chains
- Provide advice on self employment

- Hold a Dragon's Den style event around job and business creation
- Mentors into employment – role models

Health and Social Care

Mental health

- Mental health issues are becoming more prevalent in Brent. In the current climate people are struggling to cope. Services in Brent are poor and there is a lack of information and support to people who need it most.
- A delay in mental health support for people in custody is problematic. It can take up to 24 hours for a practitioner to attend the police station to assess someone with suspected mental health problems. People with mental health problems should not be in custody, but need to be linked in to other agencies where they can receive the help and support they need.
- Mental health services – services in Brent should not be closed. People need to be helped to live well with their mental health problems and not left isolated and alone.
- Isolation of the elderly and people with mental health problems is an issue. Are there projects in Brent working to get these people out and about and meeting up with friends, or attending day centre facilities? It should be noted that some people felt that replacing day centres would not be a good use of resources.

Patient and public involvement

- Involving the public more in the work of the council and health services should be a priority.
- Brent council should work with the NHS to publicise the way people can get involved in their local health services – e.g. as a member of a foundation trust.
- Patient and public involvement – The health service should make better use of patients to help plan and deliver services.

GP commissioning / GP services

- There is confusion about the roles and responsibilities of GPs in the new commissioning landscape. There needs to be better communication with the public on what clinical commissioning groups will do and GPs plans for services. Patient Forums need to be better advertised so that more people can get involved.
- Could Brent GPs introduce text message reminders to patients when they have appointments? Some people complained that they had been removed from their GP list for missing appointments, but they had been forced to make their appointment weeks in advance.
- Should GPs be in charge of health budgets? Some people were unhappy about this.
- GPs need to be better trained to understand mental health issues. What are the training requirements for GPs in this field, as patients are being disadvantaged by GPs not understanding the full range of mental health problems that people face.

Health and social care services

- There is a shortage of NHS Dentists in Brent. How can access to dental services be improved?
- We should be looking to locate services in neighbourhood settings where possible and avoid centralising into hospitals.
- Health service budgets – How are the reductions in health budgets affecting services in Brent? Is the council up to speed on the implications of the local NHS's plans?
- Reducing health tourism – are people coming to the UK to take advantage of our health care system, and if they are, how can this be stopped?
- Information on health and social care – what signposting is there in Brent for people looking for more information about health and social care services? Using the internet doesn't suit everyone.
- Health and social care services should be better integrated and assess the whole needs of the person, not put up artificial boundaries between services.
- Waiting times for hospital appointments are increasing and this is unacceptable.
- Does the NHS locally follow NICE guidelines and are patients properly involved in making decisions about their care? Does the local NHS have a strategy, is their effective monitoring and governance of local NHS services.
- There is a significant difference in the quality of surgical procedures that people receive. People need to be aware of this, the potential risks of having surgery and the fact that if something goes wrong, seeking redress is extremely difficult.
- People are being confined to their homes because of cuts to health and social care services. Brent council should help and champion these people.

Children and families

- Is there adequate support for children in schools with SEN? Are behavioural difficulties addressed in an effective way in Brent?
- What support can the council offer families who don't speak English? Is there a family learning programme in Brent, for example?
- Children in care are given too much by the council. A lap top is given to each child in foster care for them to do their school work. Is this a good use of resources, when all they do is play games on them and foster carers can't afford laptops for their own children? Do children in care need to be escorted to school as they are currently? Again, is this a good use of scarce resources?
- How is the council working to ensure more children in care are adopted?
- Could the council provide more support for children who are struggling, academically, in schools?

Housing services

- Housing – Can the council do more to tackle damp and disrepair in the private rented sector in Brent? Environmental Health Officers should be more proactive to address the problems in the PRS and not wait to respond to complaints.
- Tenancy agreements – What support can be given to tenants on 6 month short hold tenancies who face possible eviction, or are living in substandard conditions? What will the council do, what won't it do?

Other areas

- Contracts with the council – could more be done to help small businesses win council contracts. Contract requirements can be too onerous for some small businesses and so they choose not to tender for contracts.
- Energy bills – these are too high and people are complaining that because they now have fewer home visits from health workers / social workers, they are not able to discuss their heating problems with someone who may be able to advocate on their behalf.
- Preventative work and early intervention – this is where the council and health service should focus. How can the school nursing service contribute to early intervention work and has the council considered the long term savings that can be made through early intervention in health and social care fields.

Environment and Sustainability

Summary of main themes:

- Defining what sustainability means in Brent
- Changing communication methods to effective behaviour change for recycling e.g. town centre films, projects led by young people, community champions, politicians on the street
- Have labels for bins showing what goes where
- Lobby big business on packaging
- Improve business waste approaches
- Assess the risks of rolling out the green deal for those in poverty and on benefits
- Communicate government changes on rules about concrete drives and assessing what can be done about those already there
- Improve council use of recyclable items e.g. stationery, publications, cups
- Assess and communicate the implications of law changes around community involvement in planning in future
- Identify how the carbon impact of regeneration plans is assessed by the council and balanced against other benefits sought for the borough
- Improve cycle provision in the borough
- Rationalise the different warden services in the borough

Service issues to feed back to E&N

- TfL consultation on PR2
- Concern about not being able to recycle in Willesden Lane above shops and the fact that there are no longer newspaper bins
- Need greenery in front gardens - trees in pots. Consider a deal with plant a nursery and Brent magazine competition for best front gardens in borough
- The access to allotment on Furness Road is narrow and there is no access for cars whilst the youth centre is being rebuilt. The allotment officer has not been replaced. Who should residents talk to as we cannot transport compost to the allotment

- Promote the climate change pledge in the Brent Magazine again
- Put more saving water information on the website

What is sustainability?

- Top down action as well as grass roots action which needs statutory change to ensure success via Mayor of London and central government

Recycling

- We need labels on the bins to say what goes in which bin. Use what was in Brent Magazine including diagrams and make into a sticker (multiple reiterations of same message)
- People worried about contamination and possible fines are leaving their rubbish next to Brent public bins (multiple reiterations of the same message)
- There is no explanation on what to do with new bins, better communication is required.
- What will happen to people who do this incorrectly?
- Use resident's associations and get officers along to demonstrate
- Have roadshows area by area, using politicians to communicate the changes, soap box or mega phone work would be better
- Stop sending paperwork – make films and show them in town centres, DVDs, films in the post office
- Use Harlesden Town Centre Team and learn from their approaches
- Streetwatchers operate as part of Neighbourhood Watch. Use these people to educate others
- Schools have been overlooked – use them as young people are best at getting the message to the rest of the family , educate children to change behaviour of parents, have school visits to the sorting site, Youth Parliament visit recycling site
- Have resident visits to sorting site
- Do not use Area Forums as they have 60 people representing 44,000 and fail to achieve anything – scrap them
- There are still issues for flats
- How does the mixed recycling and sorting work, will there be burning of materials like in France?
- People are putting their vegetable waste in plastic bags and we need community champions to educate their neighbours on things like this
- Fear cut backs in communication budget on recycling
- Bin men should not be talking on their mobiles whilst collecting rubbish as it disturbs people in the neighbourhood
- Lobby Tesco and get more shops to use paper bags like Primark. There was an idea to turn plastic bags into beautiful cups and saucers at Park Royal – what happened to this idea?
- Separate out Metro papers form other waste
- Promote the number for free removal of white goods
- Note the council is not using recyclable cups and sent out information on changes to recycling in non recyclable envelopes

Business Waste

- Follow Westminster example where officers go and identify which business has left waste on the street instead of paying for business waste disposal (tv show)
- Encourage businesses to get rid of oil correctly and fine them if they do not

Housing

- Environmentally friendly housing needs to be built by RSLs
- Green deal involves a charge to the tenant in the small print – before going down the green deal route poverty and ability to pay need to be considered particularly for tenants on benefits
- Few resources in the Council to inspect and enforce standards in private rented homes (about 9 officers to cover around 20,000 properties). The private rented sector now plays a vital role in Brent due to the acute shortage of social rented housing and it faces added pressures brought on by increasing homelessness/use of private rented homes as temporary accommodation, and by the cuts in housing benefit.
- Thousands of tenants, including children, are living in homes that fall well below the Decent Homes Standard and around 40% contain serious health and safety hazards. Private tenants have no security of tenure and therefore when they complain about their conditions, they risk losing their homes altogether. Brent Private Tenants' Rights Group believe that Brent should devise a new Housing Strategy for the Private Rented Sector and that a priority should be given to pro-active inspections to drive up standards.

Air Quality

- In Wembley and Harlesden there is poor air quality
- We need to clamp down on car use in the borough

Plants and wildlife

- Plant more environmentally friendly plants in the borough i.e. olives

Climate Change

- Look at planning arrangements for people concreting over their drives and communicating the change set out in recent bills about use of different materials to allow water to permeate through the drive covering.
- Learn from the USA and their water permeable materials for drives
- Discourage concrete drives
- Implications of law changes around community involvement in planning in future
- How carbon impact of regeneration plans is assessed by council
- Look at retrofit rather than rebuild where possible
- Have social enterprise facilitate implementation of solar panels street by street using door knocking to engage people in cutting carbon; link it with roof insulation work
- BHP work on solar panels on housing is positive
- Need to invest and coordinate solar panels on schools roofs

- Council lobby central government on the fact it has/is reneging on previous green pledges
- Concern about rezoning around Park Royal, Wembley , Neasden if waste site is placed in this area there will be raised pollution

Transport/travel

- PR2 bus has been withdrawn and the 206 and 224 diverted with extended routes to compensate. Concern about how TFL consulted upon this change
- Get more cycle path provision in the borough and address the issues at Blackbird Hill/Neasden shopping precinct
- Look at what lobbying can be done to change law so that people do not park on cycle paths
- Improve cycle parking provision in borough and at council buildings including showers/changing facilities
- Have cycle paths along routes to schools – Kingsbury High, JFS, St Gregory's, Claremont
- Have zero tolerance on parking near schools
- Improve transport links to sports facilities from north of the borough e.g. Vale Farm

Other

- Rationalise warden services

Children and Young People: Notes from workshop sessions

Session 1

- Full Brent Council review required re summer riots across London –what lessons can be learnt for Brent , recommendations of two major national enquiries and impact on Brent
- Young people hopes cut – big reductions in Education and health budgets as result of public sector budget cuts
- Develop Young Apprenticeships for local people - Brent Council version
- Need to support Connexions Service – quality and quantity maintained
- More free holiday clubs for foster carers –free in Hillingdon , Brent costs are high
- Children's Centres have been successful – review and improve longer term?
- More sports and recreational activities , more athletics tracks, more accessible routes for sports

Session 2

- Young people excluded from using community facilities in the evening- such as local schools
- KicZ football programme in partnership with QPR football club , finding money for £30,000 per year operating costs (feedback from Metropolitan Police)
- Where can young people make use of Parks – clear signage i.e. safe cycling

- Good practice projects included ABC football coaching; White House Association (social integration)

Session 3

- Young people working in Harlesden Town Centre project –good example of young people engaging and participating in policy development and improving local area
- More joined up projects and services involving children and parents, there is a tendency to separate areas for service planning and development
- Greater support for parents with family support
- More work required around Citizenship across all age levels- stress civic role and rights and responsibilities
- Effect of youth service cuts – the summer riots leave a lot of questions regarding youth provision locally
- Make use of local volunteers (local resources) such as retired teachers, youth workers, social workers

Session 4

- Not enough school places ; full review of Brent school places required
- Review policy on school academies and appeals procedure overall
- More innovation required re youth funding – look at best practice across the UK
- More funding required for youth services overall,
- More youth clubs required across the borough –including specialising subject on conflict resolution, coaching and mentoring , after school clubs
- Youth service operating as facility managers as opposed to youth workers

Post it note comments

- More funding of young people's activities and use of existing facilities in Brent, especially school sports gyms and playgrounds
- Young people should be encouraged to become business people
- Holidays are also a problem for families of children on free school meals
- After school clubs are expensive and many parents who need them are low paid
- Brent Council offering **proper** apprenticeships , this is an excellent idea but harder for them to offer since so many services (maintenance etc) are outsourced/privatised
- Motivational talks from young men who have previously been convicted and been to prison – to speak to young people
- More Councillors to visit schools and talk to them re issues for young children and debate
- How many places in the borough are available for use of young children: who staffs them, what are activities, what does lead to?
- Running down of play service facilities (free places) for LAC, SEN, Children on Child Protection Register
- No work experience at school now, help with vocational courses/apprenticeships

- No hope, aspirations are cut because of costs university costs £9,000 per annum plus living expenses
- Lack of facilities, things to do, without a degree, where is our future workforce coming from ; cut in Connexions service
- Improve transport links to existing facilities e.g. Vale Farm, Copthall; football pitches being planned at Kingsbury High School (very positive for local area)

Community Safety

- Not enough or not the right things for young people to do - there was a feeling that money was wasted on services "bad kids" would not attend and "good kids" parents did not allow them to go too
- Stop and search was an issue raised at all the groups - how it's done and why needs more explanation
- People felt they did not get the "right story" from the press, Brent was portrayed badly and this did not at reflect what it is like to live here
- Concern was expressed about the number of payday loan companies and feeling that there are unlicensed loan sharks operating on some of the estates
- Prostitution was linked to this with increasing pressure on family finances
- Fears about poverty driving crime

This page is intentionally left blank