

**Brighton & Hove City Council**

**For general release**

**Meeting:** Children Families and Schools Sub Committee  
**Date:** Monday 20 October 2003  
**Report of:** Director of Children Families and Schools  
**Subject:** Annual Review Meeting Letter  
**Wards affected:** All

**1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1. The purpose of the report is to inform the Sub Committee of the content of the letter from the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) detailing the outcome of the Annual Review of Performance Meeting (ARM).

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 To note the contents of the letter.

**3. Information**

3.1 As part of the national performance framework for councils with social services responsibilities there is an annual meeting that reviews the overall performance of the council with regard to its social services functions. The ARM letter sets out the Inspectorate's view of the performance of social services in Brighton & Hove during the last year and comments on improvements planned for the year ahead.

3.2 In assessing performance, SSI reaches judgements about performance against a set of standards and criteria, as published in February 2002, drawing on evidence from a number of standard sources. These include:

- The published PAF Performance Indicators and other statistical data up to 2002-2003, plus data supporting planned targets for 2003-204
- Monitoring information from the Position Statement completed in June and October 2002, and the Delivery and Improvement Statement completed in May 2003.
- The audit of services to children in need carried out in response to the report of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry. and
- The report of an SSI Inspection of Child Protection Services published in June 2003.

- 3.3 The ARM letter is in two parts, an overview letter and an annexed report that summarises the strengths of performance over the last year and highlights priorities for improvement in the year ahead. The annexed report has sections on adult services and those for children and families, the part of most relevance to committee members will be pages 5 and 6.
- 3.4 Strengths identified within Children and Families Services are the number of children in foster care and improvements in employment, education and training for care leavers. Also highlighted are the greater engagement of elected members in planning for services and the commitment to children's services reflected in the additional funding that has been made available.
- 3.5 Areas for improvement include placement stability and the numbers of looked after children. Concerns about capacity focus on the numbers of looked after children in Independent Agency Foster Care.
- 3.6 It is a requirement that the contents of the ARM Letter are presented to an open committee of the council. The ARM letter provides recommendations to help councillors in strategic planning to improve outcomes and quality of service.

**Contact Officer:**

**Fiona Johnson  
Head of Child Protection Policy and Development  
01273 295384**

**Mr Ian Long  
Director of Social Services  
Brighton and Hove Council  
PO Box 2501  
King's House  
Grand Avenue  
Hove  
BN3 2SS**

*5th Floor  
Eileen House  
80-94 Newington Causeway  
London  
SE1 6EF*

**Tel: 020 7972 2000  
Fax: 020 7972 2820  
Minicom: 020 7972 2915**

19 September 2003

Dear Ian

### **ANNUAL REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE**

Thank you for arranging our recent annual review meeting. This letter sets out the Inspectorate's view of the performance of social services in your area during the last year and comments on improvements planned for the year ahead.

The recommendations made in this letter and its annexed report are intended to help the council improve outcomes and the quality of service to service users and carers. They are also intended to improve the prospects of improved performance ratings in the future.

**In assessing performance, SSI reaches judgements about performance against a set of standards and criteria, as published in February 2002, drawing on evidence from a number of standard sources. These include:**

- the published PAF Performance Indicators and other statistical data up to 2002-2003, plus data supporting planned targets for 2003-2004
- monitoring information from the Position Statement completed in June and October 2002, and the Delivery and Improvement Statement completed in May 2003.
- the audit of services to children in need carried out in response to the report of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry. and
- the report of an SSI Inspection of Child Protection Services published in June 2003.

Details of the standards and criteria have been published, and are available from SSI.

The Annex to this letter summarises the strengths of performance over the last year and highlights priorities for improvement in the year ahead. The

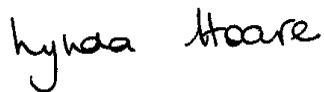
annual review does not attempt to review all aspects of performance. It focuses on the performance issues for which SSI has current information.

This report will form part of the SSI's performance record for the Council and will be published on the Department of Health's website in November. **You are asked to present it to an open meeting of the relevant executive committee of the council within two months of the date of this letter, and to advise me of the date on which this will take place. The document must be made available to members of the public at the same time.**

Progress will continue to be monitored during 2003-04 through our usual processes, and a further Annual Review meeting will take place during the first quarter of 2004-05.

Performance (Star) ratings will be confirmed in November, based on an assessment of overall performance using all admissible evidence. The evidence summarised in this letter will be used to help arrive at the rating.

Yours sincerely



**Lynda Hoare**  
**Director**  
**Social Services Inspectorate – South East**

Cc: **Mr David Panter**, Chief Executive – Brighton & Hove Council, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN3 2LS  
**Mr Darren Wells**, Auditor – Ground Floor Front, 16 South Park, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1AN  
**Mr Simon Robbins**, Chief Executive StHA – York House, 18-20 Massett Road, Horley, Surrey RH6 7DE

## PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT 2003 BRIGHTON & HOVE

### SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Assessment has highlighted the following improvements to service since the last Annual Review:

- numbers of children looked after in foster placements or placed for adoption (B7) remain high and for young children (C22) have continued to rise. (standard 2);
- employment, education and training for care leavers has improved (A4) (Standard 1)

#### **Assessment has highlighted the following concerns about performance:**

- placement stability (A1) and long-term stability (D35) of LAC have both deteriorated since last year (standards 1 & 4);
- although the percentage of children de-registered from the Child Protection Register who had been on the register for two years or more appears to have deteriorated (PAF C21:13.5% - 16.7%), recent figures produced following a review of such cases indicate an improving situation. The percentage of children registered during the year on the CPR who had previously been registered remains low (PAF A3)
- the objective was stated in last year's ARM of reducing the number of LAC to 300 by 2003/04 through early intervention and increased family support. In practice, numbers of LAC had increased to 400 by the end of June 2003;
- similarly, numbers placed in Independent Fostering Agencies were forecast to fall from 47-35 over the same period but have actually increased to 65; and
- the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Audit concluded that some children were being well served, with promising prospects. The inspection of child protection services had judged some children to be well served, with uncertain prospects.

## ***Capacity for Improvement (Standard 6)***

**Assessment has highlighted the following improvements to capacity.**

- the Directorate of Children, Families & Schools has now been established for over a year. All main posts are filled, and the greater engagement of elected members has been reflected in higher priority and additional funding (£2 million) for children services;
- the Brighton & Hove application for Children's Trust status was successful; and
- the action plans for the Joint Review; the best value review; the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Audit and the Child Protection Inspection are all in hand.

**Assessment has highlighted the following concerns about capacity:**

- an increase in the amount of in-house fostering capacity is being sought through a recruitment campaign and improved payment and support arrangements.
- there is an urgent need to undertake a full analysis of the 400 LAC to understand why numbers are increasing and to inform a strategy of prevention; and
- family support and the use of Family Centres are to be subject to major changes which will be based on 4 multi-disciplinary teams, based around existing family centres and involving local schools.

## **SERVICES FOR ADULTS**

**Assessment has highlighted the following Improvements observed since the previous annual review:**

- numbers of delayed transfers have fluctuated but have steadily declined in the last few months. They are now in the mid – 40's with 60% being attributed to social services (Standard 4);
- admissions of supported residents over 65 are falling but remain high. Intensive home care remains relatively high and stable and numbers of older people helped to live at home remain relatively high though falling. However, this fall is attributed largely to a re-focussed use of intensive home care to avoid admission to residential care. The Council remains confident of achieving its PSA targets (C26, C28 and delayed transfers). (Standard 3); and

- the Council has set up integrated service teams with posts jointly funded by the PCT and City Council. A draft commissioning strategy has recently been produced, which covers housing, home care, and care homes.

**Assessment has highlighted the following concerns about performance:**

- the First year of Section 31 pooled budget arrangement resulted in an overspend on the Learning Disability budget which required the production of a Financial Recovery Plan. The Council will be reviewing its strategy in December 2003 and still proposes to extend Section 31 arrangements to older people who are physically frail;
- numbers receiving equipment quickly have been low, but staff sickness and poor data collection are said to have contributed to this and provision is expected to improve. (In addition a joint health social care equipment store is due to open in September 2003). (Standard 4); and
- the number of carers assessments is very low but should increase now that there are four dedicated staff to undertake them and data collection has been improved. All assessment staff now undergo training on how to carry out carer assessment. (Standard 4).

***Capacity for Improvement (Standard 6)***

**Assessment has highlighted the following improvements to capacity:**

- new home openings have compensated for any recent closures. A 60-bed nursing home is due to open this summer. From August 2003, a block contract will cover the use of all local EMI placements;
- all residential placements are now controlled centrally through the Placement Bureau and spot-contracting by individual social workers has been eliminated;
- the Council is investing in intermediate care beds and intermediate day services to support people, and is redesigning its four resource centres to provide rehabilitation following a hospital stay;
- incentives are being given to home care providers to take on more complex work and to provide better training and staff development. This is increasing the capacity of the private home care sector. In-house provision is now used to provide short intensive periods of home care, prior to transfer to the private sector;

- there are now no agency staff working in older people's services, following the introduction of the "Care Crew" initiative. There has been significant additional investment in social care in this year's budget, with an extra £2 million for learning disability service, £1.3 million for Older People Services and £300,000 for Mental Health Services;
- the Council has a new approach to budget monitoring which focuses on critical budgets and performance, including three social services budgets. The Assistant Director of Finance sits on the Council finance director's group and also has a place on the integrated finance team which is in partnership with South Downs Health Trust; and
- the inclusion of Councillors on finance panels has helped them to understand the financial pressures on social services. There were significant overspends last year but this year's budget has been increased to take account of extra commitments.

**Assessment has highlighted the following concerns about capacity:**

- Care First is being implemented on a rolling programme, and an additional 80 personal computers have recently been purchased. Data quality will be improved and training capacity increased through the introduction of an information steering group covering adults, children and corporate IT services. It is intended that electronic case records should be introduced by the end of the year.

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**Financial implications**

Children, Families & Schools is facing significant financial pressures in 2003/04 which are projected to continue into 2004/05. There is a direct correlation between some of the areas of concern highlighted in the ARM letter and the overspend - in particular the increased numbers of Looked After Children and numbers placed in Independent Fostering Agencies and the investment in in-house fostering capacity and family centres. Further detailed planning is underway to identify the resourcing implications of dealing with the priorities for improvement as identified in the ARM letter and how those can best be managed within the context of the Council's overall budget strategy.

*Finance Officer consulted: Louise Hoten*

**Legal implications**

The Department is required to meet statutory obligations under the Children Act 1989, the Adoption Act 1976, the Carers (Recognition Services Act) 1995, the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and associated regulations and the Children (Leaving Care) Act. Human rights implications under the Human Rights Act 1998 arise in connection with the provision of statutory services to children and families in need. Most notably the following Articles are relevant. Article 2 (Right to life); Art. 3 (Prohibition of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment); Art. 5 (Right to liberty and security of person); Art. 6 (Right to a fair hearing); Art. 8 (Respect for private and family life, home or correspondence); and Art.14 (The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the convention shall be secured without discrimination). *Lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson*

**Corporate/City-wide implications**

The Performance (star) ratings will be published in November 2003 and will be based on an assessment of overall performance. The evidence summarised in the ARM letter will be used to help arrive at that rating. That rating is an important element of the Council's overall rating under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

**Risk assessment**

Any risks associated with the proposals have been identified and addressed within the main body of the report.

**Sustainability implications**

There are no specific sustainability issues.

**Equalities implications**

The ARM letter is concerned with services for those people within our community who are most at risk of social exclusion.

**Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder**

There are no specific implications for the prevention of crime and disorder and there is no specific reference to the YOT service who are responsible for services for children and young people involved in crime and disorder.

**Background papers**

The ARM letter is attached as Appendix 1

**Contact Officer**

Fiona Johnson Head of Child Protection x 5384