

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
Email edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr J Crossley-Holland
Executive Director for Children and Young People
Children and Young People's Directorate
Sheffield City Council
Town Hall
Pinstone Street
Sheffield S1 2HH

1 December 2005

Dear Mr Crossley-Holland

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 4 July 2005 to assess the performance of the education and social care services within your authority. We are grateful for the information which you provided to support this process and for the time made available by yourself and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

Being healthy

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory.

A partnership approach is used to promote the health and well-being of children and young people. This has been effective in focusing work on areas of greatest need. Good progress has been made in establishing a range of services to support healthy living. There is multi-agency support for reductions in substance abuse. Kitemark accreditation is being used to improve the development of health in early years settings. There is a clear focus on delivering improvements to the health of children and young people through the development of the Healthy Schools Award programme, healthy eating initiatives, sex and relationships education and programmes to support exercise. The Youth Service is active in promoting healthy living. Sheffield plans to use the Local Area Agreement to align all programmes for health promotion. There is a need to develop a set of performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the various programmes.

There is a good range of services for looked after children. However further work is needed to ensure young people receive routine health checks. Performance on this indicator is average and below comparators. To ensure implementation of health plans Sheffield has plans in place to introduce support workers and to strengthen the looked after children's health team. Regulatory inspection reports point to some active promotion of health and well-being, with health promotion work being undertaken and

active involvement of the nurse appointed to work with looked after children. However in these reports concerns were raised about omissions in health plans and medication administration records in the children's homes. Reports on the secure unit's promotion of health were positive.

The incidence of teenage pregnancy remains above national averages. The rate for under 18 year olds has not reduced from the 2000 rate. However, Sheffield has a well-established multi-agency teenage pregnancy programme that is beginning to impact particularly in the under 16 year old group for whom rates have reduced since 1998. The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases for 16 to 19 year olds is higher than national rates.

There has been investment in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) service in 2004/05, which has been used to enhance services, and referral waiting times have been reduced to an average of 12 weeks. Acute youth offending referrals are timely but there is room for improvement in the timescales for none acute referrals, which are well below national averages.

Staying safe

Outcomes in this area are good.

Children and young people are provided with the safe environment to which they are entitled. Child protection procedures in schools are good and most schools were rated good or better for their support, care and welfare. Regulatory inspection reports on the fostering services confirmed that systems are in place to safeguard young people. In the children's homes a number of measures are in place to promote safety including child protection procedures and anti-bullying policies, which were reported, as effective.

Child protection indicators are generally good. Performance on re-registrations has declined but is in the good band and re-referrals continue on a downward trend and are below comparators. Child protection reviews are held as required. De-registration and the numbers on the register are in line with comparators. One per cent of child protection cases are not allocated to a social worker. Performance on timely completion of initial and core assessments remains an area where further improvements are needed. The establishment of a local children's safeguarding board is planned for autumn 2005.

Sheffield Council has worked in partnership with others to develop an extensive range of community based resources and this has contributed to halving the numbers of looked after children with a disability over the past 5 years and to considerable increases in numbers accessing inclusive services.

Sheffield's strategy for all children is to support universal services and create capacity for early intervention and prevention. It has invested in family support services, and although the numbers of looked after children have risen slightly since last year, they remain below comparators.

Sheffield places a high priority on adoption and performance is generally good. There is more of a mixed picture with regard to fostering with good performance for younger children fostered and placed for adoption but relatively high numbers in residential care as opposed to foster care. Placement stability for children looked after for four years or more and living with foster carers, has improved but remains below average.

A high percentage of looked after children have not been allocated a social worker. A number of these have been assessed as appropriately allocated to a support workers instead. Those not allocated are monitored by managers and are described as the most settled children. Nevertheless all looked after children should be allocated a social worker.

Enjoying and achieving

The outcomes for children and young people in this area are satisfactory overall with strengths balancing areas for development.

The provision of early years places is rising in line with national trends and the quality of provision in nursery education is generally good. However the proportion of childminders and out of school providers of childcare judged good is below that found nationally.

The strategy for improving attendance has been effective and authorised absence is now in line with national averages because absence is challenged rigorously by schools. However unauthorised absence remains above the national average. There are three secondary schools in which attendance is a cause for concern to the Department for Education and Skills. The absence rate for looked after children is average.

Support for improving behaviour has been effective in reducing permanent exclusions to national levels. The provision for excluded pupils meets statutory requirements. Although the rate of reintegration of excluded pupils is low, there are clear strategies for using alternative provision. These are effective in supporting pupils to continue with their education.

Support for schools in an Ofsted category of concern is effective and two special schools and a primary school have been removed from special measures in the last 12 months. However there are relatively few schools judged by their inspections to be good or very good.

Effective use is made of data to set challenging targets and to monitor the achievement of children and young people. There are appropriate strategies in place to raise attainment. However, these have yet to impact on attainment consistently, which remains below national levels and in the primary sector below those of statistical neighbours. Nonetheless the strategies are impacting on increasing the rates of improvement at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in targeted schools. The attainment of black and minority ethnic pupils is rising faster than other pupils at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE). Results at Key Stage 3 and for the proportion gaining 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE are in line with statistical neighbours and improving. Attainment at one or more GCSE A* to G grades is below the national average and that for similar authorities which indicates that support for lower attaining pupils is an area for development, although the rate of improvement is faster than the national average and for similar authorities. Value added is average for progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 and although below, is close to average for progress in Key Stage 2 and 4.

The attainment of looked after children at GCSE is low, although there is evidence of improvement. This has been accorded a high priority within the authority and a revised strategy is being implemented, although this is relatively recent and untested. Looked after children are encouraged to develop a wide range of achievements. Successful outcomes include attendance at college, university and other educational settings, participation in modern apprenticeships and the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme.

There are clear and realistic plans for implementing a strategy for pupils with special educational needs and the provision of special schools is being appropriately revised.

Support for children and young people to access recreational and voluntary learning is good through the work of schools, the youth service, the music service and outdoor education centres. Regulatory inspection reports on children's residential settings commented positively about looked after young peoples' participation in leisure activity.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are good.

There has been a positive reduction in the percentage of first time offenders in the youth justice system. While the rate of recidivism is increasing, it remains below national average.

The council has a contract with an extensive young carers' support project that provides support, signposting to services and advocacy.

There is evidence of a number of initiatives to support young people in managing transition and challenges in their lives. These include support for early years and for the transition to secondary education.

Consultations with children who have disabilities and young people and their carers have informed the development of provision and transition work was generally reported as effective in regulatory inspection reports.

The council has a range of initiatives to involve young people in decision-making and the development of services, which include specific consultations on policies and strategy, monthly presentations to the partnership board by children or their representatives, the Youth Parliament and residents meetings in children's homes. A charter for participation has been developed with partners and standards for participation agreed.

Looked after children are involved in reviewing provision and planning their own development and there is planning for the current level of involvement to be increased. The percentage of looked after children communicating their views to their own review has substantially improved but remains below comparators. An involvement and participation project is working to further develop consultative and participation processes in social services and to establish a web page as a means of improving the involvement of looked after children in the review processes.

Achieving economic well-being

The contribution to supporting children and young people to achieve economic well-being is good. Attainment in sixth forms is above that found nationally and that of statistical neighbours. The successful promotion of work-based learning is reflected in higher success rates than found nationally and in the region. However, the rate of young people not in education, training or employment after 16 remains just above the national average.

The local authority has established a good strategy, 'learning for life', for the development of the post-14 curriculum. This has been developed effectively with a wide range of partners to address the future skill requirements of the local economy based on a detailed audit of need. It has resulted in the development of a broad and flexible curriculum with a wide range of applied learning routes available at 14 to encourage progression to further education at 16. This has contributed to a significant rise in the proportion of young people continuing on to full-time education at 16 and has improved retention rates at 17, which are good.

Sheffield has a clear focus on improving support for continuing education in its most deprived areas. Vocational pathways in the two new planned academies have been strengthened. Strong partnership with the local Learning and Skills Council has resulted in a new sixth form college. This has secured additional provision in an area with a tradition of disengagement. The retention rate in full-time education is improving faster than nationally, especially in the most deprived areas.

The retention of care leavers in education, training and employment is low but there is a clear multi agency strategy to address this, although it is too early to comment on the impact of this. For looked after children the regulatory reports noted that much work was being undertaken to prepare children to live independently, though further work is needed on pathway and transition planning. The strategy for supporting young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to engage with suitable placements is appropriate and is actively pursued in partnership with the further education college.

There is a clear strategy for family learning, which is supporting parents and carers to re-engage with education and gain qualifications to support their transition to further education or employment.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well established pregnancy programme and improving trends for under-16 pregnancies • acute mental health referrals for the Youth Offending area teams is 100% • well developed drug treatment service • well developed plans to address healthy lifestyles with some innovative practice – early years kite mark and sports partnership activities • joint working at a senior management level and multi-agency strategies developed • Youth Service provides a curriculum on healthy living. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases • slow referral to commencement timescale for non-acute mental health needs • health of looked after children specifically PAF C19 and including medication and recording of healthcare in children’s homes.

<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the focus on early intervention and preventative services • school provision for staying safe • performance on adoption • community based support for children with a disability • child protection indicators for registrations, de-registrations, reviews, numbers on the register and re-referrals. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initial and core assessments within timescales • allocation of social workers to looked after children and child protection cases • placement stability for children looked after for at least four years and placed with foster carers • the proportion of looked after children placed in foster care in comparison to residential care.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear improvement strategies are in place and are having an impact • Good support for attendance and behaviour • effective support for schools in an Ofsted category of concern. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inconsistent rates of improvement in attainment • educational attainment of looked after children • the number of good and very good primary schools.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the charter for participation, standards and toolkit • the range of consultation that has directly impacted on service development • support for young carers • support for pupils with a disability at the point of transition. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development to further ensure consultation and participation with looked after children, particularly in relation to reviews • the impact of the youth offending service on rates of recidivism.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective 14 to 19 strategy in place • sixth form attainments • improved provision for education post-16 • improving retention rates into education at 16 and 17 • participation in and success rates for work-based learning programmes. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proportion of care leavers in education, training and employment pathway and transition planning for looked after children.

Service management

The council has appointed a Director of Children and Young People's Services and has a clear structure for the authority's work. The development of a district based delivery model for lower tier services supported by higher tier central services has been informed by a thorough analysis of need. This has incorporated geographical and longitudinal analyses of a wide range of data. Appropriate priorities for development have been identified and there is effective targeting of resources. The local area agreement provides an opportunity to further improve investment through the pooling of budgets.

There are well established arrangements for partnership working within the city. A 0 to 19 partnership board is in place to oversee developments and the arrangements of the local strategic partnership are being reviewed to establish a clear structure for planning, monitoring and evaluation. The voluntary sector is well represented on the partnership board. There is a proven system for multi-agency groups working on key issues such as teenage pregnancy and substance abuse.

There are well established systems for consultation with stakeholders, which already include an appropriate and developing focus on seeking the views of children and young people.

An analysis of staff strengths and deployment has been undertaken and a thorough review of systems for performance management has resulted in improvement. Sheffield is noted for its innovative and effective support for workforce reform and rightly regards this as key to the success of the planned developments. Further work is necessary to ensure appropriate levels of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) for residential workers and post-qualification awards for social workers.

The self analysis was a wide ranging summary of the current and planned initiatives to deliver services to children and young people. It drew on appropriate performance indicators to illustrate progress although this was not consistently rigorous. The council is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses and is able to illustrate its approach to addressing areas for development.

The authority has good capacity to tackle the range of initiatives that remain to be addressed.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

Healthy life-styles are promoted for children and young people:

- the effectiveness of consultation with children and young people on health issues
- progress against the identified health priorities established for Sheffield and progress developing impact indicators.

Staying safe

The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:

- the quality and timeliness of assessment and planning processes for child protection referrals
- the effectiveness of the allocation and placement strategies for looked after children.

Enjoying and achieving

Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and to achieve highly:

- impact of the primary and secondary strategies to improve overall levels of attainment for all children and young people.

Children and young people who are looked after are helped to enjoy and achieve:

- impact of the strategy to raise the attainment of looked after children and young people and to improve their attendance at school.

Making a positive contribution

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution:

- impact of the youth offending team, specifically in reducing rates of recidivism.

Achieving economic well-being

Children and young people who are looked after are helped to achieve economic well-being:

- impact of the strategy to increase the proportion of care leavers in education, training and employment
- pathway and transition planning.

Final judgements

Please see your final annual performance assessment judgements attached at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely



FLO HADLEY
Divisional Manager
Office for Standards in Education



JONATHAN PHILLIPS
Director – Quality, Performance and Methods
Commission for Social Care Inspection

APA final judgements 2005: Sheffield City Council

Areas for judgement	Final judgements ¹
The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	3
The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	3
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	3
The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people	3

1

Grade	Service descriptors	Capacity to improve descriptors
4	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users	Very good
3	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users	Good/promising
2	A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users	Adequate
1	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users	Inadequate