

**Performance Review Report for
West Berkshire County Council Social Services 2004**

Summary of Improvement Recommendations

Children and Family Services

- Following a very positive inspection of Children's Services (June-July 2004), a clear Action Plan to address areas for development is now in place and should be delivered. It will form the basis of the monitoring meeting agenda with the BRM.
- Key outcomes are to be achieved by the West Berkshire Children and Young People Strategic Partnership.

Services for Adults and Older People

- The council should continue its drive to improve the range and quality of services to help older people and adults to live at home particularly in relation to intensive home care.
- The number of people with LD helped to live at home is to be increased in line with the PSA target. (C30).
- Adult Services are developing new initiatives with health partners to meet the objectives of the prevention agenda. The challenge will be to roll out such developments to more isolated areas of the authority.
- In line with the strong and emerging partnerships measurable local joint indicators should influence strategic development.

Performance Review Report 2004

West Berkshire County Council

Children and Family Services

The council has demonstrated significant progress within the last year to improve its services to children and their families. Corporate objectives reflect this priority and the service inspection judgement is that West Berkshire is serving most children well with excellent prospects for the future.

1. National priorities and strategic objectives

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- The council have a clear strategy to build and maintain flexible and diverse children's services. Since the last Annual Review improvements to address the requirements from the VCI audit have been made.
- There are a wide range of successful partnerships to assist the council in improving services in particular the 'West Berkshire children and young people strategic partnership'.
- Performance management is embedded within the culture of the organisation and information is routinely used to monitor the impact of service delivery.

Areas for improvement

- Further work should be undertaken to ensure that service users can contribute fully in consultation processes to inform service development and delivery.

2. Cost and efficiency

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- Good progress has been made to reflect children's services as a top corporate priority for the council. The 2004/05 budget has been protected and there is growth to develop services.

- The Children's Services has a strong commissioning function, with robust budget and financial management systems in place. Managers demonstrate a sound understanding of budget management.
- Children's services have demonstrated a pro-active approach to developing partnerships which are supported by joint, shared and pooled budgets.

Areas for improvement

- Children's services should consider ways to ensure that the voluntary sector can contribute to strategic planning and commissioning.

3. Effectiveness of service delivery and service outcomes

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- Performance indicators remains strong with 14 indicators at Band 3 or above. For example the stability of placements identified as showing Band 4 performance has improved and the numbers of children placed for adoption is better than the England average.
- A1, stability of placements, shows significant improvement (50%) on last year.
- 100% of reviews for the numbers of children on the Child Protection Register were completed on time (38 @ 31/3/04) and there are no unallocated Looked After Children on the CPR.

Areas for improvement

- Recruitment and training of foster carer's should lead to greater placement choice becoming available. Following detailed analysis progress on commissioning and placement needs should be reported at monitoring meetings.
- The Children and young people strategic partnership should demonstrate that their single assessment format is piloted and rolled out as outlined in the Children's Inspection action plan.

4. Quality of services for users and carers

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- Planning for children is built upon a sound and inclusive assessment process and takes account of the views of service users and their families. This results in a wider range of family support options including outreach respite which is provided by a dedicated team.
- There is a public information strategy in place that delivers relevant information in an accessible format with both a website and it's pages targeted at children and young people.

Areas for improvement

- A strong focus must be maintained on the timely completion of initial and core assessments. Whilst completion of core assessments exceeded this year's plan (by 12%), initial assessment figures have fallen short of the planned target by 10%.
- Improvements to the frequency of file monitoring and audit management of files should be progressed to achieve accurate and efficient records.

5. Fair access

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- A variety of services are available to reflect most of the needs of the community, promote equality and demonstrate that diversity and social inclusion are valued. This is evident in the work undertaken with unaccompanied asylum seeking children and in the initiatives designed to prevent children and young people from being excluded.
- Access to all key services, except Information Services and Specialist family placement support services is available on a 24/7 basis. Advocacy is mostly available and interpreting services are always available when needed.

Areas for improvement

- Work should continue to improve and sustain the quality of service to black and minority ethnic service users. Training for managers should be completed and the revised equalities action plan should be implemented and related data used to inform service delivery.
- Following a re-launch of the direct payments scheme as an option for disabled children the target of an increase of 25% per annum should be demonstrated.

6. Capacity for improvement

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- Business planning and performance management are robust within the service. Management arrangements are clear and an effective change management programme has ensured that, during the integration process, of children and education services, performance has not deteriorated.
- Children and Young People Committee members carry out regular visits to children's services. They examine performance information on a quarterly basis and regularly meet with service users. This has enabled them to have a broad understanding of social care and it is now hoped that this will be rolled out to all elected members.
- The council has found recruitment difficult in an area of high employment and has established a broadly based recruitment and retention strategy.
- The Children's inspection and annual monitoring have identified that there is strong leadership and direction which underpins service delivery. Imaginative and successful partnerships ensure that social care is a high priority on the council's agenda.

Areas for improvement

- The Children's Service Inspection Action Plan should be implemented in line with agreed timescales and current performance should be sustained.

Services for Adults and Older People

The council has a corporate plan that prioritises the social care agenda and revenue funding allocations have increased. Emphasis is placed on partnership working and seeking out imaginative solutions to problems.

Progress to improve performance has been swift and successful this year as evidenced in both the performance indicators and supporting DIS and other monitoring evidence.

1. National priorities and strategic objectives

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- Performance on delayed transfers of care has remained very good and an efficient reimbursement protocol is in place.
- Significant improvement in the investment in domiciliary care has led to 550 additional hours being made available. New schemes are in place to avoid hospital admission or facilitate early discharge.
- There is excellent partnership working on alternatives to residential care leading to new facilities being developed including those for older people with dementia.
- Improvement in the percentage of intensive home care (B11) places the council in Band 5 and 3rd highest in the comparator group.

Areas for improvement

- Despite the significant increase in the amount of intensive home care delivered, the indicator C28 is at Band 3 and places West Berkshire 9th in the comparator group. The objective of moving to Band 5 should be pursued. Recruitment is a difficult issue within this geographical area.
- Joint local Performance Indicators to be implemented to measure progress on the reduction of emergency hospital admissions and prevent crises.

2. Cost and efficiency

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- The public/private partnership with Amey has realised 'additional cost and quality improvements' signalled in the recent Children's Inspection Report.
- Realistic and achievable collaboration with partners has reduced duplication and increased efficient user focused services for example single assessment for intermediate care services.
- The council has ensured that a range of lower level domiciliary care support is developed assisted by use of the Supporting People Grant.

Areas for improvement

- The council has invested in new IT systems and an initial contact centre for all services. It should now be followed up with streamlined services for home care and a single access point for intermediate care.
- Partnership working and joint initiatives with other local authorities and PCT partners need to demonstrate service improvements for all care groups and a more effective recruitment process for unqualified staff in particular.

3. Effectiveness of service delivery and service outcomes

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- There have been significant improvements in PAF performance since last year. Most indicators are improved.
- In line with strategic planning the number of older people helped to live at home is increasing.
- Access to Direct Payments is now at Band 3 and good progress has been made to increase the numbers who are receiving Direct Payments.

- Equipment is being delivered quickly and performance is at Band 5.
- Good performance has been achieved on C31 which is at Band 5 and more adults with mental health needs are being supported to live at home.

Areas for improvement

- The number of people receiving a statement of their needs has increased but requires further improvement.
- The council should continue its drive to extend the Direct Payments scheme. Further progress to increase numbers from 28 to 40 should be pursued.
- Ensure that there is appropriate provision of care home places for adults aged 18-64.
- Increase the numbers of young physically disabled or learning disabled adults helped to live at home.

4. Quality of services for users and carers

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- The council has ensured improvements can be achieved with additional funding going to social care alongside the decision to make social care a very high priority council wide.
- More service users are receiving timely assessments and access to services.
- There is a rolling audit programme in place which ensures that users' views influence service development.
- A joint Quality and Performance Board has been established between the council and Health to monitor agreed local performance indicators.
- Managers and their teams are conversant with performance monitoring and management information is produced monthly. This is now being modelled for the whole council.

Areas for improvement

- Use of the joint local performance indicators to influence service development.
- The council should use the findings from the detailed Review of Home Care Services to redesign the service for the future.

5. Fair access

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- The council has stated clearly that inclusion is a major thrust of its planning. This is well evidenced across the Adult Care Groups in particular in mental health and learning disability services.
- The council has been particularly productive in ensuring employment opportunities are available to as many service users as possible.
- Recommendations from previous inspection reporting have been acted on and community-based services developed for older people in rural areas.
- The analysis of ethnic monitoring has been presented to Elected Members and then published on the council's website by 31st May 2004.

Areas for improvement

- Service improvements to be brought about by further work on outcomes from the RRA Act impact assessments.

6. Capacity for improvement

Improvements observed since the previous annual review

- The council has demonstrated a marked improvement in PAF performance and a commitment to further develop and improve the services it offers. Service developments are frequently in partnership and often innovative and social care has been placed firmly as a priority within the corporate agenda.

- Capacity issues such as recruitment of unqualified staff are being addressed through successful partnership both within the council and with other organisations.

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