
CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE IN 2005

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Chris McEwan, Children's Services Portfolio

Responsible Director(s) - Margaret Asquith, Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome from the Annual Performance Assessment of Darlington Borough Council's Education and Children's Social Care Services for 2005.

Information and Analysis

2. This year the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of Children's Services was conducted jointly by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate the outcomes for children in the area and the contribution of Council services to those outcomes. The APA determines the Council's star rating for Children's Services and contributes to its social care star ratings for 2005 and the overall Corporate Performance Assessment rating.
3. In preparation for the APA the Authority was required to submit a self-assessment of the services it provides for education and children's social care. This assessment together with an APA data set formed the basis of a round table discussion between officers of the Council, CSCI and Ofsted during July 2005. On the basis of this discussion and following moderation at a national level the Council was issued in October 2005 with a letter setting-out an assessment of Council services for children and young people. This letter (a copy of which is enclosed at **Appendix 1**) highlights both areas of strength and areas for improvement and provides the final APA judgements for the Authority in 2005. APA judgements are ranked from 1 to 4. The final judgement scores for Darlington's Annual Performance Assessment are as follows:

APA final judgements 2005: Darlington Borough Council

Areas for judgement	Final judgements
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.	2
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

4. The table below provides a descriptor for each score.

	Descriptor
Grade 4: A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for children and young people, is innovative and cost-effective and fully contributes to raising expectations and the achievement of wider outcomes for the community.
Grade 3: A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for children and young people, has some innovative practice and is increasingly cost-effective whilst making contributions to wider outcomes for the community.
Grade 2: A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users	A service that delivers minimum requirements for children and young people, but is not demonstrably cost-effective nor contributes significantly to wider outcomes for the community.
Grade 1: A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for children and young people, is not cost-effective and makes little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community.

5. As referred to in paragraph 2 above the APA contributes to the Council's star rating for social care. The Council received notification of its social care ratings in November 2005 (letter attached as **Appendix 2**). This confirmed our social services performance rating as 2 stars. The letter breaks down the performance of social care services between adults and children. For children the Council is recognised as serving most people well and that it has excellent capacity for improvement. The final judgements secured for the APA for children's services and the overall 2 star rating for social services performance has contributed to the Authority maintaining its 'Excellent' status for Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Outcome of Consultation

6. This report has been considered by the Social Affairs & Health Scrutiny Committee and the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Legal Implications

7. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

8. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

9. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

10. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

Reason

12. To inform Members of the current performance of Darlington Borough Council Children's Services

Margaret Asquith
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

Annual Performance Self-Assessment 2005
Annual Performance Assessment Data Set

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