
**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE IN DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the recent Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of the Children's Services Department and to highlight areas for development in the coming year.

Information and Analysis

2. Background

Every year the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OfSTED) carries out an assessment of each council, commenting on its effectiveness in meeting the needs of children. The APA is structured to follow the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda: Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution, and Achieving Economic Wellbeing. The APA also comments on an Authority's capacity to improve. Finally, a grade is given for the overall effectiveness of Children's Services.

A grading on a scale of 1 to 4 is handed down by OfSTED, with 1 being unsatisfactory and 4 being very good.

A full copy of the APA letter is attached to this report as an appendix.

3. Areas for Improvement

The areas for improvement identified through the APA process are:

- a) Accelerate plans to reduce further the number of decayed, missing and filled teeth in children aged 5-14
- b) Closely monitor child protection activity to bring about improvement in deficit areas
- c) Closely monitor progress on looked after children and young people's long term stability to ensure improvement
- d) Raise standards in Key Stage 1 and in secondary schools
- e) Reduce the absence and exclusion rates
- f) Help more schools to provide an outstanding education
- g) Accelerate progress with all aspects of the 14-19 strategy
- h) Agree and implement arrangements to assure the quality of education and workplace provision
- i) Increase secondary schools' confidence in the authority's capacity to support them effectively.

These areas have been consolidated into priorities for development. Along with strategic priorities identified in the Children and Young People's plan, they will be addressed through the Children's Services service planning process.

Legal Implications

4. 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

5. 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.

Recommendations (if any)

6. Members are recommended to receive this report for information.

Murray Rose
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

7. There are no background papers.

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