
CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2008

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Chris McEwan,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of Children's Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome from the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of Darlington Borough Council's Children's Services for 2008.

Summary

2. This report provides a summary of the Annual Performance Assessment of services for children in Darlington.

Recommendation

3. Members are asked to note the content of this report.

Reason

4. In order to be informed of the current performance of Darlington Borough Council's Children's Services.

**Murray Rose
Director of Children's Services**

Background Papers

Annual Performance Self-Assessment 2008
Annual Performance Assessment Data Set

Julian Kenshole: Extension 2071

S17 Crime and Disorder	The recommendations within the APA letter will have a positive impact on Crime & Disorder
Health and Well Being	The recommendations within the APA letter will have a positive impact on Health & Well Being
Sustainability	There are no specific sustainability issues contained within this report.
Diversity	The recommendations within the APA letter will have a positive impact on children and young people with disabilities and/or complex needs.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not represent a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Implementation of the APA recommendations will have a positive impact on the Aspiring theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy in particular through ensuring that all children receive high quality learning and the Healthy theme through tackling obesity in children and young people.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) is required by Section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to undertake an annual review of each local authority's children's services and to award a performance rating for them. Annual Performance Assessment discharges these duties. This is the last year of APA before the move to Comprehensive Area Assessment. As such the APA process was reviewed to make it a more differentiated and proportionate process, particularly for authorities like Darlington which underwent a Joint Area Review during 2008. The assessment was based on an analysis of data and the authority's own self-assessment/Children and Young People's Plan.

6. Attached at **Appendix A** is a letter from Ofsted that summarises the findings of the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment for Darlington. It should be noted that the data profile used to inform the APA judgements is the validated data for 2007, and not data from 2008. This is particularly relevant to school performance where Ofsted notes the good progress made in respect of exclusions, attendance and the achievement of vulnerable groups, but fails to acknowledge the improvements in academic performance in summer 2008 examinations, particularly at Key Stage 4. Although the APA is published after the Joint Area Review, it is based on less contemporary data. The letter highlights both areas of strength and areas for development. Judgements are ranked from 1 to 4 (where 4 is the highest and 1 the lowest). The final judgement scores for Darlington's Annual Performance Assessment are as follows:

Areas for judgement	Grade awarded
Overall effectiveness of Children's Services	3
Being Healthy	4
Staying Safe	3
Enjoying and Achieving	2
Making a Positive Contribution	3
Achieving Economic Well-being	3
Capacity to improve, including the management of children's services	3

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

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

8. Areas identified for development over the course of the next year include:
 - (a) The progress of schools in achieving Healthy Schools status.
 - (b) The need for local authority children's homes to meet all National Minimum Standards.
 - (c) The number of referrals that led to an initial assessment has decreased.
 - (d) Improve standards in Key Stage 1.
 - (e) Improve standards in Key Stages 3 or 4.
 - (f) Further improve attendance and rates of permanent exclusions.
 - (g) Reduce re-offending rates.
 - (h) Improve opportunities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to influence the shape of local services.
 - (i) Reduce the number of young people not engaged in employment, education or training post-16, including young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young offenders, and 17 to 18-year-olds; and
 - (j) Reduce the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds whose current activity is not known.
9. These will be prioritised for action within the Service Plans of the Children's Services Department and in our response to the recommendations of the Joint Area Review.

Outcome of Consultation

10. There has been no consultation in respect of the Children's Services APA rating. This is an external judgement of Darlington's Children's Services, subject to national moderation and inspection processes.