



Making Social Care
Better for People

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CONFIDENTIAL: EMBARGOED UNTIL 18 NOVEMBER 2004

Ms Margaret Asquith
Director of Social Services
Darlington Borough Council
Social Services Department
Town Hall
DARLINGTON
County Durham
DL1 5QT

15 November 2004

**Performance Ratings for Social Services: November 2004 and
Access to the Performance Indicators Website**

Dear Ms Asquith

Performance Ratings for Social Services: November 2004

I am writing to inform you of the latest performance ratings for your council's social services. This rating constitutes the social services component of the comprehensive performance assessment for all local government services.

a) Judgements and Rating

The judgements and rating for your council are as follows:

Services for children

Serving people well?	Most
Capacity for improvement?	Promising

Services for adults

Serving people well?	Some
Capacity for improvement?	Promising

Star Rating

Your social services performance rating is 2 stars.

b) Context

A performance review report was sent to you following the annual review meeting earlier this year. This sets out the context and summarises separately the performance of services for children and those for adults. Improvements since the last review are detailed, as are the priorities for further improvement that were discussed and agreed.

We welcome your feedback to help us improve our service.
Please feel free to contact the Customer Service Unit on 0845 015 0120

c) Evidence

In assessing performance, CSCI reaches judgements about performance against a set of standards and criteria, drawing on evidence from a number of standard sources. Further details are set out in CSCI's Operating Policies available at:

www.csci.org.uk/council_star_ratings/councils_star_rating/ssioperatingpolicies.pdf.

The sources include:

- the published PAF performance indicators and other statistical data up to 2003-04, plus data supporting planned targets for 2004-05;
- monitoring information from the Delivery and Improvement Statement;
- the reports of former SSI and CSCI inspections, where applicable;
- the reports of Joint Reviews, where applicable.

A summary of evidence mapped onto the standards has also been sent to you.

Details of the standards and criteria have been published, and are available from CSCI or may be seen on the CSCI council performance website at: http://www.csci.org.uk/council_star_ratings/default.htm.

The star ratings range from zero to three stars. The categories for "serving people well?" are no, some, most and yes. The categories for "capacity for improvement?" are poor, uncertain, promising and excellent.

The final decisions on star ratings were made by the Chief Inspector.

d) Further Changes to Star Ratings

CSCI policy on star ratings is that they will be published each year, and for the most part will not be changed during the year. For councils with a zero star rating, a higher rating may be awarded later if robust and substantial evidence of performance improvement becomes available. Conversely, if serious concerns about performance arise during the year, a council's rating may be adjusted to zero stars, and special monitoring arrangements put in place.

e) Further Information and Publication

The new performance ratings and underlying judgements will be published on Thursday 18 November. The performance review report for your council will also be available on the CSCI website at:

www.csci.org.uk/council_star_ratings/councils_star_rating/default.htm and

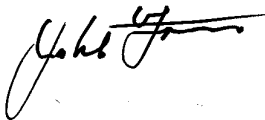
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a copy of this letter will also be placed there within two weeks of the date of writing.

We will send you an e-mail containing the embargoed star ratings for all councils on Tuesday 16 November. Both this e-mail and the e-mail setting out the star ratings for all councils are sent to give you time to prepare local briefings - for example, to handle press enquiries. If you require help or advice on dealing with the media, CSCI press officers, Edith Djin, Tracey Saunders and Marlon Charles are available to assist. Their contact numbers are 020 7979 2090/2089/2086.

Any questions about your star rating that are not answered by the guidance or by the contents of this or your Performance Review Report should be addressed in the first instance to your CSCI Business Relationship Manager.

Yours sincerely



JOHN FRASER
Regional Director
Commission for Social Care Inspection
North East Region

Copies:

Mr Barry Keel, Chief Executive, Darlington Borough Council
Mr Ken Jarrold, Chief Executive, County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority
Mr Mark Nicholson, Appointed Auditor

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