
CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2006

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

Responsible Director - 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 Children's Services for 2006.

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), the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and the North East Strategic Health Authority (SHA). 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 contributes to the overall Corporate Performance Assessment rating for the Council.
3. In preparation for the APA the Authority was required to submit a self-assessment of the services it provides for education, health 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, Health and Ofsted during July 2006. On the basis of this discussion and following moderation at a national level the Council was issued in October 2006 with a letter setting-out an assessment of Council services for children and young people. This letter (a copy of which is attached at **Appendix A**) highlights both areas of strength and areas for improvement and provides the final APA judgements for the Authority in 2006. APA judgements are ranked from 1 to 4 (4 being the highest). The final judgement scores for Darlington's Annual Performance Assessment are as follows:

APA final judgements for <u>2006</u>	Grade awarded
Areas for judgement	
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 <i>capacity to improve</i> its services for children and young people	3
The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	4

4. 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	Excellent / 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

5. The **2005** judgements are shown in the table below, and therefore this is a good improvement on last year.

APA final judgements for last year - <u>2005</u>		Final judgements
Areas for judgement		
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's 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 social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people		3

Outcome of Consultation

6. 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.

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's Children's Services.

Margaret Asquith
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

Annual Performance Self-Assessment 2006
Annual Performance Assessment Data Set

Margaret Asquith Ext: 2099