



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Meeting: Executive Board

Date of meeting: January 2009

SUBJECT: Children's Services Annual Performance Assessment 2008

Electoral Wards Affected:

No specific issues for wards

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report considers the outcomes of this year's Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of council children's services. The report includes a summary of the key findings of the assessment and details actions that show how the council is responding.
2. The Children's Services Inspection Framework includes both an in-depth inspection, the Joint Area Review, and a lighter touch yearly desktop assessment, the Annual Performance Assessment. This Framework started in 2005 and concludes in March 2009 with a new approach based around the new Corporate Area Assessment. From 2005 to 2007 Leeds received high scores and an overall judgement of 'good' in the APA. This positive trend continued in the Leeds Joint Area Review that took place in late 2007 and reported in May 2008. The JAR report was generally positive, and rated both service management and capacity to improve as 'good'.
3. The outcome of the 2008 APA is shown below with previous relevant judgements.

	OfSTED APA 2008	Self- evaluation 2008	JAR 2008	APA 2007
Be Healthy	2	3		3
Stay Safe	2	2	2	2
Enjoy and Achieve	3	3		3
Positive Contribution	3	4		3
Economic Wellbeing	2	2	2	3
Capacity to Improve	2	3	3	3
Overall Effectiveness	2	3	3	3

Notes

JAR scores are broadly comparable but differ due to wider partnership focus of inspection

- 4 This year Leeds has achieved an 'adequate' grade overall. Although the APA letter does not indicate a major *decline* in outcomes, it does highlight important challenges in a number of areas, indicating where improvement in outcomes need to be more significant, or take place more rapidly. Work is underway to address these areas and the APA has focused further attention on this work, including the council's key safeguarding responsibilities. The APA letter recognises the progress Leeds is making in a number of key areas. The changes set out in this report will build on this work bringing improvements in the areas highlighted and others over the next year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. The Board is recommended to:
- a. Receive the report.
 - b. Approve the actions proposed in sections 4 to 9.

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is firstly to provide the Board with the 2008 OfSTED Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of the council's children's services (attached at Appendix 1 of this report) and some commentary. Secondly, to set out actions to bring about improvements in outcomes, including the key area of safeguarding.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As part of the development of children's services, OfSTED and its partner inspectorates agreed the Children's Services Inspection Framework. This framework includes both an in-depth inspection, the Joint Area Review, and a lighter touch yearly assessment, the Annual Performance Assessment. This Framework started in 2005 and concludes in March 2009 with a new approach based around the new Corporate Area Assessment.
- 2.2 Unlike the JAR, the APA is focused solely on *council* children's services. The APA is based on the council's own self-evaluation, briefings from central and regional government and an extensive dataset. The APA concludes with OfSTED giving scores from 1 (Inadequate) to 4 (Outstanding). The APA produces scores for each Every Child Matters (ECM) outcome such as 'Be Healthy', as well as producing a score for 'capacity to improve' and 'overall effectiveness'. This score for 'overall effectiveness' feeds into the Corporate Performance Assessment.
- 2.2 In the three years from 2005 to 2007 Leeds performed well in the APA. In each year all scores (except 'Stay Safe' from 2006 to 2007) were judged to be good, including the important 'capacity to improve' and 'overall effectiveness' judgements.
- 2.3 These positive findings were confirmed by the results of the intensive Joint Area Review (JAR) inspection. The Leeds JAR took place in December 2007, resulting in a draft report in March and a final published report in May 2008.
- 2.4 OfSTED changed the arrangements for the APA in 2008 to produce a tighter focus on safeguarding, outcomes for vulnerable groups and the core roles of councils. It is generally acknowledged that this year has been more challenging as a result (see para 5.1 below).
- 2.5 These changes to the inspection arrangements have led to changes in the APA judgements for many authorities. The proportion of councils judged to be 'good' in their overall effectiveness declined from 78% to 73% nationally. The number of councils judged to be 'inadequate' overall rose from none to four (Doncaster, Haringey, Milton Keynes and Surrey). In particular the grades for 'Staying Safe' changed significantly, with the number of authorities judged to be inadequate for this outcome doubling.
- 2.6 The 2008 self-evaluation by the council was informed by a local evaluation of performance and outcomes, but was also shaped by the recent JAR report and changes to the inspection framework. This resulted in the 'Economic Wellbeing' score in our self-evaluation being changed from 'good' to 'adequate'. This was because the new APA framework was only concerned with 14-19 education, whereas previously this had included many areas of strength for Leeds such as

childcare, regeneration and worklessness. As OfSTED had judged Leeds to be adequate in 14-19 education in the JAR, this was the final score the council submitted for the APA. However, because of the above changes in what is being assessed, the economic wellbeing scores are not like-for-like comparisons between 2007 and 2008.

2.7 The contents of this report need to be set in the wider context of the 10-year transformation plan for children's services.

3.0 **The 2008 APA**

3.1 The full APA Letter is attached in Appendix 1. The summary scores are set out below:

	OfSTED APA 2008	Self- evaluation 2008	JAR 2008	APA 2007
Be Healthy	2	3		3
Stay Safe	2	2	2	2
Enjoy and Achieve	3	3		3
Positive Contribution	3	4		3
Economic Wellbeing	2	2	2	3
Capacity to Improve	2	3	3	3
Overall Effectiveness	2	3	3	3

Notes

JAR scores are broadly comparable but differ due to wider partnership focus of inspection

3.2 The next section provides some commentary and analysis on the 2008 APA, focusing on the changes in this year's APA letter. For the key areas, additional information is provided on what improvements are already in place and the major next steps planned to drive further improvement.

4.0 ***Be Healthy***

4.1 The grade provided by OfSTED for Be Healthy in 2008 is 2, or 'adequate'. In all previous years this outcome had been rated as 'good'. The areas for development identified by OfSTED are teenage conceptions, health services for Looked After Children and infant mortality. This year's APA is informed by a smaller set of data than in previous years and Leeds' relatively weak performance on some indicators in these three areas is the main reason that the score is lower this year. A commentary as well as a summary of current and planned improvements in the three areas for development are set out below:

4.2 *Teenage conception:* Leeds has not reduced teenage conception rates, unlike the trend seen nationally or in similar areas. This issue is well known locally and the council, PCT and wider partnership have moved rapidly to address this. The 2008 APA does not reflect this progress because the data used in the assessment is for 2006. The main changes that have taken place are: new leadership and commissioning arrangements; agreement of a new strategy; and stronger

performance management. These management changes have informed the re-commissioning of improved services for young people and central government has praised Leeds' response as an example of best practice. This work, and an additional £100K investment, means that services are now more accessible for young people and work is being better targeted on the most vulnerable schools and neighbourhoods. The next step to drive further improvement will be based on joint local plans and commissioning in the six targeted wards with highest need and a citywide social marketing campaign. New data to assess this new strategy will become available in 2010.

- 4.3 *Health Services for Looked After Children:* The main indicators for this area are for the regularity of health and dental checks. Leeds performance has been relatively low but improving gradually overall in recent years. However recent investments from the council and PCT should lead to a marked improvement in performance in future. The main improvements put in place in this area include: commissioning from April 2008 of a dedicated LAC Dental Health Team to provide dental services to all young people in care and the funding of a specialist sexual health nurse for Looked After Children. To improve this further the partnership will invest further during 2009/10 and 2010/11 in the LAC Health Team and improve shared IT systems by March 2009 to improve recording and performance management. Performance data should show the impact of these improvements from 2009 onwards.
- 4.4 *Infant Mortality:* the most recent data show that the rate of infant mortality in Leeds is above the national average but, importantly, is in line with similar authorities. In response to this issue the council, PCT and wider partnership in Leeds have agreed an Infant Mortality Strategy and are developing targeted action plans for the areas with highest need. The next step to further improvement will be work with the Department of Health National Support Team in the new year.

5.0 Stay Safe

- 5.1 OfSTED provided an overall grade of 'adequate' for Stay Safe, which is in line with the council's own self-assessment. This is an area where there has been considerable change in the focus, guidance and practice of OfSTED in the recent APA for every local authority. This is due to OfSTED's own development and also the recent events surrounding the 'Baby P' case. In light of these changes 26 authorities received a lower grade in 2008 and eight were judged to be inadequate. OfSTED identified three areas for development in Leeds: the fostering service; the quality of residential care and the timeliness of reviews for Looked After Children.
- 5.2 *Fostering service:* An action plan is in place to address all the issues raised at the inspection. This is being managed and overseen by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. This has already made an impact on the service, for example:
- In all cases where foster carers have more children placed with them than their approved number (known as 'exemptions') these have been reviewed, with new risk assessments completed and new procedures put in place;
 - New procedures are in place for placements into foster care made out-of-hours by the Emergency Duty Team.
 - A major piece of work with recruitment services to ensure robust, safe recruitment practice is fully in place
 - New guidance and training has been produced for carers and staff

- Improved processes are in place to strengthen the role of children's views in care reviews.

The action plan is on track for completion in January 2009 and the service will meet all standards required by February 2009.

5.3 *Residential Care:* The Council has made significant improvements to residential care since the Residential Review of 2007. This has led to the closure of one home and a wide range of improvements to the management, staffing and practice in residential provision. This has been reflected in the more recent OfSTED inspections of Leeds residential homes. Eleven of the council's twelve residential homes are now judged adequate or better by OfSTED, of these the majority of council homes have been judged good, and one home has been judged as 'outstanding'. The one remaining inadequate home is awaiting the OfSTED re-inspection for official reclassification, officers are confident that this home will achieve an 'adequate' rating. One other local residential home, commissioned from another provider, remains inadequate. The contract with this provider has been terminated and notice served, alternative provision has been, or is being identified for the young people affected.

5.4 *Timeliness of reviews for Looked After Children:* The rate of reviews in Leeds is still below national and similar area benchmarks. However, the rate has improved significantly from under 40% in March 2007 to 80% in September 2008. This improvement reflects prioritisation of this work within Children and Young People's Social Care, including initial investment in additional reviewing officers to increase capacity; improvements to ICT systems and individual and team level plans for improvement. Recruitment early in 2009 will bring 2 further Independent Reviewing Officers, with posts in place by April 2009.

5.5 Safeguarding is of crucial concern for children's services in the city. In light of recent events nationally and Leeds self-evaluation and APA remaining 'adequate' further improvements in this area are now very important. Therefore further work is being undertaken, which takes into account recent requirements set out by the Secretary of State in light of the Baby P case and includes:

- Strengthened arrangements for leadership and management, by reviewing the role of the Chief Officer for Children and Young People's Social Care in Leeds to ensure it meets national and local requirements and also concentrating more focus on strong operational management.
- Investment in additional capacity for quality assurance and performance management.
- An audit of child protection cases on all children aged 0-4 years is taking place. The results of this for cases involving children aged under 3 will be collated in early January. The results for cases involving children aged 3 and 4 will be collated in early February.
- Preparation for any unannounced inspection of children's social work services will be implemented from January 2009. It will use the joint area review methodology, be supported by an experienced JAR inspector and focus on the quality of service provided. This evaluation will provide the service with valuable information about necessary areas for improvement. Staff will be supported to feel confident about this process through updated training for fieldwork staff relating to assessment work and new training for relevant officers on supervising child protection work.

6.0 **Enjoy and Achieve**

6.1 OfSTED gave Leeds an grade of 3 for Enjoy and Achieve, which is in line with the Council's own self-assessment. The letter highlights the good overall quality of schools and early education in Leeds, rising standards at key stage 4 and particular strengths in provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Two areas are identified for particular focus:

6.2 *Attendance Rates:* Leeds will continue to build on the progress being made by targeting particular schools where attendance is a significant issue. The 18 schools recently targeted for persistent absence have seen reduced levels during 2008. Wider ownership of attendance as a priority has also been ensured through the development of a new policy and strategy, which has involved young people and the Children Leeds Partnership. This is helping to embed a more 'intensive' approach within target schools and areas, with resources refocused towards activity to help families and pupils most at risk through for example: increased use of penalty notices; fast tracks; first day calling and support to families. The aim being both a short, and long term positive impact on attendance figures. Closer monitoring of these and other strategies will be carried out via the Attendance Officers and School Improvement Officers in conjunction with other services. A revised multi-agency programme board is going to oversee and ensure further improvements in overall attendance.

6.3 *Raising Achievement for children from some minority ethnic backgrounds:* As the number and proportion of BME children changes it is important to adjust focus to target those groups where there has been a particular increase in the size of the population or where there are particular issues. Targeted interventions with some groups have already seen positive improvements and work is now underway to extend that to the Kashmiri Pakistani community. The approaches being adopted will emphasise both pupil participation and parental involvement. In the later part of 2008 further improvements have already been identified across BME groups in terms of pupil achievement. In order to produce a step change in performance a secondary Leaders strategy group has been set up recently to focus particularly on strategy and policy to improve BME achievements for community groups where lack of progress has been highlighted in the APA, so that for example, performance significantly improves in Asian and Gypsy/Roma Traveller groups.

7.0 **Make a Positive Contribution**

7.1 OfSTED graded Leeds as 3 ('good') for make a positive contribution. This was not in-line with the council's self-assessment of 4 ('outstanding'). OfSTED recognised some significant strengths in work in Leeds, but also determined that the areas where improvement are still needed are important considerations requiring further attention. Leeds was recognised for the increases in young people accessing the youth service, reductions in the number entering the youth justices system for the first time and decision-making opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Key areas for development relate primarily to work with looked after children, specifically:

7.2 *Participation by looked after children in their reviews:* This figure has been improving and work is ongoing to maintain this trend. Training for the relevant

teams and specific training for key officers has helped increase skills and understanding around participation in the reviewing process. A sub-group within the team is developing innovative practice in this type of work. Different ways of enabling the sort of participation that young people want are being explored, for example through better use of I.T. A set of standards to support young people's participation has been agreed and a stronger role for the Independent Reviewing Officers in ensuring that participation is part of each review has been established. This will be further strengthened with the additional IRO posts discussed in 5.4 above.

- 7.3 *The number of looked after children receiving final warnings or convictions:* Leeds Youth Offending Service is implementing an Action Plan to address this, which is being monitored by a multi-agency group. Work being undertaken includes training and support for residential children's home staff to help them deal with 'low level' incidents and avoid significant police involvement; closer links between neighbourhood policing teams and children's homes so that more 'informal' and supportive relationships can help prevent minor incidents from escalating; and more information sharing between the foster carers and children's homes with the Youth Offending Service and 'Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) teams, so that looked after children considered at risk of negative behaviour can be 'fast tracked' to diversionary alternative, positive activities. This work is being underpinned with a review of the protocol between the police, YOS and CYP Social Care for addressing incidents involving young people in looked after placements.

8.0 Economic Wellbeing

- 8.1 Our self assessment for Economic Wellbeing is lower in 2008 than in previous years. OfSTED accepted this self-assessment. In part this reflects extensive changes to the content of this judgement within OfSTED's assessment. As such the changed grade is more a result of changes to inspection than a decline in performance. In the past a wide range of areas, including many where Leeds was recognised as a national leader, were included in this judgement. For example, in 2007 this included: childcare; reducing worklessness; family learning; regeneration; housing; homelessness; 14-19 education and NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training). In 2008 the judgement was based on 14-19 education and NEET. As such, and in light of the recent JAR inspection findings on 14-19 education our self-assessment grade was 'adequate'. The key areas for development identified by OfSTED were NEET and Level 3 (Broadly equivalent to two A levels) qualifications for 19 year olds.
- 8.2 *The proportion of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training:* The latest data indicate improvement in the local NEET and 'Unknown' rate for young people, although confirmation of this trend will not be available until the spring when the national measure is available. A NEET strategy has been agreed and Leeds has successfully gained £2.5 million of targeted LSC funding for the next two years. The partnership has agreed a new IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) framework and work is ongoing to re-tender local IAG services.
- 8.3 *The proportion of young people with Level 3 qualifications at aged 19:* The council, schools and colleges are making progress in 14-19 education but this indicator is still a concern. The slow improvement in part reflects more limited improvement in GCSE results three years ago when the current 19 year-old cohort were in Key

Stage 4. The authority has led strong work to improve capacity and citywide working on 14-19 education. A new 14-19 Education Plan has been agreed, the college merger approved and local commissioning partnerships developed. GCSE results are now improving rapidly which will improve this measure in future years and Leeds is well ahead of the national trend on the roll-out of Diplomas. The key next steps for further improvement are to further develop the take up of Apprenticeships and a support and challenge programme for school sixth forms.

9.0 Capacity to Improve

9.1 This grade is mainly a result of the decline in 'Be Healthy' and OfSTED's interpretation of the new grade for 'Economic Wellbeing' as representing a 'step – down' in performance. It should be noted that the detailed findings of the Joint Area Review rated capacity to improve as 'good' and that for the first three years the APA did not identify a single area for development in Capacity to Improve. Finally, partnership working is seen as key to securing improvements and the Council was awarded Beacon status for partnership work founded strongly on core studies from children's services. The key areas for development identified in 2008 are set out below:

9.2 *Social care vacancies:* This issue was raised by OfSTED on the basis of a return dated 30 September 2007 covering all children's social care staff (ie fieldwork, residential, fostering and adoption workers etc). At that time the residential homes staffing review was still being implemented and a number of posts were filled by temporary and agency staff pending permanent recruitment. Similarly, a number of fieldwork posts were filled by agency staff pending permanent staff returning from courses as qualified social workers. During 2007/08 16 FTE substantive fieldwork appointments have been made.

9.3 *Value for money of preventative and family support services:* OfSTED have used a somewhat simplistic interpretation of various budget benchmarking indicators compared to the number of children in care as the basis for this comment. Whilst the reality is more complex, for example this includes the authority's investment in Sure Start and early years, this is an acknowledged local issue. There has been extensive work to consider the role and effectiveness of these services across the partnership over the past twelve months, including some good joint research by social care, the voluntary sector and a local university. In addition new approaches have been piloted through the SignPost project and some local projects. Next steps for further improvement include: implementing the findings of the recent reviews into family and preventative services (e.g. the positive impact of the Budget Holding Lead Professional pilot).

10.0 Overall Effectiveness

10.1 The grade for the overall effectiveness of children's services in the 2008 APA is 2, or 'adequate'. This grade is produced by inspectors as a balanced overall assessment of all the other grades, with a particular emphasis on 'Stay Safe' and 'Enjoy and Achieve'. The grade for overall effectiveness has changed as a result of the changes to the grades for 'Be Healthy' and 'Economic Wellbeing' and the remaining 'adequate' grade for 'Stay Safe'.

11.0 Conclusion

- 11.1 This years Annual Performance Assessment has seen significant changes to the inspection framework, placing more emphasis on a smaller number of key indicators of progress. The national picture has seen a reduction in the number of local authorities graded as good overall and an increase in the number of authorities Graded as inadequate overall and particularly for safeguarding. Against this context it is however still disappointing that Leeds APA score is lower than in previous years so although the letter does not indicate a major *decline* in outcomes, it does highlight important challenges in a number of areas.
- 11.2 The APA has provided indications of where improvement in outcomes need to be more significant, or take place more rapidly. Although services were aware of and working on these areas, the inspection has further focused attention on them. The 'tougher' focus within the inspection on safeguarding, coupled with the national context of public concern about assurances within safeguarding work is reflected in the work for continuous improvement that was already underway in Leeds to strengthen arrangements and processes in this area.
- 11.3 The APA itself acknowledges the progress that Leeds is already making in some of these key areas. Improvement work is already showing a strong progress and impact, as is seen in the recent inspections of residential homes, or the praise for Leeds new approach to reducing teenage conceptions. The changes set out above will build on this work bringing improvements in the areas highlighted and others over the next year.
- 11.4 The Budget Plan for 2009/10 will include resources for targeted work on the required development areas.

Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- a. Receive the report
- b. Approve the actions proposed in sections 4 to 9

Background Papers

Report to Executive Board: Children's Services Annual Performance Assessment and Half Year Update on Progress and Performance – 19th December 2007

Report to Executive Board: Leeds Joint Area Review – 11th June 2008

Ofsted's Annual Performance Assessment Handbook of Procedures 2008 (see the ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk)