

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
29 January 2009

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2008

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Ofsted assessment of the performance of the children's services within Wiltshire County Council.

Background

2. The Annual Performance Assessment process is a continuous one and was still required to happen despite the fact that Wiltshire had a Joint Area Review (JAR) of children's services in summer 2008. The Department completed a self-assessment which was submitted to Ofsted in June. Inspectors then considered the self-assessment, the draft JAR report and a range of other evidence, chiefly performance indicators across both education and children's social care. This was purely a table-top exercise and there was no visit or contact made with the Council. A draft of the Annual Letter was drawn up and sent to the Council to comment on the accuracy of the content. The final letter was published on 18 December 2008. The letter is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
3. The judgements are predominantly based on performance data 2007/08, this means that the school test results for summer 2007 were used.

Main Considerations for the Council

The judgement:

4. The letter includes the grades for a number of assessed areas:

Assessment judgement area	APA grade
Overall effectiveness of children's services	2
Being healthy	2
Staying safe	2
Enjoying and achieving	2
Making a positive contribution	3
Achieving economic well-being	3
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	2

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale
4: outstanding/excellent; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate*

5. The grade for "Overall effectiveness of children's services" contributes its grade 2 to the CPA assessment.
6. The assessment process highlights areas for development. As the process has a broader scope than the JAR, some additional improvement areas are

identified. Most of these areas were already recognised by the Department and focussed work to improvement was underway.

The current position:

7. The assessment focuses mainly on data from the last financial year. The table provided as Appendix 2 gives an update on the current situation and actions for improvement.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

8. None.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

9. The letter highlights that there are still attainment gaps between boys and girls. It acknowledges that there have been some improvements in the educational achievement of multi ethnic groups but that achievement is still inadequate.

Risk Assessment

10. The Council needs to recognise the importance of improving key performance indicators relating to the outcomes for children and young people, and ensure that resources are carefully and fully directed at areas of under performance.

Financial Implications

11. As in the JAR report, the Letter highlights the lack of management capacity to secure the appropriately ambitious change agenda. This is being addressed through the restructuring of the Department for Children and Education and the financial implications have been factored into the 2009/10 budget proposals.
12. Also in the JAR report, the Letter highlights social care and special education needs placements have been acknowledged as too costly. This had previously been identified and is part of the commissioning plans of the Children and Young People's Trust Board.

Legal Implications

13. None.

Conclusions

14. The grades given by Ofsted show a drop from last year in the grades for Be Healthy 3 to 2 and Staying Safe 3 to 2. In Be Healthy this is mainly due to the rate of teenage conceptions rising and aspects of Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In Stay Safe it is due to insufficient children with disabilities with a transition plan, adoption rates for looked after children, timeliness of initial assessments, placement choice for looked after children and slow implementation of the common assessment framework.

Proposal

15. The Committee is asked to note the content of the report.

Carolyn Godfrey
Director, Department for Children and Education

Report Author:
Lynda Cox
Head of Performance Management and Co Ordination
15/12/08

Background Papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:
Ofsted Annual Performance Assessment Letter 17/12/08

Appendices

Appendix 1 Ofsted Annual Performance Assessment Letter 17/12/08
Appendix 2 Update Table.