



# **Joint Area Reviews Youth Service Self-assessment**

**Guidance**  
(February 2006)

## **Introduction**

This paper provides guidance to inspectors and to managers of youth services in local areas on the purpose, structure, completion and use of self-assessment. It should be read in conjunction with the guidance for Joint Area Review and Annual Performance Assessment self-assessment.

## **Background**

The *Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services* sets out the purpose and principles for joint area reviews (JAR) and annual performance assessment (APA). These principles underpin the self-assessment as a key element of both the JAR and APA processes. Following the introduction of Ofsted's new framework for youth service inspections in January 2004 it has been agreed that where a service has not been inspected under the new youth framework, an enhanced coverage of youth service provision will be accommodated within the joint area review. The enhanced youth inspection will mirror as far as possible, the principles agreed for the joint area review. The youth service element of the JAR will be fully integrated and, as such, dates for analysis, fieldwork and feedback will coincide.

- The joint area review is the primary inspection regime;
- The approach will be proportionate and differentiated;
- Inspectors will draw from youth service data as far as possible;
- All stages and timings will match those of the joint area review.

## **Methodology**

This self-assessment is based largely upon the JAR model and replaces the previous self assessment report (SAR). It is designed to enable youth services to provide evidence and grade their performance in respect of the three key framework aspects of achievement, curriculum and resources and management. It also enables youth services to comment on how effectively they contribute to young people achieving the five key outcomes. Local areas will nevertheless wish to ensure the youth service also features as appropriate in the overall JAR and APA self assessment. Youth Services are no longer required to complete the previous 2004 self assessment report (SAR) in preparation for inspection albeit that many have now integrated it into their planning processes.

## **Supporting evidence and documents**

The JAR self-assessment evidence may include higher level strategic and planning evidence to which the youth service may cross refer. The youth service self assessment should present evidence which is current and relevant, and which demonstrates impact. It is likely that the extent of the service specific documentary evidence initially submitted need not extend beyond:

1. youth service annual plan or equivalent
2. staff development and performance management details
3. quality assurance evidence
4. curriculum plan

The primary source of evidence will be the assertions contained with the self assessment. This document should therefore be evaluative and demonstrate impact. In the case of section B (performance against the Local Authority Youth Service Inspection Framework) two sides of text will suffice. In the case of the five key outcomes section, a similar length of text should cover all outcomes. Services are invited to provide an indicative grade for each section. It is understood however that youth work will contribute variably to the ECM outcomes and the self-assessment does not look for a neat balance of one against the other. For these reasons inspectors will not provide an overall ECM grade with the final report. Services should resist providing a catalogue of activity being undertaken as evidence. Managers will be able to provide more detailed evidence at the analysis stage and should therefore restrict the amount of initial evidence submitted to one lever arm file or a CD. For inspection planning purposes services should also submit a draft outline programme of youth work activity scheduled for week one of the JAR fieldwork. Managers are asked to highlight areas of work across the service which are considered to be representative of good practice and/or link with the five key outcomes. It is anticipated that inspectors will carry out a sample of session observations including within the neighbourhood study area. A staffing structure should also be submitted.

**Submission**

Submission of all documentation should coincide with the JAR milestones.

**Grading**

Youth services are asked to grade themselves using the following four-point scale and the following descriptors.

Grade	Descriptor
<b>Grade 4:</b> <b>Outstanding</b> <b>A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users</b>	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for young people, is innovative and cost-effective and fully contributes to raising expectations and the achievement of wider outcomes for the community.
<b>Grade 3:</b> <b>Good</b> <b>A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users</b>	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for young people, has some innovative practice and is increasingly cost-effective whilst making contributions to wider outcomes for the community.
<b>Grade 2:</b> <b>Adequate</b> <b>A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users</b>	A service that delivers only minimum requirements for young people, but is not demonstrably cost-effective nor contributes significantly to wider outcomes for the community.
<b>Grade 1:</b> <b>Inadequate</b> <b>A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users.</b>	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for young people, is not cost-effective and makes little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community.

## **Completing the form**

The following section has been designed to assist in the process of self-assessment. The template for self-assessment is divided into three parts. The questions raised in each section are not exhaustive, but provide prompts for completing the template. The focus is to evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve outcomes. Therefore, it is not necessary to comment in full on each key judgement. It may be that examples cross more than one outcome.

It is helpful if the self-assessment is concise, evaluative and referenced to relevant evidence.

For example:

- using a full analysis of national and local data but without re-iteration and description;
- using bullet points, lists and summary statements wherever possible, and avoiding lengthy or repetitive text; and
- cross-referencing to specific sections of relevant documents rather than repeating the information they include.

<b>PART A Background</b>	In this section provide brief background information to the youth service. Include structure, staffing numbers, budget information, delivery and partnership arrangements.
<b>PART B Performance against the framework</b>	This should provide a succinct summary evaluation and grade of overall performance in relation to the youth service framework aspects. Please cross-refer to key documentary evidence and performance data. This section should cover no more than two sides of A4.
<b>PART C Contribution to the ECM outcomes</b>	The youth service contribution to outcomes. Present up to four to five examples per outcome of contributions the youth service makes. Grade each section. Some aspects lend themselves more to youth work activity than others so the depth and nature of response to each may differ.

<b>PART A Background Information</b>	
<b>Name of Youth Service</b>	
<b>Name of Head of Service</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Telephone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Date self-assessment submitted:</b>	

**PART B Performance against the youth service framework key aspects**

**Standards of young people's achievement and the quality of youth work practice**

**Grade**

**Quality of curriculum and resources**

**Grade**

**Strategic and operational leadership and management**

**Grade**

**PART C      The contribution to outcomes . Consider 4-5 examples of youth service contributions per outcome.**

<b>Being Healthy</b>	<b>Indicative Grade</b>
<b>Staying Safe</b>	<b>Indicative Grade</b>
<b>Enjoying and Achieving</b>	<b>Indicative Grade</b>
<b>Making a positive contribution</b>	<b>Indicative Grade</b>
<b>Achieving economic well-being</b>	<b>Indicative Grade</b>