

Ref: C1(2005)2

To: All Local Authority Chief Executives  
Not Blackburn, Sutton, West Sussex  
and Rochdale or eight authorities  
subject to September JAR

Copied to:  
Directors of Education  
Directors of Social Services  
Directors of Children's Services

23 February 2005

Dear Colleague

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2005 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (APA) OF THE COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

This letter provides information on the process, key dates and summary details on the self-assessment requirements which will contribute to the above annual assessment.

You will be aware that we are currently consulting on the arrangements for APA and the consultation paper setting out details of the intended approach is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/everychildconsultation](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/everychildconsultation). This consultation ends on 28 February 2005 and although we intend to move promptly to responding to consultation, we felt that it would be helpful to authorities to have an early indication of the expectations and deadlines of this year's requirements to facilitate their planning.

### **The Process**

All local authorities will receive a rating which will form the children and young people's service block in the comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) 2005. The rating for children and young people will also consist of separate judgements on education and children's social care. The children's social care rating will contribute to the council's star rating for social services. The APA constitutes key elements of the improvement cycle which also includes meetings and dialogue with staff from DfES and CSCI. The key stages of the APA are:

- submission of a self-assessment by the local authority;
- an analysis undertaken jointly by Ofsted and CSCI of the self-assessment, the performance indicators and all other relevant evidence such as briefings from the DfES, Youth Justice Board, CSCI and Ofsted;
- a meeting with the authority to discuss strengths, areas for development, issues emerging from the analysis stage, and areas that might require further fieldwork in a future joint area review (JAR);

- a letter summarising the issues discussed and providing judgements on which the published ratings will be based;
- the rating of the overall contribution of the council's services to the five outcomes for children and young people which will be used by the Audit Commission to provide the rating for the children and young people's service block of the CPA.

### Key APA Dates

<b>By 31 March 2005</b>	Key documents sent to authorities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-assessment form and guidance;</li> <li>• the APA dataset; and</li> <li>• names of HMI and Business Relationship Manager (BRM) undertaking the analysis.</li> </ul>
<b>By 31 May 2005</b>	Authorities return completed self-assessment and dataset.
<b>6 June 2005</b>	HMI and BRM begin the analysis stage of the process.
<b>June - July 2005</b>	APA meetings (proposed dates to be published in advance).
<b>July - September 2005</b>	Draft letters sent to authorities.
<b>November – December</b>	Publication of ratings.

### The Self-Assessment

The requirements of the self-assessment are being developed so that they are compatible with the intended approach to the Children and Young Person's Plan. The self-assessment process is currently being trialled by a number of authorities and we will send to authorities on 31 March the final template which will take into account the responses from these trials and from the consultation process.

As a result of the consultation and trial processes, the self-assessment template and accompanying guidance will be developed further, but it is anticipated that the principles of the approach will not be subject to significant change. The self-assessment should be aligned to the authority's key plans for children and young people. It should be a short, succinct evaluation of the council's progress in improving outcomes for children and young people. It should analyse the effectiveness of the prioritisation of action, the impact of services and the involvement of children. However, we recommend that you wait until you receive your customised copy of the self-assessment on 31 March before embarking on its completion.

## The APA Dataset

As indicated above, this will be provided on 31 March. For education the data will be pre-populated and will largely consist of information already in the public domain. Social care colleagues will be familiar with this process whereby their estimated data of out-turn and plans are collected. Detailed definitions of the performance indicators will be provided in early March.

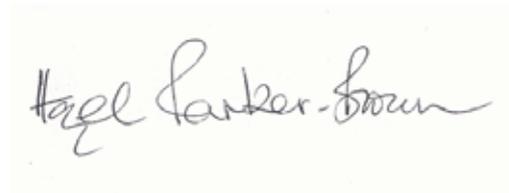
It would be helpful for us to have the name of a link officer who will act as the point of reference for further communication on APA of the council's children's services. We will forward to you in due course further documents as they become available, a proposed date for the APA meeting and, by the end of March, the full self-assessment and dataset. Please return the attached slip by 7 March to [mberge@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:mberge@ofsted.gov.uk)

If there are any queries about this letter, could Directors of Social Services contact their local business relationship manager at CSCI and Directors of Education contact Maggy Sadler at [msadler@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:msadler@ofsted.gov.uk) or ring 020-7421-6779.

Yours sincerely



**DAVID BELL**  
HM Chief Inspector  
Ofsted



**for DAVID BEHAN**  
Chief Inspector  
CSCI

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR APA OF LOCAL COUNCIL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

<b>Link Officer</b>	
<b>Local Authority</b>	
<b>Name of Link Officer for Children's Services APA</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone</b>	
<b>Email</b>	

Details for return by 7 March 2005 to Magda Berge by email to [mberge@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:mberge@ofsted.gov.uk)