

Annual performance assessment: handbook of procedures for 2008

Guidance on each stage of the annual performance assessment process for:

- inspectors
- Ofsted managers
- local authorities and their partners.

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Reference no. 070225

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A. Introduction to annual performance assessment 2008

This handbook outlines in detail the arrangements and methodology for council annual performance assessment (APA).

Ofsted is required by Section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to undertake an annual review of the children's services provided by each council and to award a performance rating for them. The APA discharges these duties. The rating awarded is also used as the rating for the children and young people's block in the Audit Commission's comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) of local authority services.

APAs are an integral element of the improvement cycle for councils and their strategic partners. Not only are they of themselves a vehicle to drive change, they also give a position statement in relation to the council's children's services that is considered in annual priorities meetings with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) children's services advisers in the regional Government Offices, thus helping to focus ongoing support and challenge.

All documents which relate to the APA can be found on the Ofsted website:

www.ofsted.gov.uk/portal/site/Internet/menuitem.455968b0530071c4828a0d8308c08a0c/?vgnnextoid=92f8b018b5631110VgnVCM1000003507640aRCRD

Key changes from 2007

Following evaluation of the APA 2007 process and a period of consultation, a number of changes are being made for 2008. Key changes include:

- the introduction of a differentiated approach which will determine the level of scrutiny and need for an on-site visit
- arrangements for councils with a joint area review (JAR) in Blocks 18 to 21 to receive a proportionate APA following the completion of the JAR fieldwork. Information and judgements from the JAR will feed into the APA
- providing councils with the option of either completing a self-assessment or submitting their review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)
- a reduction in the number of key judgements on which inspectors will report, resulting in a reduced number of core indicators and a smaller dataset
- reducing the number of briefings and ensuring they are more succinct and focused.

In 2008, grades will be awarded for:

- the contribution the council makes in improving outcomes for children and young people
- the contribution the council makes towards improving each of the five Every Child Matters outcome areas (being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being)
- the council's capacity to further improve these services.

Grading scale

All judgements are made using the following four point scale:

- Grade 4: outstanding
- Grade 3: good
- Grade 2: adequate
- Grade 1: inadequate.

Descriptors for the grades are to be found in Annex 1 to this handbook.

The annual performance assessment process

The 2008 assessment will take place between September and November with the final publication of all APA letters on 17 December.

Each assessment will be undertaken by two Ofsted inspectors. They will have a relevant level of expertise in education and social care. The lead inspector for the assessment process will be the local managing inspector from the Education Directorate.

The APA process is described in full in Section D of this handbook. The APA process map summarises the stages for 2008.¹

Risk assessment

Risk assessment will govern the level of scrutiny given to each APA including whether an on-site visit, or other type of contact, is required. This differentiated model is being introduced in response to councils' feedback and is in line with Ofsted's priority for better inspection that is proportionate to need.

The risk assessment will place councils in one of two groups based on the following criteria:

- previous APA performance since 2005
- performance as reported in JARs since September 2007

¹ The APA process map is included on page 9 of this handbook.

- corroboration of the accuracy of the self-assessment in 2007
- analysis of the APA dataset.

Where appropriate, councils will be provided with a provisional date for an on-site meeting or other type of contact in early June. Councils will be advised of any change to the agreed on-site arrangements before the end of July.

There will be no on-site meeting with councils which have a JAR in Blocks 18 to 21.

Key judgements

The judgements used for APA 2008 are based on the children's services key judgements framework. In this framework there are 36 key judgements which are supported by a set of published performance data. The APA focuses mainly on those key judgements which cover the council's services for children and young people, using existing evidence such as performance data and the council's assessment of its own performance. This year, in order to place more focus on the contribution of the council and provide Ofsted's input to the CPA grade, the APA scrutiny will centre on a reduced number of key judgements and performance indicators. The key judgements and performance indicators to be used are set out in Annex 2 and Annex 3.

Admissible evidence

A range of supporting admissible evidence, based on information already in the public domain, or previously shared with councils, will be made available to APA inspectors.²

The self-assessment or review of the CYPP

For APA 2008, councils are asked to submit either a self-assessment, based on the reduced key judgements, or the review of their CYPP. Councils have a statutory duty to review their CYPP and guidance on this can be found in the DCSF guidance *Annual review of the Children and Young People's Plan*. However, for the purposes of the APA, with its focus on the contribution of council services to outcomes for children and young people, councils may prefer to submit a self-assessment which more clearly allows them to focus on their own particular contribution. Guidance on the production of a self-assessment is provided in Annex 4. Further information on the self-assessment is provided in Section C of the handbook.

The APA letter

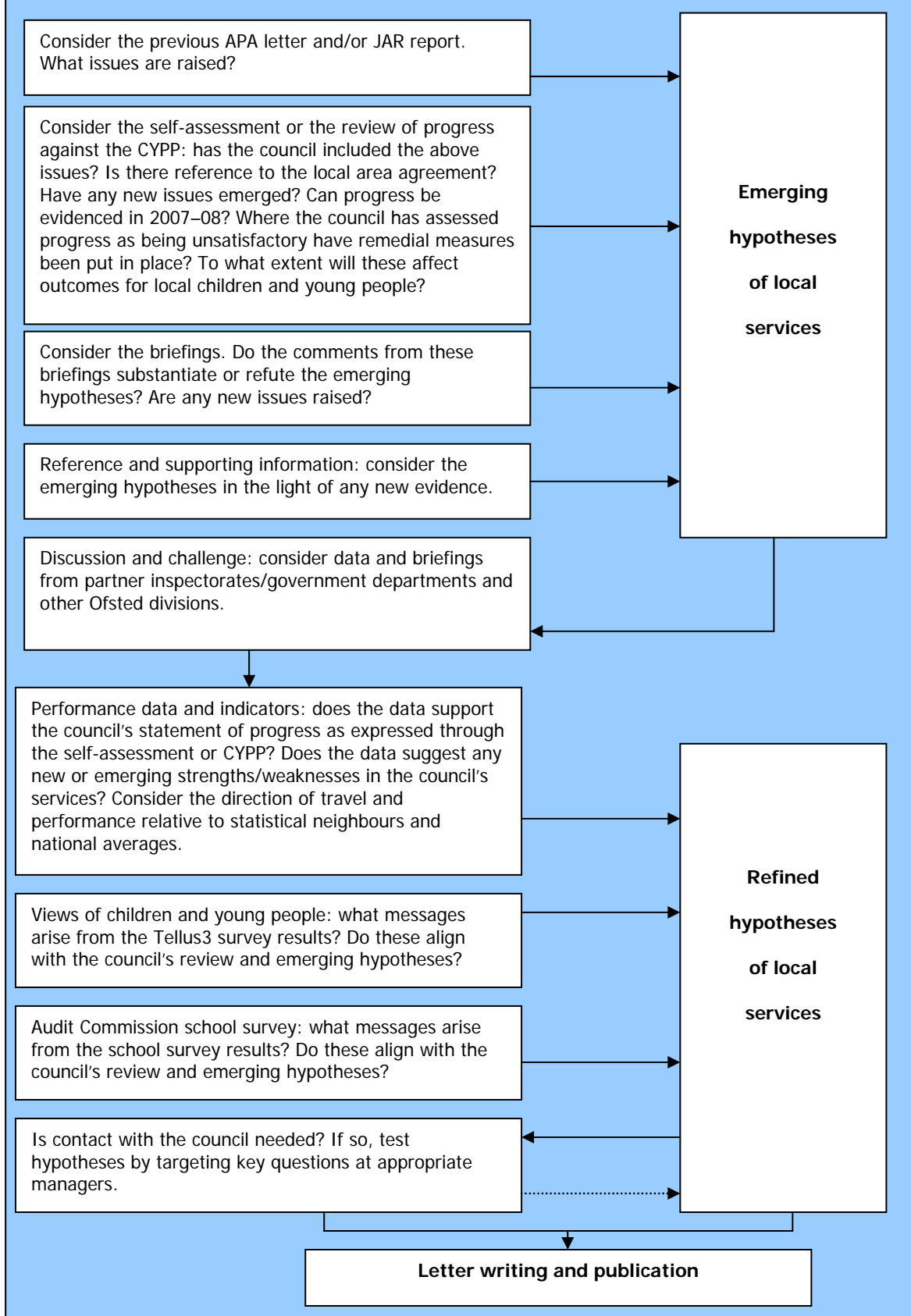
The style and content of the published APA letter will be differentiated. Section H of this handbook provides further details. All letters will confirm the grades awarded. The final judgement on the council's children's services will be based on published grade descriptors.

² Please refer to Section C of this handbook.

Timeline

	For all councils
Setting up	<p>In early April, Ofsted will request information on a small number of indicators not included in, or available from, other collections, for return by the end of May.</p> <p>In mid-May, Ofsted will send a formal request to councils for their self-assessment or review of the CYPP.</p> <p>By mid-June, other inspectorates and government departments will provide Ofsted with their briefings. Ofsted will provide councils with the list of briefings received.</p> <p>By 26 June, the council will provide its self-assessment or review of its CYPP, the self-evaluation of grades, the Local Safeguarding Children Board minutes (LSCB) and the LSCB plan if available.</p>
Councils having their JAR in Blocks 18 to 21	<p>Councils having a JAR in Blocks 18, 20 and 21 will submit their CYPP review or a self-assessment for APA purposes, together with the self-evaluation of grades by 26 June.</p> <p>For councils having a JAR in Block 19, the CYPP review together with the self-evaluation of grades should be submitted by 26 June. However, because of the timing of receipt of the draft JAR report, a self-assessment or any update of the CYPP review can be submitted by 11 July.</p>
Scrutiny of evidence	This stage takes place between September and November.
Contact with the council	<p>If required, this may take the form of an on-site visit, a telephone call or email correspondence to discuss one or more outcomes. In June, councils will be notified of the date for a possible on-site visit or contact. The APA programme will be confirmed by the end of July. On Day 2 of the APA, inspectors will contact the council to make any necessary arrangements.</p>
Final consistency check and agreement of grades	All letters will be available to a central consistency panel within Ofsted for final checking; grades awarded will be formally agreed by HMCI.
Issuing draft letter and grades	Following all quality assurance activity, a draft letter will be sent to councils for factual accuracy checking. All councils will receive their letter on 14 November. At the same time and in line with the agreed protocol, the draft letter will be sent in confidence to the DCSF. Provisional grades will be shared with the Audit Commission.
Representation	Representation activity will take place between 28 November and 12 December.
Final reporting	The final letter and grades will be published on 17 December.

APA 2008 process map



B. The information provided to inspectors

Background and administrative information

- A spreadsheet containing:
 - inspector contact details
 - link officer contact details for each council
 - names of directors of children's services for each council
 - names of Government Office children's services advisers for each council.
- A timeline indicating the scheduling of APA blocks.

Documentation provided in July

- APA: handbook of procedures for 2008.
- Previous APA letter/JAR report.
- The council's self-assessment or review of progress against its CYPP.
- The council's self-evaluation of grades for each of the five Every Child Matters outcomes for children's services overall and its capacity to improve.
- Minutes of the council's LSCB and plan.
- Briefing papers and information from Ofsted and other inspectorates/government departments.
- Other reference/supporting documents.
- An APA notebook for completion.

Documentation provided by the beginning of September

- The children's services dataset for the council.
- Audit Commission school survey for 2008.
- Tellus3 survey.

C. Admissible evidence

The APA is a desk-based process and no fieldwork is undertaken. The following range of admissible evidence is considered by inspectors during the scrutiny process and forms the basis on which judgements are made.

For councils having an on-site visit, the date of the visit is the final opportunity for discussing admissible evidence. Normally, no new information will be considered by inspectors beyond this point.

In exceptional circumstances, if significant new evidence that relates to the performance year in question, such as the outcome of a serious case review, comes

to light following the on-site visit or review of the available data for those not receiving an on-site visit, Ofsted will take it into account.

The briefings

These briefings provide key information for APA inspectors and should be reviewed in the scrutiny process.

Source	Contents
Ofsted – commentary on schools causing concern	<p>For all councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ data and information on the numbers and proportions of schools in each of the Ofsted categories of concern as at April 2008, compared with statistical neighbours and national proportions. <p>The content of the briefing will be available on the Ofsted website in advance of the APA.</p>
Government Office children's services advisers	<p>A commentary in relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes, based on a range of evidence from DCSF/Government Office field forces, the Strategic Health Authority and national strategies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ summaries of information from meetings held with councils to monitor and discuss progress on performance improvement ■ local contextual information in relation to the council's provision of children's services ■ detailed interpretation of data, revealing trends or patterns in performance ■ specific reference, where relevant, to safeguarding, looked after children, and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; to equalities and diversity issues, and to service management ■ commentary on the progress made in implementing the Change for Children programme locally. <p>The Government Office will share the content of the briefing with the council in advance of publication to Ofsted.</p>

Youth Justice Board – youth offending teams	<p>Contextual and performance information based on the Youth Justice Board Capacity and Capability assessment (C&C) and quarterly performance (relevant indicators from the national set). The C&C will involve Youth Offending Team (YOT) self-assessment against the relevant indicators and other national priorities such as the strategic plan for criminal justice for the next spending review period and the YOT's contribution to ECM outcomes. Other information will included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ funding from statutory partners, the Youth Justice Board and others ■ the role of the management board including changes to membership and wider governance within the authority ■ emerging issues including priorities for the coming year. <p>The report will include the above and will have been seen by the council and validated by the Youth Justice Board Head of Region.</p>
Ofsted Children's Directorate	<p>Ofsted's Children's Directorate will prepare a briefing to cover the aspects listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ information about new, or existing, serious case reviews, including where recommendations have been monitored or inspected ■ information about other serious incidents concerning children and young people that are not yet the subject of a serious case review ■ information from regulated services work, including: emerging themes; significant ongoing issues being monitored; specific issues relating to council-owned services; the inspection of children's homes and other regulated services, including matters relating to registration, enforcement and complaints; the inspection of fostering and adoption services. <p>All comments will be drawn from information already in the public domain or from issues previously raised with the council.</p>

Healthcare Commission	<p>The Healthcare Commission will provide a briefing based on the information provided by its annual health check. Where relevant, it will make specific reference to services for children and young people, such as child and adolescent mental health services or health provision for very young children.</p> <p>All comments will be drawn from information already in the public domain and will be shared with the council by Ofsted.</p>
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Surveys and minutes

Audit Commission school survey information	The 2008 outcomes for each local council area will be available for inspectors to consider. The survey provides an indication of the views of responding schools.
Tellus3 survey	This provides information on the views of children and young people in a sample of schools, compared with national and statistical neighbour data.
Local Safeguarding Children Board	<p>The LSCB minutes provide valuable insight into the work of the LSCB and the extent to which local partners cooperate and are actively engaged in implementing the wider safeguarding agenda.</p> <p>Where available the LSCB plan should also be submitted to add context to the minutes.</p>

Reference or supporting documents

Scrutiny of these documents is not an essential element of the APA process, although reference to some of them may be helpful or necessary in order to seek clarification of points.

Document	The evidence it provides
Contextual information from the Audit Commission	This includes the most recently available data and information on the population of the area and the context in which the council is operating.
Monitoring letters from Ofsted on schools in formal categories of concern; letters following survey visits	<p>Monitoring letters provide more detailed information about issues facing schools, their progress in addressing these and the quality of the support provided by the council. Where information is available about a number of schools there may be emerging themes that demonstrate the council's approach to identification, intervention and support.</p> <p>Letters following survey visits give useful information</p>

	<p>on the quality of subjects and other work in schools. They also demonstrate how well the council supports schools and coordinates good practice.</p>
<p>Monitoring information from the Youth Justice Board – secure estate</p>	<p>Youth Justice Board secure estate performance monitors will prepare a briefing on each young offender institute, secure training centre and secure children's home in their region. This will provide a commentary on those services within the establishments for which the council is responsible. It should be noted that not all councils have such institutions within their boundaries.</p> <p>The briefing will provide information from a youth justice perspective, giving an overview of council's involvement in the end-to-end management of young offenders between the community and custody. It will draw on the latest risk assessment that the Youth Justice Board, as commissioner for the secure estate, completes for every establishment based on its three key performance indicators and cross-referenced to the Every Child Matters outcomes.</p> <p>The briefing will have been seen by the establishment and the council, and validated by the Youth Justice Board regional manager.</p> <p>Reports of these inspections are also available to APA inspectors</p>
<p>The latest Audit Commission annual audit letter for the council and relevant information from the use of resources service block of the previous year's comprehensive performance assessment</p>	<p>A report on the work of the council in relation to accounts, financial aspects of corporate governance and performance management. It makes a judgement on whether best value is being delivered, looks at the implementation of government policy and identifies failing services where remedial action may be necessary.</p> <p>For APA purposes this will provide some useful background information on the way the council works and its priorities for improvement and the context within which services for children and young people operate.</p>
<p>Education financial information (Audit Commission)</p>	<p>This information has been drawn from the latest Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy data for 2007–08. It outlines school and council funding for education for each area against similar and national data.</p>
<p>The latest corporate assessment report for the council</p>	<p>This report assesses community leadership and corporate arrangements, and capacity to support services in delivering improvements.</p> <p>For the APA, it will set a baseline on the council's approach to identifying and achieving its priorities. It also provides some clear contextual details about the</p>

	council, which will offer valuable background information.
The council's latest corporate plan or council plan	This plan sets out the council's priorities, targets and service objectives for the current year. For the APA, it provides background information demonstrating the priority placed on services for children and young people. It will also show how services are working together to achieve positive outcomes.
The 2007 comprehensive performance assessment rating for the council	This will provide information on the council's performance in 2007 and will be used as background information only.
The latest JAR report	This will not be relevant to all councils, but where it is available, it will provide up-to-date key information about the performance of specific children's services and the contribution of service management to children's services in general. The APA process will examine progress since this review, especially in meeting the recommendations.
The 2007 APA letter	This letter provides the baseline for the 2008 APA. Progress since last year will be a key factor in making the 2008 judgements, especially in relation to identified areas for improvement.
National Healthy Schools Programme	Information about the number of schools participating in the National Healthy Schools Programme and details about the levels and status awarded.

The dataset

The validated children's services dataset is for the year April 2007 to March 2008, although a minority of indicators have different parameters due to data availability or collection methods. The dataset is presented under the five outcomes for children and young people and service management. In 2008, data collection for the dataset will be undertaken by the DCSF and other relevant agencies. Information on a small number of indicators, which is not included in, or available from, other collections by the required date, will be requested from the council by Ofsted in early April, to be returned by the end of May.

An initial set of children's services data, including the latest available educational performance indicators, will be sent to authorities during April in a 'toolkit' format similar to that of 2007. At the same time, analysts in Ofsted will begin to prepare initial summary documents for inspectors based on this information. When the first stage of social care data becomes available, this will be displayed in an analysis tool, which was launched last year and presents social care data in an interactive format. This will be available to inspectors and councils in late June and will include looked after children (OC2 data) and Ofsted data. This will support councils and inspectors

in planning for the APA. The final, validated set of data, consisting of all up-to-date social care and performance data, will be sent to councils in September and will be available to APA inspectors for their scrutiny process.

In September, inspectors and councils will be provided with an analysis of overall inspection judgements for schools and early years settings. This will show the proportion of inspected provision that has been judged good or better across council areas.

The children's services dataset is based on a reduced number of key judgements and performance indicators published in Annex 3 of this handbook. The way in which this data will be used, and interrogated, for APA purposes is set out in Sections D and F of the handbook. However, last year's larger key judgements and indicator set used for the APA programme can be used for reference if required.³

Councils will also have access to a range of local data and indicators that relate to the achievement of their priorities and targets. These should be referenced in the councils' self-assessment or review of their CYPP, and inspectors will take full account of them when reaching their judgements about progress. Any provisional test and examination data for 2008 available at the time of the APA will also be considered by inspectors, although comparisons will not be made at this stage with similar authorities or with the national picture. Unvalidated data of this kind will contribute to evaluations of the direction of travel and will only be used to inform the judgement on the council's capacity to improve.

The council's self-assessment or review of its children and young people's plan

For the purposes of the 2008 APA, councils are asked to submit the following by 26 June:

- the self-assessment or review of the CYPP
- a self-evaluation of grades for each of the five Every Child Matters outcomes, the council's contribution to children's services overall and the capacity of the council to improve these services
- minutes of the LSCB for the previous 12 months and, where available, the LSCB plan.

In response to the feedback about the APA 2007 process, councils will be given the option of providing either a self-assessment or their CYPP review. Many councils considered that a tighter framework than the CYPP review would enable them to convey their contribution to outcomes more clearly. The suggested self-assessment guidance sits alongside the reduction in the number of key judgements and performance indicators to be used for the 2008 APA, a reduction which is also aimed

³ Arrangements for annual performance assessment, Ofsted, 2007. This can be found using the link: www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070039

at focusing more clearly on the contributions of councils themselves. Guidance on the self-assessment for those councils who wish to use it is attached to this handbook as Annex 4.

For those councils that wish to use the annual review of their CYPP for the purposes of the APA 2008, this should include a detailed assessment of progress and improvement. The guidance for reviewing the CYPP makes it clear that no specific format or length is required. However, it does note that the review should be concise and clear and offers some suggestions about what should be included in relation to each of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Key features for the CYPP review, which will be particularly helpful for the APA, include:

- an emphasis on analysis and evaluation rather than description, and on outcomes and impact rather than processes
- the opportunity to take stock of key strengths and weaknesses and to note any barriers to improvement
- the ongoing involvement of key partners in evaluating the plan
- the inclusion of information about actions taken to address issues from the previous APA and/or JAR
- an emphasis on the involvement of children and young people and their families to ensure that their views and experiences are taken into account and that they receive feedback on decisions made as a result of their involvement
- evidence that the strategies and actions are securing equality of opportunity for all children and young people
- evidence that all services are active in promoting and respecting diversity
- the impact on delivering outcomes of new or joint approaches to service delivery and partnership working
- any changes in the resources available to deliver the CYPP and the impact on priorities
- arrangements in place to develop the workforce to manage change
- improvements in the provision and outcomes for vulnerable or underachieving groups.

Exceptionally, a council may present supplementary material for the purpose of the APA, such as an internal review. In these circumstances, such material should be sent electronically no later than the Friday before the APA starts. Whichever method of self-assessment is used, if a council considers that it has improved sufficiently to warrant an improved grade from the previous APA, then it should cite clearly and specifically the evidence which supports this judgement.

D. The APA process

Inspectors work together to undertake and complete the APA process, but the LMI will be nominated as the lead inspector responsible for seeing the APA through to completion.

Most tasks will be shared and negotiated between the two APA inspectors, but the person acting as the lead will:

- make contact with the council through the link officer and, if necessary, confirm the date and agenda for the on-site discussion, telephone call or email communication
- ensure that notes are kept of communications between the inspectors and the council
- ensure the content of the final letter is agreed with colleagues
- ensure the final completion of the APA notebook
- submit the letter for clearance and publication on the Ofsted website.

By the end of the scrutiny days, inspectors will have formed their judgements. These will be entered into the APA notebook.⁴ An initial letter will be drawn up in preparation for quality assurance activities before final drafting.

APA familiarisation and workshop days: July and September

Time will be allocated for all inspectors between July and September for training and workshops. By the end of this time inspectors will:

- be familiar with the revised arrangements for APA 2008
- be familiar with the reduced key judgements and dataset for their council
- have received briefings and guidance from Ofsted colleagues, other inspectorates and commissions on the interpretation of specific data and information
- have worked with their APA partner to begin to identify some of the key issues.

Tasks and the allocation of time

For all APAs in 2008 the same key tasks will be undertaken by inspectors. These are:

- the scrutiny and recording of evidence
- the reporting of findings in the notebook and letter
- reviewing the letter in the light of quality assurance processes.

⁴ Please refer to Section G of this handbook.

Risk assessment will govern the level of scrutiny and will lead to APAs being differentiated in two ways. For APAs requiring less scrutiny and for those having a JAR in Blocks 18 to 21 the allocation of time is as follows:

- Days 1 and 2 scrutiny, analysis and recording
- Day 3 reporting by means of the notebook and draft letter
- Day 4 quality assurance – critical read and recording
- Day 5 quality assurance – challenge, consistency panels and completion of recording.

It is envisaged that for many APAs, and certainly those requiring less scrutiny, there will be no need for contact with the council other than a courtesy telephone call on Day 2 to confirm that no further discussion is required. For APAs requiring more scrutiny the allocation of time is as follows:

- Days 1 to 3 scrutiny, analysis and recording
- Day 4 discussions with the council and possible on-site visit
- Day 5 completion of recording and draft letter
- Day 6 quality assurance – critical read and recording
- Day 7 quality assurance – challenge and consistency panels
- Day 8 completion of recording (LMI only).

During Day 2, inspectors will need to decide jointly on the nature of their contact with the council. Where inspectors judge that further discussions are necessary, this may be in the form of a planned series of telephone calls or email communication to take place on Day 4, or it may be that an on-site visit is judged necessary for Day 4. The decision to seek further clarification through additional communication rests solely with the inspectors.

Scrutiny and recording

Inspectors will consider or review:

- the previous APA letter/JAR report and any issues raised
- the overall content of the grade descriptors
- the analysis guidance document used in the APA training.

The self-assessment or revised CYPP presented by the council

When considering the self-assessment or CYPP review, inspectors should consider the following questions and note their hypothesis in the evidence notebook:

- Has the council used an accurate needs analysis in undertaking its review and/or in developing the CYPP review? Are there identified areas of strength and weakness? Are there any key areas that do not appear to have been addressed?
- To what extent have issues identified in the previous APA or JAR been addressed and how much improvement is demonstrated?

- What evidence is there that the strategies for improvement undertaken in the past year have been effective and have resources been deployed effectively?
- Does the self-assessment or CYPP review clearly demonstrate how the council's services make an impact?
- Are there any key areas where risks are high and improvement is slow or hindered? Are any barriers to improvement noted? If so, what is planned to address these?
- Is there evidence that the council's children's services are working together with other services and partners?
- Is there evidence that the council has involved children and young people and their families, and taken their views into account, and provided feedback to them?
- What evidence is there that the council's actions successfully promote equality of opportunity and diversity?
- Have there been improvements in the provision and outcomes for vulnerable groups, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for looked after children?
- If a council considers that improvements since the previous APA warrant an improved grade or grades, does the weight of supporting evidence justify this?

The briefings

Briefings have been shared with the councils and contain information that is already in the public domain. Some may contain the author's views on quality and performance. These views are given as information for the APA inspectors to consider alongside other evidence; they are not the APA judgement.

It is suggested that the briefings are considered in the following ways.

- What do they suggest about the council – do they help to confirm any emerging judgements? If not, what issues do they raise for further investigation?
- What areas have been identified as priorities in the briefings? Do they confirm or expand those identified from the analysis of data?
- What evidence is there that services are working together effectively?

Inspectors will discuss these questions in the light of their previous work and refer to the analysis guidance, refine their emerging hypotheses and note the trail of evidence in the APA notebook.

The minutes of the LSCB

- The LSCB minutes provide valuable insight into their work and the extent to which local partners cooperate and are actively engaged in implementing the wider safeguarding agenda.

The LSCB plan, if available, and minutes for the previous 12 months should be scrutinised to cover the following issues.

- The LSCB constitution and its specific area of delegated decision-making; how it relates and reports to the wider Children's Trust Board or other governance arrangement; its constituent management group and any sub-groups that progress its agenda.
- The LSCB budget and the extent and equity of respective contributions from partner agencies in terms of financial and human resources.
- Work priorities for the year and how the LSCB is monitoring them. The LSCB minutes should contain a detailed outcome-related strategic action plan that clearly synchronises with current outcome priorities in the CYPP, including:
 - clarification of thresholds for engagement of all partner agencies
 - recruitment and relevant checking processes
 - investigation of allegations
 - private fostering arrangements
 - cooperation with neighbouring councils and sub-regional arrangements
 - procedures that ensure a coordinated response to unexpected child deaths
 - the coordination of a council-wide safeguarding promotion plan
 - effectiveness of the link between the LSCB, the Local Domestic Abuse Forum and the broader objectives of the Local Safer Communities partnership.

Reference or supporting documents

A range of other background and supporting information is provided. Consideration of this material is not mandatory but will be undertaken if there is any doubt about judgements, or any conflict emerging from other admissible evidence or unresolved gap in this evidence.

The following steps are suggested for considering additional information and reaching emerging judgements.

- Consider whether the additional information clarifies areas where there is conflicting evidence or a gap in knowledge.
- Consider whether these documents and sources of information confirm the emerging judgements. If not, determine what other information is required about the council, and list it.
- list any queries, and the other information required, and use this material to inform the agenda for any discussion with the council.

Review the emerging hypotheses and update the APA notebook as needed.

The children's services dataset

The validated children's services dataset is for the year April 2007 to March 2008, although a minority of indicators have different parameters due to data availability or collection methods. The data will help inspectors to test views of the outcomes being achieved by children and young people and establish firm hypotheses. In addition, summary indicators will be provided as a starting point for analysis in each of the outcome areas. These additional documents are intended to help councils and inspectors secure a route through the indicators, and are not intended to replace the need for scrutiny of the whole dataset. It is important that, by the end of this scrutiny stage, all the data has been considered in the light of contextual information and other admissible evidence.

Alongside this national dataset, inspectors should also consider any local data presented in the council's self-assessment or CYPP review. Such data will give a clear picture of the progress that councils and their partners are making in relation to local priorities and targets. In addition, recent local performance data will also be considered, even where they are not validated against similar councils or national figures. This unvalidated data will only be used to support the capacity to improve judgement and direction of travel.

The following steps are suggested.

- Analyse the summary indicators and then the dataset to establish the profile it provides of the outcomes achieved by children and young people in the area.
- In doing so, consider overall standards, improvement trends and consistency of evidence.
- Consider whether the indicators show incidence at least in line with national and/or statistical neighbour averages, and whether they show a trend of improvement.
- Consider performance against the key threshold indicators.
- Consider local data and the most recent performance indicators – do they provide a picture of performance against local targets? Do they illustrate a trend of improvement or point to any additional areas of concern?
- Consider hypotheses emerging from the evidence previously contemplated – does the data support these hypotheses? Do they point to any additional areas that would be expected to feature in the council's priorities, or provide confirmation that certain areas do not need to be considered as priorities?
- In the light of the evidence from the dataset, decide what is convincing, and which aspects require more evidence, and what, at this stage, might seem appropriate for taking forward for discussion with the council.
- Use the analysis guidance to check whether there are additional questions that might emerge from the data.

Enter notes in the APA notebook as required.

Survey data

The Audit Commission school survey

The school survey undertaken in 2008 will be available for the scrutiny process in September. The school survey is a collaborative tool developed by the Audit Commission in partnership with Ofsted, Estyn, the Wales Audit Office, councils and headteacher and governor associations. The primary purpose of the school survey is to act as a source of evidence about schools' perceptions of the support provided by their council and the services provided locally for children and young people. The summary report for each council area examines schools' responses to the questions in the survey, which cover the five Every Child Matters outcomes and a service management section. Schools answer each question in the survey using one of six possible responses: (1) very good; (2) good; (3) satisfactory; (4) poor; (5) very poor; or (X) unable to comment.

Tellus3

Tellus3 has been designed for children and young people from school Years 6, 8 and 10. It will provide statistically reliable data which are representative of the local authority area, together with national and statistical neighbour benchmarks. As such, Tellus3 will provide a valuable picture of the local area as viewed by children and young people.

The following steps are suggested in considering the surveys.

- Analyse the survey responses to ascertain particular areas of strength or weakness identified by respondents.
- In doing so, consider the consistency of response, both within the survey data and in relation to other APA admissible evidence.
- Consider whether the results show incidence at least in line with national or similar authority averages, and whether they show a trend of improvement.
- Consider emerging hypotheses emerging from the evidence previously contemplated – do the responses to the surveys support these hypotheses? Do they point to any additional areas that would be expected to feature in the authority's priorities, or provide confirmation that certain areas do not need to be considered as priorities?
- In the light of this evidence, review hypotheses about what is convincing, and which aspects require more evidence.

Enter the notes in the APA notebook.

(Remember, surveys of this type should be treated with appropriate caution, especially if response rates are low.)

Contacting the council

For many councils the 2008 APA process is one that inspectors will conduct without the need for discussions with officers or an actual on-site visit. This expectation has been made clear in the February 2008 letter to councils. Nevertheless, inspectors might wish to clarify details: they might wish to have additional communication through email; arrange for one or more telephone conversations to pursue specific issues in more detail; or they might wish to arrange for an on-site visit.

On Day 2 of the APA process the LMI will make contact with the council to set out any further liaison that is required and make arrangements for communication on Day 4 of the APA process. Whether inspectors are seeking to arrange email communication, telephone discussion/s or to arrange an on-site visit, inspectors will (jointly) be clear about what they want to arrange and the purpose of the liaison.

On site visit – where appropriate

Before preparing for the on-site discussion, the APA notebook should be reviewed to ensure it shows clearly the emerging judgements and key hypotheses, the analysis leading to these and the areas that require further interrogation and discussion with the council. The guidance in Section F of this handbook will be helpful at this stage.

Councils will have been informed of the date when this meeting might take place well in advance. It is hoped they will have been able to arrange for core personnel to be available on-site should a visit be necessary. During Day 2, inspectors will identify any areas for discussion with the council. The LMI will contact the council to alert them to the particular outcomes or themes to be pursued in discussion during the visit. These discussions will enable councils to take a fuller part in the iterative judgement-making process and will also allow inspectors to test out and secure their hypotheses. Inspectors will ensure they keep the number of issues to be pursued to an absolute minimum.

The on-site visit is intended to enable a professional debate between inspectors and the council based on the admissible evidence and the council's own review of progress. It provides an opportunity for inspectors to raise questions with the council about apparent anomalies, and to clarify aspects of the CYPP review or self-assessment. The discussions are not intended to be conducted as formal interviews. They will enable inspectors to clarify gaps in evidence or challenge evidence in an open and transparent manner.

The discussions should cover the following points and, where possible, reference will be made to specific outcomes or themes:

- focus on aspects where inspectors require further clarification
- focus on aspects where inspectors identify that there are gaps in evidence
- focus on areas where inspectors consider that there is conflicting evidence or where inspectors require further information

- focus on areas which inspectors consider to be of greatest risk.

Findings should be noted in the APA notebook.

Procedures and protocols

Where a meeting takes place, inspectors will be available on-site for as much of the day as is required. They will meet if necessary with lead officers or team leaders as well as the Director of Children's Services. However, if the topics for discussion are limited then the visit will be brief.

Both inspectors will normally be present at all discussions, although there may be specific occasions when brief meetings are more appropriately attended by one inspector only. Given the purpose of the on-site visit, it is not essential for elected members or chief executives of the council to be available. Ofsted's protocol with Government Offices dictates that DCSF children's services advisers will not be in attendance.

The inspection team will keep a record of all relevant information in the evidence notebook. No further information can be accepted from the council after this point in the process, although there will be a later opportunity for factual accuracy checking of the final draft letter. However, Ofsted may include new significant evidence that comes to light, such as a serious case review, if it is believed to be applicable to the 2008 performance year.

Inspectors will not provide councils with formal feedback at the end of the day nor will they share emerging grades. At this stage of the process inspectors have further work to do to consider the information provided by the council during the discussion, followed by rigorous quality assurance procedures.

Recording and reporting

Inspectors will:

- complete the APA notebook, ensuring that where an on-site visit or other liaison with the council has occurred, the information gathered is recorded and the evidence supporting each judgement is clear
- draft the APA letter, using mainly the information in the APA notebook and ensuring that findings and the interim judgements are clearly stated.

Further details about completing the APA notebook and writing the APA letter can be found in Section G and Section H of this handbook.

Quality assurance

Following the recording and reporting of evidence, the quality assurance process within Ofsted will be carried out in three stages.

- Stage 1: a critical read of all draft letters for accuracy and completeness.
- Stage 2: regional consistency and challenge panels to validate or amend judgements for all assessments.
- Stage 3: a central consistency and challenge panel will validate and amend judgements and ensure consistency across all assessments.

After each stage inspectors will review and amend the APA notebook and the draft letter in light of the quality assurance comments, to ensure a full audit trail.

Section I of the handbook provides more information on the quality assurance processes and the role of consistency and challenge panels.

Factual accuracy

All draft APA letters will be sent to councils on the same day – Friday 14 November. Councils will have five working days in which to conduct a factual accuracy check and make a written response (see Section I for more information). At the same time, the DCSF will receive the draft letters in order to prepare for its priorities meetings and the draft grades will be provided to the Audit Commission.

On receipt of the written response from the council, inspectors will amend the final draft, inform the council of any changes that will be made to the text and forward the letter to administrative staff for proofreading purposes.

E. Relationship between the APA and JARs

In 2008, the APA will not be aligned with the joint area review in the same way as for 2007. For those councils with a joint area review in Blocks 18 to 21, the APA will be timed to ensure that the joint area review fieldwork is complete before the APA letter is published on 17 December. This means that all councils will have seen their draft joint area review report prior to the publication of the APA letter. In all cases the evidence gathered during the investigations from the joint area review will feed into the APA evidence base. There will be no APA on-site visit for these councils.

For self-assessment, councils with a joint area review in Blocks 18 to 21 should refer to Annex 4 in this handbook.

The same quality assurance and representation processes apply to all councils.

F. Making judgements

How are judgements reached?

The key judgements, supported by the analysis guidance and the grade descriptors, provide the structure on which the APA judgements are built. The scrutiny of all available admissible evidence will lead to the final grading. The process described in

Section D is iterative, ensuring that all the emerging themes and hypotheses are discussed, and revisited as new evidence becomes available. The focus should be on wider judgements. The individual pieces of evidence do not carry different weighting, but must be assessed for consistency, coherence and impact. The impact on outcomes is considered to be of crucial importance by inspectors when reaching their judgements.

Inspectors will engage in the stages listed below, bearing in mind that these are not positioned in any hierarchical order of importance.

Take account of the council's self-assessment or review of its CYPP and the self-evaluated grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study the self-assessment or review of the CYPP, analyse the progress made by the council and its partners in implementing the CYPP and the links with the local area agreement. ■ Analyse the strategy for improvement, its rigour and impact; are clear targets, actions and timescales identified, and are these realistic and sufficiently challenging?
Consider existing inspection evidence, briefings and other supporting information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Scrutinise what the inspection evidence, briefings and other supporting information say about the council and assess how far they confirm, clarify or extend emerging judgements or provide additional information to fill any gaps. ■ Where the council has had a JAR, focus especially on progress since that time, there is no need to revisit all the JAR judgements.
Use the data and survey results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Analyse the dataset to establish a profile of the outcomes achieved by children and young people in the area, including vulnerable, underperforming and other groups. ■ Consider overall standards and levels of attainment, achievement, improvement trends and consistency of evidence. ■ Consider the extent to which the data supports the focus of the CYPP and supports the statements of progress within the self-assessment or CYPP review.

After each stage

Consider the emerging hypotheses in the light of the information gathered and record evidence in the form of a commentary that supports these developing hypotheses so that a secure audit trail develops.

The place of data

The data provides a profile of the outcomes achieved for children and young people in the local area that contribute to the final judgements.

Four key thresholds provide a consistency check in relation to the judgements about the councils' social care and education functions. They will be carefully reviewed by inspectors alongside other evidence. A council cannot be judged to be performing well if it does not reach a specified level in these key thresholds. The key thresholds for 2007 are as follows.

- 2034SC PAF CF/C20: The percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed (BVPI 162).
- 2043SC PAF CF/A1: The percentage of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year (BVPI 49).
- 2059SC PAF CF/C23: The number of looked after children adopted during the year as a percentage of the number of children looked after at 31 March (excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers) who had been looked after for six months or more on that day (BVPI 163).
- 3072SC PAF CF/A2: The percentage of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least one GCSE at grade A*–G or a GNVQ (BVPI 50).

Grade descriptors

The grade descriptors will be used to help identify key aspects in determining the contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people.⁵ The grade descriptors make inspection judgements more transparent, enable judgements to be derived securely from a consideration of outcomes and ensure consistency in gathering evidence and making judgements. The guidance in the introduction to the grade descriptor document should be read carefully as this provides important information.

Making the overall judgement about the contribution of children's services

The grade descriptors will be used to make this judgement, adopting the 'best fit' model.

The overall children's services judgement is not reached through the application of any mathematical formula. It is made as outlined above, by taking a balanced view of the full range of admissible evidence that supports the key judgements. The evidence and analysis behind this judgement will be shared with the council in

⁵ Every Child matters: inspection of children's services: grade descriptors April 2007.

discussions and at meetings in those cases where they occur. Note the following when making the judgement.

- If a key function or responsibility (such as corporate parenting, school improvement, social care, support for looked after children or another particular group) or one of the five Every Child Matters outcome areas is inadequate, **this will have a significant impact on the overall judgement**; it is likely to render the children's services judgement no better than adequate, and may make it inadequate.
- Place the emphasis on clear strengths or weaknesses in impact on outcomes for children and young people, rather than isolated examples of success or problem areas, especially if these involve very small numbers.
- Reach judgements in the context of local priorities which will be based on the council's analysis and identification of need and its strategy for responding.

Reaching secure judgements

Inspectors will ensure that the evidence is secure; challenge their assumptions and establish key reasons for their decisions. Examples are given below.

- If children's services are judged overall as delivering well above minimum requirements for users, is there secure evidence of excellent performance at this level, and are actions taken which contribute significantly to improving outcomes for children and young people? What are the excellent characteristics?
- If children's services are judged overall as consistently delivering above minimum requirements for users, is there secure evidence that the balance of strengths across all outcomes is consistent? What are the good features?
- If children's services are judged overall as delivering only minimum requirements for users, does the balance of judgements across all outcomes clearly and unambiguously indicate that services together are making an adequate contribution to the outcomes for children and young people? How endemic or systemic are identified areas for improvement? Consider whether the judgement should really be inadequate?
- If children's services are judged overall as not delivering minimum requirements for users, does the balance of judgements indicate weaknesses in processes, practice and impact across more than one outcome and/or service area? To what extent do identified areas for improvement present barriers to better outcomes for children and young people?
- What is the overall direction of travel and the council's capacity to sustain and build on its strengths and address its areas for

improvement? Is the judgement on capacity supported by a proven record of impact on improving outcomes?

Characteristics

The following characteristics may be helpful in securing a judgement on the council's children's services:

Where a council's services for children and young people are delivering well above or above minimum requirements for users, the following characteristics are likely:	Where a council's services for children and young people are delivering below minimum requirements for users, the following characteristics are likely:
<p>Inspectors' confidence in the council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ strong corporate leadership ■ budget assigned to support and sustain growth ■ strong budgetary control ■ capacity for improvement shows an established and upward trajectory, with clear evidence of strategic and operational initiatives having a track record of a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people ■ accuracy of self-assessment or CYPP review indicates the ability to identify needs, plan effectively and deliver the necessary outcomes 	<p>Inspectors' confidence in the council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ limited confidence in the council's capacity and potential, demonstrated by, for example one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ slow development in integrating services ▪ interim and/or insecure leadership at strategic level ▪ weak arrangements for consulting with children and young people ▪ intervention strategies in place to support children's services, such as Communities and Local Government intervention and DCSF engagement
<p>Evidence of the council's growth, improvement and delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ rapid and sustained improvement ■ sound evidence that joint working between services results in good and improving levels of impact on outcomes for children and young people, with solutions that cut across traditional sector boundaries ■ clear evidence of strong partnership working yielding positive outcomes. 	<p>Evidence of the council's growth, improvement and delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ performance of the council's services not demonstrated through sustained improving trends, evidence of progress or incremental change in outcomes.

<p>Impact of the council's actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ sustained good outcomes for children and young people in the majority of the five outcomes, with signs of improvement evident in the adequate ones ■ positive impact of actions for specific groups of young people overall, such as looked after children, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, minority ethnic young people and those of Traveller heritage ■ strong performance indicators overall ■ areas for improvement affecting a very small minority of children and young people, for example three of the 13 care leavers in the council not gaining at least one GCSE 	<p>Impact of the council's actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ insufficient impact of initiatives demonstrated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the council itself recognises that impact, so far, has been limited ■ significant inconsistencies in provision and/or outcomes for one or more groups of children and young people, such as those who offend; girls; those from minority ethnic backgrounds; or those who live in specific geographical areas.
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Making judgements

The grade descriptors should be used to ensure consistent judgements are reached. Inspectors will adopt a 'best fit' model.

The judgement is based on two dimensions:

- the direction of travel and, in particular, the rate of improvement in outcomes and whether the improvement is sustained
- the track record of local services, in particular the evidence that services have the ambition, priorities, capacity and performance management to make improvement. This should also provide evidence to identify services, aspects or functions that are at risk of not improving outcomes for children and young people.

Evidence to make this judgement should be drawn from all outcomes. However, the self-assessment or review of the CYPP will also provide evidence and particular emphasis must be placed on:

- the accuracy of the self-assessment or CYPP review
- whether initiatives in the self-assessment or CYPP review are suitably resourced
- whether services are working together
- whether the local council can provide evidence of impact.

Service management judgements covering the council's wider responsibilities and partnership working for children and young people in the area cannot be made on the evidence available to the APA team. However, many features of the effectiveness

of the management of children's services within wider children's trust arrangements will be evident throughout the APA process. These will contribute to the APA's capacity to improve judgement.

G. The APA notebook

The APA notebook forms a secure record of evidence and judgements as they emerge during scrutiny and, where appropriate, discussions with the council. Its main purpose is to record the assessment or evaluation that underpins the APA judgements, referring briefly to the supporting evidence as and when necessary. The APA notebook supports inspectors if they need discussion or a meeting with the council to arrive at secure judgements and in drafting the APA letter.

The APA notebook allows inspectors to evaluate the five Every Child Matters outcomes in turn, noting the overall contribution of children's services in improving the outcome and the capacity to improve, including the management of services, and taking the progress made by the council and comparator data into account.

There are also summary sections for overall contribution and progress made since the previous APA and/or JAR. The section on progress allows inspectors to highlight areas where improvement has occurred, or where actions have been ineffective in improving outcomes. Please note that no separate or distinct graded judgement is required for progress.

The APA notebook includes a section on quality assurance and acts as 'record-keeper' for information about the APA. No separate quality assurance record will be kept. The APA notebook is also required for archiving and storage purposes and will be used for retrieval purposes in the event of any representation or complaint.

Inspectors will use the APA notebook as follows:

- To summarise the quality of the outcomes achieved by children and young people in each of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. **It is unnecessary to repeat the admissible evidence**, but key strengths should be acknowledged; significant areas for improvement should be identified and a visible evidence trail recorded for the analysis and provisional judgements that can be justified against grade descriptor criteria. Note that the children's services dataset is part of the evidence base and does not need to be reproduced in the APA notebook.
- To assess the contribution made by the council's services for children and young people.
- To assess the progress the council has made, as a key player in partnership activity, towards achieving action described in the CYPP. Comment on the overall progress made by the council in addressing the recommendations of the previous APA/JAR.
- To assess the council's capacity to improve its children's services.

H. Guidance on writing the 2008 annual performance assessment letter

Introduction

There are substantial changes to the APA letter format for 2008. There will be two letter templates.

Template 1 (short confirming letter)

Councils which can demonstrate convincing evidence of sustained good performance and whose self-assessment is accurate and in line with the APA analysis will receive a short confirming letter. This letter will confirm Ofsted's grade judgements and agreement with the council's planned areas for development.

Template 2 (longer, more informative letter)

Those councils which demonstrate:

- a performance that is adequate or less
- evidence of significant instability in performance
- that its assessment of its performance is not in line with the admissible evidence

will receive a longer, more informative letter. This letter will confirm Ofsted's grade judgements and identify areas for development. A table format will be used to demonstrate the key positive and negative evidence for the grade, particularly where this is different from the council's own assessment. The table in the letter will set out the key evidence concisely in bullet points, and will be taken from the relevant analysis summary boxes in the APA notebook.

A table will not be used where a council has assessed its performance as adequate or less for one or more Every Child matters outcomes. Instead, for these outcomes, the letter will set out more fully the concerns and areas for development.

Exemplar letters and templates will be provided for inspectors, to ensure consistency of approach. Overall judgements for the outcome areas will be stated simply, and supportive evidence, where required, will be clearly described drawing on performance data or as précised references to briefings and other evidence. The APA letter, set in the context of previous years' performance, will be based on rigorous analysis and evaluation in the APA notebook.

The identification of areas for improvement, where these vary from the council's own priorities will be based securely on admissible evidence. The identification of areas for improvement can be thought of as a **risk analysis**. In other words, inspectors will determine where the obstacles to further improvement lie, what the likelihood is that performance will not improve, or may even decline, and what the significance and impact of this is.

Word limits

The exemplars for the letters will set clear guidance for the content required as well as the length of text. There is no absolute word limit for each section of the letter or for the letter as a whole: individual circumstances may vary. However, where a council requires a longer, more informative letter, inspectors should ensure that the tables conform to the length illustrated in the exemplars.

House style

APA inspectors can access the Ofsted style guide using the link below:

www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2519

I. APA quality assurance process

Underpinning principles:

- the most important aspect of quality assurance is the provision of inspectors, all of whom are trained and competent to undertake work associated with APA
- each inspector is responsible for ensuring the APA is conducted according to the agreed procedures and to a good standard. This establishes quality assurance firmly throughout the APA process from start to finish, avoiding unnecessary changes and duplication
- formal quality assurance processes will normally confirm that APAs are conducted as required and additional action will be taken only where required.

Quality assurance will ensure that assessments are as follows.

Comprehensive: all aspects of the council's children's services work relevant to the key judgements underpinning the APA, have been rigorously considered in reaching judgements.

Secure: strengths and areas for improvement for each outcome area justify the overall evaluation reached.

Sufficient: evidence is sufficiently robust to justify the judgements.

Supported: final judgements and associated commentary are fully supported by admissible evidence.

Scope and purpose

The essential purpose of quality assurance throughout all the stages of APA is to:

- ensure the assessment process meets the appropriate standards and the judgements are underpinned by a secure evidence base

which has been analysed and evaluated in a rigorous, transparent and accountable way using the grade descriptors

- secure a consistent approach across all APAs
- ensure that each outcome is rigorously and fairly evaluated, drawing on all available evidence, and judged against the agreed four point scale
- give additional attention to those councils where there may be issues such as inadequate progress or significant differences between the 2007 APA outcomes and those proposed for 2008.

The key elements of quality assurance for the annual performance assessment

- briefing materials for inspectors are consistent
- inspectors have access to all available evidence and sufficient time to scrutinise and interrogate it
- a consistent and comprehensive training programme is undertaken by all inspectors
- an ongoing evaluation of evidence between inspectors takes place at each stage of the APA process
- consistency and challenge panels operate for all councils
- all processes are completed before councils are asked to check the factual accuracy of letters.

The APA team's role in securing quality

Throughout the APA process, each inspector is responsible for the quality assurance of their own work following all available guidance.

The APA inspectors will ensure:

- the use of plain English, correct grammar, spelling and agreed style
- that appropriate consideration is given to the council's self-assessment or CYPP review and all available data, briefings and other evidence
- APA notebooks are used to record analysis of evidence
- judgements are clearly supported by evidence
- in association with regional APA administrators, that copies of draft letters are saved in accordance with a clear process of version control.

Stages of quality assurance

Critical read

The draft letter will be reviewed by a critical reader who has not been involved in the assessment of the council's performance. Critical readers will check for accuracy, security of judgements and completeness of content. Comments of the critical

readers will be considered by the APA inspectors and amendments or shortfalls in evidence addressed.

The critical readers will ensure:

- messages are clear and expressed accurately
- the overall judgement is a rigorous and fair account of all five of the outcome judgements and the capacity to improve
- appropriate suggestions are offered to improve the clarity of the message where necessary.

All changes or requests for clarification made by the critical readers will be recorded in the letter as track changes or amendment notes. A reference should be made in the notebook to the recommendations and changes to the letter.

Consistency and challenge panels

The draft APA letters and notebooks for all councils will be subject to scrutiny at regional consistency and challenge panels. APA notebooks and letters will be available in the shared folders where a regional administrator can coordinate access with consistency panel members.

Each panel will consist of managers or senior inspectors with an appropriate range of expertise and who have had no previous involvement in the assessment of the councils under consideration. APA inspectors will be invited to attend. Consistency and challenge panels will be held for each APA block to minimise the number of councils under scrutiny at any one time. The panels will consider:

- the consistency and rigour of the proposed judgements
- the balance of the content of each letter
- whether judgements are supported by an accurate analysis and evaluation of the full range of admissible evidence
- whether all vulnerable groups of children are referred to across each of the outcomes.

Summary comments from the panel discussion will be recorded in the APA notebook.

APA inspectors will make changes to the letter where required, and should acknowledge that these changes have been made in the APA notebook. If inspectors disagree with any of the panel's recommendations, this should also be noted and justified in the APA notebook.

Central consistency panel

All letters will be reviewed by a central consistency panel of senior managers, chaired by HMCI or a nominated director.

Council factual accuracy check

On receipt of the final draft, councils are invited to comment on the factual accuracy of the letter. The points that are raised will be considered and councils will be informed of any amendments made before the letter is finalised.

The final draft letter will then be sent by the lead inspector to regional administrative staff prior to the representation process and publication.

J. Representation procedures

Councils may decide to lodge a written representation against any aspect of the children's services judgements.

Dates for submission of a representation

Ofsted should be informed of the intention to make a representation by midday on 28 November 2008 and the full representation statement should be submitted by midday on 3 December 2008. The representation statement should focus on any perceived inaccuracies in the evidence used or the significance afforded to the evidence. It is not an opportunity for the council to enter new evidence.

Any representation should be sent to the Divisional Manager of the Local Services Inspection Division at Ofsted at sue.leaver@ofsted.gov.uk.

Representation process

The purpose of the representation process is to enable the council to present its written arguments as to why the award of a grade to that council is incorrect. The consideration of representations will be carried out by Ofsted staff who have not taken any part in the assessment or moderation of the judgements for the particular council under consideration.

Ofsted will ensure that the council is given the opportunity to make clear, concise and unambiguous arguments and that the review panel makes an informed, reasonable and proportionate decision.

Independent reviewer

An appropriate independent reviewer will be appointed to review the APA notebook, APA letter, admissible evidence, the representation statement and other relevant documents related to the council seeking representation. The independent reviewer will report their findings to a panel of three senior managers.

Representation panel

A panel of senior managers will consider the representation. Members of the panel will read and evaluate the representation in the light of the evidence and the

response of the independent reviewer. Members of the panel will offer an impartial view.

In the normal course of events, the review panel will make its recommendation for any amendments to the council's performance rating at the panel sitting, without the need for further work. However, in exceptional cases, it may be necessary to seek clarification or further information on a particular point (relating to either factual matters or matters of expert opinion) from either the council making the representations or another Ofsted inspector or manager. The additional points made in this respect should be clearly recorded.

The review panel will consider the representation, then discuss and make a consensus recommendation. Where there is not a consensus, a majority recommendation should be made. If consideration of the representation results in an amended judgement, the panel will evaluate the impact of this change on the overall children's services grade. The panel chair will be responsible for ensuring that outcomes are recorded and communicated to the council by 11 December 2008. The panel's decision will be forwarded to HMCI for agreement.

Following the representation process, regional APA administrators will proofread all APA letters for house style and consistent presentation prior to publication.

HMCI will formally agree and sign off all APA grades.

The 2008 APA letters will be published on 17 December.

Annex 1: grade descriptors

Grade	Descriptor
Grade 4: A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for children and young people, is innovative and cost-effective and fully contributes to raising expectations and the achievement of wider outcomes for the community
Grade 3: A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for children and young people, has some innovative practice and is increasingly cost-effective while making contributions to wider outcomes for the community
Grade 2: A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users	A service that delivers minimum requirements for children and young people, but is not demonstrably cost-effective and does not contribute significantly to wider outcomes for the community
Grade 1: A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for children and young people, is not cost-effective and makes little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community

Annex 2: key judgements, focus for reporting and examples of evidence for use in annual performance assessment 2008

This document shows the reduced key judgements which inspectors will report on in 2008. To view the full set of key judgements for children's services published in 2007 please see the document *Arrangements for annual performance assessment of children's services 2007*.⁶

Being healthy: how far do local services contribute to improving children and young people's health?

Key judgements	Arrangements for APA 2008 Examples of evidence ⁷
1.2 Healthy lifestyles are promoted for children and young people	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will now be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the health and well-being of children with increased breastfeeding • Teenage pregnancy rates and sexually transmitted diseases • Smoking, alcohol and substance abuse • Healthy schools including healthy eating, exercise and obesity.
1.4 Action is taken to promote children and young people's mental health	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will now be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CAMHS strategy and impact
1.5 Looked after children's health needs are addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after children are immunised and have regular health screening and dental and optical checks. • Health assessments of looked after children are carried out and health plans agreed, implemented and regularly reviewed. • Looked after children are given advice and support in accessing appropriate local health services. • Looked after children are provided with guidance and support which promotes healthy living. • A designated doctor and nurse for looked after children are identified for the area. • Health providers are informed, when necessary, about

⁶ Arrangements for annual performance assessment, Ofsted, 2007. This can be found using the link: www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070039

⁷ These examples reflect practice which delivers at least minimum requirements for children and young people; nevertheless, they are not intended to be exhaustive or mandatory.

	<p>the particular needs and circumstances of looked after children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looked after children have access to appropriate CAMHS.
1.6 The health needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical provision for individual children and young people is accessible, coordinated, meets their needs and is provided in a way which supports inclusion wherever possible (NSF 8). Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to appropriate CAMHS (NSF 9). Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are properly prepared and supported for the move from paediatric care to adult health services (NSF 8).

Note: NSF= National Service Framework (DoH/DCSF).

Staying safe: how far do local services contribute to children and young people staying safe?

Key judgements	Arrangements for APA 2008 Examples of evidence
2.2 Children and young people are provided with a safe environment⁸	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of strategies to reduce bullying, discrimination and harassment Health and safety assessments of childcare provision and schools Impact of domestic violence strategies.

⁸ The term learning difficulties and/or disabilities is used to refer to individuals or groups of learners who have either a learning difficulty in relation to acquiring new skills or who learn at a different rate to their peers. The term is used to cross the professional boundaries between education, health and social services and to incorporate a common language from 0–19. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 defines that, 'a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments and learning difficulties. The definition also covers medical conditions when they have long-term and substantial effects on pupils' everyday lives. Those designated with special educational needs under current legislation (education) all have learning difficulties and/or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most learners of the same age.

2.3 The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contribution of each service to preventative support is clearly identified and understood, and inter-agency policies and procedures are consistently implemented. • Families and children and young people at risk are identified, and coordinated support is provided to them. • Private foster carers are identified, monitored and supported in developing and maintaining positive relationships with their children. • Agreed referral, assessment, planning and review arrangements are consistently applied (NSF5). • Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and other vetting checks are undertaken for adults starting to work with children and young people, or to have regular unsupervised contact with them, and these are updated regularly. • Complaints about staff working with children and young people are monitored and acted on. • There is a joint agency approach to the management of sex offenders in the community, including the maintenance of a risk register, multi-agency public protection arrangements, and registration with the police.
2.4 Agencies collaborate to safeguard children according to the requirements of current government guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-agency policies and procedures are comprehensive and up-to-date, and they reflect regulatory requirements (NSF5). • Inter-agency policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and any concerns addressed. • Guidance and training is provided for staff, paid carers and volunteers working with children and young people on how to recognise and raise safeguarding and welfare concerns; training needs are regularly reviewed (NSF5). • Information is provided to the public on how to recognise and raise safeguarding and welfare concerns. • Settings and services providing for children and young people have designated members of staff for safeguarding and promoting their welfare, and they receive regular training (NSF5). • Staff with responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people are supported and supervised commensurate with their roles (NSF5). • There are secure arrangements for the recording and sharing of information on children and young people at risk of harm. • Threshold criteria for making and responding to safeguarding referrals are clear and widely understood (NSF 5). • Agencies' accountabilities are clear at each stage of the

	<p>safeguarding procedures (NSF 5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people on the child protection register (or equivalent) are allocated to a key worker who is a professionally qualified social worker. • Case records are clear, accurate, comprehensive and up to date (NSF 5). • Serious Case Reviews are undertaken in line with national requirements and their findings inform service planning, practice and management. • The involvement of parents, carers, children and young people in safeguarding processes is encouraged and supported. • There are clear procedures for children and young people and carers to make complaints, and support is available.
2.5 Services are effective in establishing the identity and whereabouts of all children and young people aged 0–16	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on protocols for sharing information across agencies and boundaries • Support for children who are excluded from school • Support for young carers
2.6 Action is taken to avoid children and young people having to be looked after	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trend and numbers of children becoming looked after • The spend on family support services
2.7 Looked after children live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster and adoptive placements are sufficient to meet local need, and foster carers, prospective adoptive parents and residential care staff are suitably trained and supported in understanding and meeting the particular needs of children and young people. • Residential care placements comply with national minimum standards and regulations. • Looked after children have care plans which are regularly and independently reviewed. • Looked after children are reviewed regularly irrespective of where they are being looked after. • Looked after children are able to report concerns about their care and treatment. • Care placements are monitored on a regular basis, including those outside the local area. • Changes of care placement are clearly managed, minimised as far as possible and include support for the children and young people concerned. • Information is shared effectively between carers and others working with looked after children.

2.8 Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is shared effectively between carers and others working with children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. • Respite care and other placements are sufficient to meet local needs, and carers are suitably trained and supported. • Residential care placements comply with national minimum standards and regulations. • Continuity of care is supported for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. • Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to report concerns about their care and treatment. • Transitions between settings and from children's to adult services are well managed. • Staff are provided with guidance and support on safeguarding children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. • Carers of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are offered assessments of their own needs.
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Enjoying and achieving: how far do local services contribute to children and young people enjoying and achieving?

Key judgements	Arrangements for APA 2008 Examples of evidence
3.2 Early years provision promotes children's development and well-being and helps them meet early learning goals	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection evidence from Early Years inspections – nurseries and childcare settings • Foundation stage
3.3 Action is taken to ensure that educational provision for 5–16-year-olds is of good quality	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and achievement across all key stages • The impact of school improvement services
3.4 Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and to achieve highly	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted action to promote good behaviour and attendance
3.5 Educational provision is made for children who do not attend school	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action is taken to ensure that children and young people who have been permanently excluded from

	<p>school attend appropriate alternative settings aimed at securing re-integration into mainstream education or work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action is taken to ensure that children who are not able to attend school receive education suitable to their needs (NSF 6, NSF 7).
3.7 Children and young people who are looked after are helped to enjoy and achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action is taken to ensure that looked after children have education and training placements which reflect their particular needs. Looked after children have an effective personal education plan which is implemented, and support is given to carers in ensuring that children participate in education and achieve to their potential. Educational providers are informed about the particular needs and circumstances of looked after children. Every school has a designated teacher for looked after children. Looked after children are encouraged and given practical support in participating in a range of cultural and leisure activities, and in developing their individual interests. Supplementary educational support is provided to those looked after children who need it. The educational achievement, school attendance and cultural experiences of looked after children are monitored on an individual basis, and collectively in reports to senior officers and elected members, and action is taken to address the findings. Action is taken to maximise attendance and avoid exclusion of looked after children and to encourage their participation in post-16 education and training.
3.8 Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to enjoy and achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified, and their needs are assessed at a sufficiently early stage for their needs to be met (NSF 8); funding policies encourage early intervention. There are clear protocols which are consistently applied across agencies for assessing the individual needs of children and young people and for deciding on provision. Parents contribute to the assessment of need and are supported in doing so. Educational and training provision for individual children and young people broadly meets their curriculum, staffing, equipment and transport needs. The progress of individual children and young people in educational, personal, social and emotional outcomes is regularly reviewed and communicated between agencies, and targets are revised accordingly. A key worker has responsibility for coordinating support for

	<p>each individual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special educational needs statements are of good quality and are produced speedily, but are reducing in number as a result of earlier assessment and provision. • The impact of policies and provision on the achievement of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is monitored and evaluated. • Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will normally have their needs met in mainstream settings, and these settings make reasonable adjustments to provide access for children with disabilities. • Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported in participating in a range of appropriate cultural and leisure activities.
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Making a positive contribution: how far do local services enable children and young people to make a positive contribution?

Key judgements	Arrangements for APA 2008 Examples of evidence
4.3 Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision making and in supporting the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual children and young people are consulted and listened to when key decisions affecting their future are made. • Children and young people are consulted and listened to when key decisions are made about local provision, focusing in particular on what they most enjoy. • Children and young people are encouraged to participate in the planning and management of services and activities. • Children and young people are encouraged to take part in and to initiate voluntary activities to support the community and environment. • Children and young people are helped to acquire the knowledge and understanding to become informed and responsible citizens.
4.5 Action is taken to prevent offending and to reduce re-offending by children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people who have offended or are at risk of offending are provided with a range of activities and support to assist them in leading law-abiding and constructive lives and to raise their self-esteem. • Arrangements are in place to address specific educational and training needs of young offenders and to coordinate the education of young people who are taken into custody. • Arrangements are in place to address specific mental health needs of young offenders.

4.6 Children and young people who are looked after are helped to make a positive contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after children and their carers are encouraged to participate in planning, placement and review meetings where key decisions are made and their views are taken into account. • Transitions of placement, education and other services are managed effectively. • Looked after children and their carers are consulted on procedures and provision and their views are taken into account. • There is an independent advocacy service for looked after children and their carers, and procedures for them and their carers to submit representations and complaints. • Action is taken to secure and retain a range of foster and residential care placements that enable children and young people's cultural, religious and linguistic heritage needs to be met. • Action is taken to ensure reasonable access for the families of looked after children placed away from home and the maintenance of contact is encouraged. • Looked after children who offend receive specific guidance and support. • Roles and responsibilities in terms of corporate parenting are clear and understood by all concerned.
4.7 Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The views of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, individually and collectively, are sought, recorded and shared between agencies to inform key decisions about them. • Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported in submitting their views, including making complaints, and feedback is provided to children and young people in a form they can understand. • Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and schools are properly prepared and supported for transition to the next phase of education. • Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive impartial information, advice and guidance on educational, training, and employment opportunities post-16. • Extended day care and respite care are available to support children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their families.

Achieving economic well-being: how far are local services contributing to the economic well-being of children and young people?

Key judgements	Arrangements for APA 2008 Examples of evidence
5.2 Young people aged 11–19 are helped to prepare for working life	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum range including work related opportunities • Availability and quality of careers education • Availability of impartial information, advice and guidance on post-16 opportunities • Equality of opportunity and take up of post-16 education and training
5.3 Action is taken to ensure that 14–19 education and training is planned and delivered in a coordinated way, and to ensure that education and training for 16–19-year-olds is of good quality	<p>The focus of reporting for this key judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in improving learners' achievements • Progress in the collaborative development of a 14–19 curriculum which meets the needs of all learners • Progress in planning for the development and delivery of specialist diploma provision • Progress in improving participation in EET among those at risk of becoming NEET
5.6 Children and young people who are looked after are helped to achieve economic well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All looked after children over 15 years have pathway plans and, as appropriate, transition plans which they have been involved in drawing up and which are regularly reviewed. • Care leavers are encouraged and supported in engaging in education, training or employment. • Personal and welfare support are available to all looked after children aged 16–19 to support their education or training. • Care leavers are able to access age-appropriate services to support their mental health and well-being. • Care leavers are supported in their social development. • Care leavers receive financial support which meets their needs. • Care leavers are provided with suitable and affordable accommodation, including residential or sheltered provision.
5.7 Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to achieve economic well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transition review takes place for all Year 9 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a transition plan is produced. • Transitions are managed by a multi-agency approach which includes healthcare, education, social care and housing. • Children and young people receive the advice they need for

	<p>education and training post-16, are properly prepared and given the support they need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and welfare support is available to all young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 16–19 to support their education or training. • Information and support is provided on benefit entitlement. • Direct payments are available and promoted for families with disabled children and/or disabled 16- and 17-year-olds.
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Service management: judging the contribution of services to delivering the outcomes – illustrations of adequate performance

The criteria which form the basis for judgements on service management are included in the Key Lines of Enquiry for CPA corporate assessment. This section summarises the key issues arising from these Key Lines of Enquiry as they apply to the management of services for children and young people.

All these activities link to key aspects of the Children's NSF.

Key judgements	Arrangements for APA 2008 Evidence of the management of services for children and young people
6.1 Ambition b) Ambitions are based on a shared understanding of local needs among partner organisations and with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentions are based on a comprehensive analysis of needs, undertaken through the children and young people's plan, which takes into account the views of parents, carers, children and young people. • The needs have been mapped against the provision made by local services and gaps in service provision have been identified. • Local partners have adopted race equality schemes and undertaken impact assessments, and have responded to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.
6.2 Prioritisation c) Robust action is taken to deliver the strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan includes a realistic assessment and identification of the resources required for implementation and consideration of actions to achieve value for money • Priority is given to providing a range of preventative services for children and young people so that needs are addressed before problems become intractable. • There are effective inter-agency processes for planning and reviewing provision for individual children and young people. • Services provided to children and young people take account of the full range of equality and diversity issues. • Services are provided in venues that are accessible to

	children and young people and their families (NSF 6, NSF 7, NSF 8).
6.3 Capacity a) There is clear accountability and decision-making to support service delivery and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local partners cooperate as defined in the Children Act 2004 and services work together to achieve improvements in outcomes. • The responsibilities placed on the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services are discharged. • The Children and Young People's Partnership, or its equivalent, is convened and services work together in a coordinated way. • Partners have established or are working effectively towards a Children's Trust.
b) Capacity is used efficiently and effectively and is developed to deliver ambitions, priorities and value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local commissioning strategies ensure that services are developed in a flexible way to cover the gaps in local services and meet needs as they arise. • Use is made of local providers from the public, private, voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors who have the capacity and track record to provide effective services. • Voluntary and community services are engaged in developing the strategy and the capacity of their services is enhanced through local cooperation. • Budgets are pooled where this provides improved impact. • Workforce planning takes account of the needs of all services and collective action is taken to recruit and retain staff, to improve quality and to train staff in new ways of working.
c) The needs of individual children, young people and their families are effectively identified, recorded and communicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people, parents and carers are involved in identifying their needs and designing services. • A single assessment and recording system (integrated childcare system) ensures that information about individuals is provided to local services once only and that the actions which agencies take are well coordinated and lead to improvement in outcomes.
6.4 Performance management c) Knowledge about performance is used to drive improvements in outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for children are regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed in the light of the outcomes they achieve for children and young people. • The findings are reported to the responsible authorities and used to ensure that services improve in a timely way. • When service development needs are identified, the contributions of different services are integrated where appropriate or new services are commissioned.

Annex 3: performance indicators

Universal PI code	Indicator name
	Section 1 – Being healthy
	Healthy lifestyle and preventative care data
1003HC	Proportion of mothers initiating breast feeding
1047SC	Percentage change from base year (1998) in number of conceptions among 15–17-year-olds (BVPI 197)
1032OF	Percentage of schools participating and achieving the National Healthy Schools Status
	Physical health data
1015HC	Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)
	Mental health data
1029HC	Substance misuse related admissions to hospital, ages under 20
1030HC	Percentage of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service new cases with length of wait under four weeks and under 26 weeks
1043SC	PAF CF/A70: councils' self-assessment of progress on four elements of the implementation of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service framework
1040NT	Proportion of those in substance misuse treatment who are aged under 18
	Looked after children and care leavers data
1037SC	PAF CF/C19: the average of the percentages of children looked after who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, and who had their teeth checked by a dentist during the previous 12 months, and had an annual health assessment during the previous 12 months
	Section 2 – Staying safe
	Environmental and other safety data
2001DT	Number of children aged 0–15 killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
	Child protection data – child protection procedures
2015SC	KIGS CH141: number of referrals of children per 10,000 population
2016SC	KIGS CH142: percentage of referrals that are repeat referrals within 12 months
2017SC	KIGS CH143: percentage of referrals of children in need that led to initial assessments
2019SC	KIGS CH02: initial child protection conferences per 10,000 population aged under 18
2020SC	Percentage of initial assessments within seven working days of referral
2021SC	KIGS CH145: number of core assessments of children in need per 10,000 population aged under 18

2022SC	PAF CF/C64: the percentage of core assessments that were completed within 35 working days of their commencement
2023SC	KIGS CH01: children and young people who are the subject of a child protection plan, or on the child protection register, per 10,000 population aged under 18
2024SC	Percentage of children and young people who are the subject of a child protection plan, or on the child protection register, who are not allocated to a social worker
2027SC	KIGS CH03: children who became the subject of a child protection plan, or were registered, per 10,000 population aged under 18
2028SC	PAF CF/A3: the percentage of children who became the subject of a child protection plan, or were registered during the year, who had previously been the subject of a child protection plan or had been registered
2066SC	Ethnicity of children who are the subject of a child protection plan (white, mixed ethnic origin, Asian or Asian British, and Black or Black British)
2034SC	PAF CF/C20: the percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed (BVPI 162)
2035SC	KIGS CH10: children whose child protection plans were discontinued, or were de-registered, per 10,000 population aged under 18
2036SC	PAF CF/C21: the percentage of children who ceased to be the subject of a child protection plan, or were de-registered, during the year ending 31 March, who had been registered, or the subject of a child protection plan, continuously for two years or more
	Looked after children and care leavers data
2042SC	KIGS CH39: children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18
2064SC	PAF CF/C68: the percentage of looked after children cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed on time during the year
2043SC	PAF CF/A1: the percentage of looked after children at 31 March with three or more placements during the year (BVPI 49)
2067SC	PAF CF/D78: the percentage of children aged under 16 at March 31 who had been looked after continuously for at least 2 1/2 years, who had lived in the same placement for at least two years, or were placed for adoption
2052SC	KIGS CH44: percentage of children looked after in residential accommodation
2054SC	Percentage of looked after children fostered by relatives or friends
2068SC	PAF CF/B79: the percentage of children aged at least 10 and under 16 looked after at 31 March (excluding those placed with parents) who were in foster placements or placed for adoption
2058SC	The percentage of looked after children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months of the agency deciding that the child should be placed for adoption
2059SC	PAF CF/C23: the number of looked after children adopted during the year as a percentage of the number of children looked after at 31 March (excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers) who had been looked after for six months or more on that day (BVPI 163)
2060SC	Percentage of looked after children with a named social worker who is qualified as a social worker
	Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities data
5026SC	What percentage of children with disabilities aged 14+ had a transition plan to support their move from Children's Services to Adult Services?

	Section 3 - Enjoying and achieving
	Early Years and Foundation Stage
3102DE	Improvement in young children's development measured by the foundation stage profile
	Key Stage 1 data
3002OF	Teacher assessment results on reading: achievement at KS1, level 2+ (all pupils)
3003OF	Teacher assessment results on writing: achievement at KS1, level 2+ (all pupils)
3004OF	Teacher assessment results on mathematics: achievement at KS1, level 2+ (all pupils)
	Key Stage 2 data
3005OF	Test results on English: achievement at KS2, level 4+ and Average Point Scores (all pupils)
3006OF	Test results on mathematics: achievement at KS2, level 4+ and Average Point Scores (all pupils)
3007OF	Test results on science: achievement at KS2, level 4+ and Average Point Scores (all pupils)
3008OF	Contextual Value Added measure KS1 to KS2
	Key Stage 3 data
3009OF	Test results on English: achievement at KS3, level 5+ and Average Point Scores (all pupils)
3010OF	Test results on mathematics: achievement at KS3, level 5+ and Average Point Scores (all pupils)
3011OF	Test results on science: achievement at KS3, level 5+ and Average Point Scores (all pupils)
3012OF	Contextual Value Added measure KS2 to KS3
	GCSE/equivalents data
3013OF	Percentage achieving 5+ A*–C (all pupils)
3104OF	Percentage achieving 5+ A*–C (all pupils) – including English and Mathematics
3105OF	Contextual Value Added measure KS2 to GCSE/equivalents
3018OF	Contextual Value Added measure KS3 to GCSE/equivalents
3061DE	Percentage of schools not attaining KS4 floor targets
	School inspection findings
3087OF	Percentage of schools requiring special measures since September 2005
3088OF	Percentage of schools requiring a 'Notice To Improve' since September 2005
	Attendance data
3034OF	Attendance at primary schools

3035OF	Attendance at secondary schools
	Exclusions data
3091DE	Percentage of fixed term and permanent exclusions in relation to the number of pupils in primary phase
3092DE	Percentage of fixed term and permanent exclusions in relation to the number of pupils in secondary phase
	Education otherwise than at school data
3067AC	BVPI 159a, 159b, 159c and 159d – percentage of permanently excluded pupils provided with alternative tuition
	Looked after children and care leavers data
3085SC	PAF CF/C69: the percentage of children newly looked after in the year, and still looked after at 31 March, who were placed at 31 March more than 20 miles from their home address from which first placed
3071SC	The percentage of looked after children who were pupils in Year 11 and eligible for GCSE (or equivalent) examinations who sat at least one GCSE or equivalent examination
3072SC	PAF CF/A2: the percentage of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least one GCSE at grade A*–G or a GNVQ (BVPI 50)
3073SC	The percentage of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with five or more GCSEs at grade A*–C or GNVQs equivalent to grades A*–C
3074SC	PAF CF/C24: the percentage of children who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months and were of school age, who missed a total of at least 25 days of schooling for any reason during the previous school year
	Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities data
3106DE	The percentage of fixed term exclusions for pupils with statements in mainstream schools (broken down into Primary and Secondary phase)
3095DE	Percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN)
3063DE	DCSF SEN2 – number of new statements of special educational needs (SEN)
3070AC	Audit Commission BVPI – percentage of new statements of special educational needs prepared within 18 weeks
3097DE	Percentage of permanent exclusions in relation to the number of pupils in special schools
3099DE	Percentage of fixed term exclusions of more than one day in relation to the number of pupils in special schools
	Section 4 – Making a positive contribution
	Youth offending information
2061YJ	Recidivism – the rate of re-offending
2062YJ	The number of first timers in the youth justice system
3080YJ	The proportion of supervised juveniles in full time education, training and employment
	Participation and other activity information
4021OF	Contact – percentage of young people aged 13–19 reached by publicly funded youth services
4022OF	Ratio of full-time equivalent youth workers to young people aged 13–19

	Looked after children and care leavers data
4015SC	PAF CF/C18: the percentage of children aged 10 or over who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, who were given a final warning/reprimand or convicted during the year for an offence committed while they were looked after, expressed as a ratio of the percentage of all children aged 10 or over given a final warning/reprimand or convicted for an offence in the police force area
4016SC	PAF CF/C63: the number of children and young people who communicated their views specifically for each of their statutory reviews as a percentage of the number of children and young people who had been looked after at 31 March for more than four weeks
	Section 5 – Achieving economic well-being
	Post-16 education and training data
5038LS	Percentage of young people by local authority/district achieving level 2 and level 3 by age 19
5003OF	Schools with sixth forms: average point scores of students entered for GCE/VCE A/AS
5007OF	Further education institutions/sixth form colleges/specialist colleges/work-based learning providers: success rate by level
5039AL	NVQ success rate for all work-based learners living in the area and aged under 19 at the start of their programme (split by learning programme, gender, ethnicity and disability)
3079AL	Personal characteristics of work-based learners living in the area and aged under 19 (gender ethnicity and disability)
5048DE	Increase in the number of young people completing an apprenticeship
	Inspection findings
5040OF	Changes in childcare providers and places (since April 2005 benchmark)
5029OF	College inspection judgement (2005 framework): how far programmes or the curriculum meet external requirements, and are responsive to local circumstances (KQ 3B)
	Employment and not in education, employment or training data
5041DE	Connexions Partnership data: number and proportion of 16–19-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)
5047DE	Connexions Partnership data: increase in participation rates of 17-year-olds in education and training
5042DE	Connexions Partnership data: proportion of 16–19-year-olds whose current activity is not known
5044DE	Connexions Partnership data: 16–19-year-olds leaving the NEET group to re-engage in employment, education or training
5045DE	Connexions Partnership data: young people at particular risk of becoming NEET
5046DE	Connexions Partnership data: proportion of young people completing Year 11 who continue in learning
	Looked after children and care leavers data
5022SC	PAF CF/A4: the ratio of the percentage of those young people who were looked after on 1 April in their 17th year (aged 16), who were engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19 to the percentage of all young people in the population who were engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19 (BVPI 161)
2038SC	Percentage of eligible, relevant and former relevant children who have pathway plans who have been allocated a personal adviser and are resident outside the council's boundaries
5037SC	Percentage of care leavers at age 19 who are living in suitable accommodation (as judged by the council)
	Section 6 – Service management
	Social care
6006SC	KIGS EX61: gross expenditure on services to children per capita aged under 18
6009SC	KIGS EX77: expenditure on family support services per capita aged under 18

6010SC	PAF CF/E44: gross expenditure on children in need but not looked after, as a percentage of gross expenditure on all children's services
6022SC	KIGS EX62: gross expenditure on looked after children per capita aged under 18
6024SC	PAF CF/B8: average gross weekly expenditure per looked after child in foster care or in a children's home
School places and admissions data	
3089DE	Percentage of primary schools with 25% or more surplus places
3090DE	Percentage of secondary schools with 25% or more surplus places
Staffing and related data – recruitment and retention	
6012SC	Percentage of social care staff directly employed posts for children and families vacant on 30 September
6016SC	The percentage of residential child care workers who have achieved the NVQ at level 3 in 'Caring for Children and Young People'
6049DE	Percentage of unfilled full time vacancies in relation to the number of full time equivalent teachers employed as at January

Annex 4: self-assessment guidance

Introduction

In response to the evaluation of the 2007 annual performance assessment (APA) process, local authorities were very clear about the importance of self-assessment. Most respondents said that although they valued the flexibility that the review of the children and young people's plan (CYPP) gave them as an alternative to a self-assessment, the CYPP review was not by itself a sufficient or appropriate preparation for the APA. Local authorities suggested that a word limited template or tighter framework for the self-assessment process with more clarity about the length and content would be helpful.

In response, Ofsted agreed to prepare and circulate guidance for self-assessment for those local authorities who choose to take up this option. However, should an authority prefer it, the CYPP review will remain an acceptable method of self-assessment. There is no requirement for authorities to do both a self-assessment and a review of their CYPP for APA purposes. Similarly, there is no requirement for authorities who wish to do a self-assessment to use this guidance.

Authorities who will be submitting or have already submitted their CYPP review for their JAR in Blocks 18, 19, 20 and 21 do not need to submit a self-assessment for the APA unless they choose to do so.

Regardless of the method of self-assessment, all local authorities will be expected to submit a self-evaluation of grades for each of the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes, for children's services overall and for its capacity to improve.

Background

In line with the principles set out in the *Framework for inspection of children's services*, the self-assessment should:

- focus on evaluating the outcomes for children and young people and the impact of local children's services on improving those outcomes
- assess how far priorities are based on accurate analysis of needs
- evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery and service management
- assess how well resources have been used to improve services and outcomes for children and young people, and to provide value for money
- provide evidence on how effectively services work together to improve outcomes for children and young people
- evaluate how well children and young people are consulted and what impact their views have on the planning of services
- show how the areas for development from the 2007 APA (or the JAR if in Blocks 10 and 11) are being addressed in current plans,

and what progress has been made in terms of improving outcomes.

The purpose

In a similar way to the review of the CYPP, self-assessment is an on-going, integral feature of the planning, review and improvement cycle for children's services authorities and their partners. The process will be informed by discussions with the Government Office children's services advisers. As in previous years the APA will make judgements about the contribution of council services to improving outcomes for children and young people. The self-assessment should therefore clearly indicate the specific contributions made by the council's own services to outcomes.

For 2008, as the last year of APA before the introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment, local authorities are asked to focus their self-assessment on the reduced key judgements and performance indicators circulated with this guidance. Where inspectors are not going to report on a key judgement there is no need for it to be addressed in the self-assessment.

Local authorities are asked to measure their progress in every outcome area, evaluate areas of relative strength and weakness and identify aspects for improvement. The views of children and young people, including those from a number of different vulnerable groups, should be taken into account and local authorities are asked to show how these views affect decisions about service provision. Local authorities are asked to evaluate the extent to which partnership working is effective, as well as how effective the authority has been in responding to the results of other regulatory inspections such as fostering and adoption. The local authority should provide a clear indication of its capacity to improve, including evidence of trends in performance over time.

The self-assessment provides important APA information and evidence for inspectors. Judgements will be made about how effectively the self-assessment evaluates strengths, weaknesses and areas for development in delivering outcomes for children and young people in the local area. It will be used alongside other evidence including performance data, relevant inspection reports and briefings from partner agencies to determine how good the outcomes are. Grade descriptors will be used to support the judgements made in each area.

The involvement of partners

We expect that all services for children and young people in the local area – including the voluntary and community sector – will be involved in producing the self-assessment. It is recognised that now, in 2008, the landscape of children's services has changed enormously since the APA programme began and therefore the breadth of the self-assessment should reflect these changes.

Completing the self-assessment

The following section has been designed to assist in the process of self-assessment. The points raised in Parts A, B, C and D are not exhaustive but provide prompts for completing the self-assessment. The focus is to evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve outcomes and implement local priorities. Therefore it is not necessary to comment to the same extent on each key judgement.

Authorities choosing to do a CYPP review, or who have submitted their CYPP review for JAR Blocks 18, 19, 20 and 21, do not need to do a self-assessment as well. However, if an authority chooses to, it may update its CYPP review, highlighting changes to the document. The additional information should focus particularly on:

- progress made in implementing the JAR recommendations
- any changes in outcomes demonstrated through data validated since the end of JAR fieldwork or through other local information.

By way of guidance the self-assessment should be no longer than 20 pages. For example: context – one page; outcomes – three pages each; management and capacity to improve – four pages and all in a font size no smaller than 11. A template for the evaluation of grades is attached as Appendix 1. The self-assessment or CYPP review, together with the self-evaluation of grades should be submitted by 26 June 2008.

If you consider that your local authority has improved sufficiently to warrant an increase in grade in any section, please be very specific and quote the evidence that supports your judgement.

Part A Background	This should include the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name and address of the children's services authority. • The name of the children's services contact including address if different from the above, telephone number and email details. • That date that the self-assessment is submitted. • The name of the person who has agreed the self-assessment on behalf of the children's services authority. • An indication of how partners have been involved in completing the self-assessment.
Part B Context	The following information should be included. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A succinct summary of the key contextual features that have a direct impact on the delivery of local services for children and young people. • A clear indication of the arrangements for joint working, including the extent to which the independent, voluntary and community sectors are involved.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate reference to factual information that is available elsewhere. For example: on the council's website; in the Children and Young People's Plan; in the Local Safeguarding Children Board strategy and action plan; in the 14–19 strategy and plan. • Include a clear and succinct statement of the local authority's for children and young people.
Part C Analysis, involvement and impact	<p>For each outcome area, please refer to the reduced key judgements document for APA 2008 and use the following prompts to help frame your responses. The focus should be on analysis of your strengths and areas for improvement rather than on description. Please cross-reference between outcomes where this helps to avoid unnecessary duplication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data – including local as well as national data – and other information have you used in your analysis and what did it tell you? How does your performance compare with the situation nationally (including progress towards meeting national targets) and with statistical neighbours? Have there been improvements over time and are they sustained? • How have the strengths and weaknesses identified in the previous APA or JAR and in other internal or external reviews and inspections influenced targets and priorities? What progress has been made? • How have you identified the needs of specific groups, such as looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities? What improvements have there been in the provision and outcomes for these groups? Have there been enough improvements? Are they sustained? • What specific targets and goals have you set and what are the timescales for achievement? Are milestones being achieved? • Which specific partners have been involved in the process of analysis and determining priorities and how has their work influenced developments in this area? • How have you involved a representative range of children and young people, including those from specific vulnerable groups, in analysing, planning and delivering services? How have their views altered service delivery? Have you fed this back to them? • Have your strategies, initiatives and results enhanced equality of opportunity, improved outcomes for children and young people and ensured a proactive approach to diversity? • Is there evidence of impact and sustained improvement? If not, what steps are you taking to remedy the situation?

<p>Part D</p> <p>The management of services for children and young people</p> <p>The use of resources</p> <p>The capacity to improve</p>	<p>The three sections of Part D should include the information as detailed.</p> <p>The management of services for children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what areas of work have the most sustained improvements been achieved and why? • What are the greatest challenges faced by the council and how are these being addressed? • Have new or joint approaches to service delivery and partnership working been successful? In what way? • How effective are your performance management and review processes overall? • How well are you developing your workforce to manage change? <p>The use of resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do you have that you are providing value for money? • Is your expenditure in line with targets and if not what action have you taken to resolve this? • Have you made any significant shift in expenditure to support priorities? Has this been effective? • How effective is your commissioning of services? How do you know? • What has been the impact of any pooled resources? <p>The capacity to improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does the council have the capacity to improve its services for children and young people? • To what extent do local services for children and young people overall have the capacity to improve? • What needs to be done to bring about further improvement? • What are the barriers to improvement and what strategies do you have to overcome them?
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General points

In completing the self-assessment, please remember to:

- be concise, clear and avoid jargon
- cross-reference between sections to avoid unnecessary duplication
- focus on analysis rather than narrative and on evaluation rather than description

- be objective and realistic
- be open about what is not working as well as what is working and show how, and over what period of time, you intend to remedy weaknesses
- differentiate clearly between aspiration and achievement
- focus on outcomes and impact rather than processes.

Grading

Local children's services are asked to grade themselves using the following four point scale and the following descriptors.

Grade	Descriptor
Grade 4: A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for children and young people is innovative and cost-effective and fully contributes to raising expectations and the achievement of wider outcomes for the community.
Grade 3: A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for children and young people, has some innovative practice and is increasingly cost-effective while making contributions to wider outcomes for the community.
Grade 2: A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users	A service that delivers only minimum requirements for children and young people, but is not demonstrably cost-effective and does not contribute significantly to wider outcomes for the community.
Grade 1: A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for children and young people, is not cost-effective and makes little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community.

Appendix 1

Annual performance assessment 2008: self-evaluation grades

Please provide the following grades using the LSIF four point scale and descriptors as a guide.

Name of local authority	
Name of APA Link Officer :	
Contact details for APA Link officer	telephone: email:
Date form submitted:	
Signed/agreed on behalf of the children's services authority	
Name:	
Position:	
Signature:	

Areas for judgement	Being healthy	Staying safe	Enjoying and achieving	Making a positive contribution	Achieving economic well-being
The contribution of the council's services in maintaining and improving this outcome for children and young people.					

The council's children's services	Grade
The contribution of the council's children's services in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	

Capacity to improve	Grade
The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people.	

This form is to be returned together with the self-assessment or CYPP review by 26 June 2008.