

THE COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The CAA will focus on areas not just organisations, outcomes for communities and local priorities as well as national targets and likelihood of future delivery. This document summarises the joint inspectorate approach and focuses on Children's Services Assessment

JOINT INSPECTORATE INFORMATION

The Area Assessment

This assessment will be based on three main questions (with a number of sub-questions):

- How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?
- How well the outcomes and improvements needed are being delivered?
Including - how good is the well-being of children and young people?
- What are the prospects for future improvements?

Evidence will come from a number of sources, including performance against LAA outcomes and national indicators, local performance management, any inspection work, other regulatory regimes, partnership self-assessment, place survey and other consultation work and any other relevant sources of data.

The area assessment is not scored; it will contain a narrative judgement on the area and include red and green flags. Green flags will be awarded for any areas of exemplary good practice that should be shared with other partnerships. Red flags will be attributed to areas where desired outcomes are not being achieved and if the partnership does not have realistic and effective plans in place to tackle them. For example if Children's Services outcomes are not good enough the inspectorates may challenge the Children's Trust through the award of a red flag.

An Organisational Assessment

This is an assessment of value for money and performance management and merges earlier 'direction of travel' and 'use of resources' assessments. The assessment will be **scored**. Ofsted's annual performance rating of council's children's services will contribute to this score. The assessment will comprise four themes:

- Managing finance
- Governing the business
- Managing resources
- Managing performance

Scoring:

4	Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
3	Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
2	Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
1	Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

Current Status

Peter Forrester (Audit Commission Wirral CAA lead) now liaising with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) on the assessment. Emerging findings have been reported to Wirral with an opportunity to respond with further evidence. In addition a self-evaluation is being produced for submission by the LSP. Red and Green tags have been proposed:

Red Tags
Delivering the reduced inequalities ambition
Impact of the recession on Wirral including NEET
Skills including NEET
Life Expectancy and Health inequalities
Strategic framework for older people
Strategic housing
Green Tags
Recycling
Anti social behaviour

The Joint Inspectorates will be meeting on the 7th of September to agree their initial findings including if the tags become flags. The findings will be shared with the LSP who can then respond.

Reporting

The Joint Inspectorate findings will be published on a web based reporting tool, this will include information about children’s services. In addition for children’s services an Ofsted summary profile will be published on the Ofsted website. The first reports will be published in November 2009 with updates in January, March and June 2010.

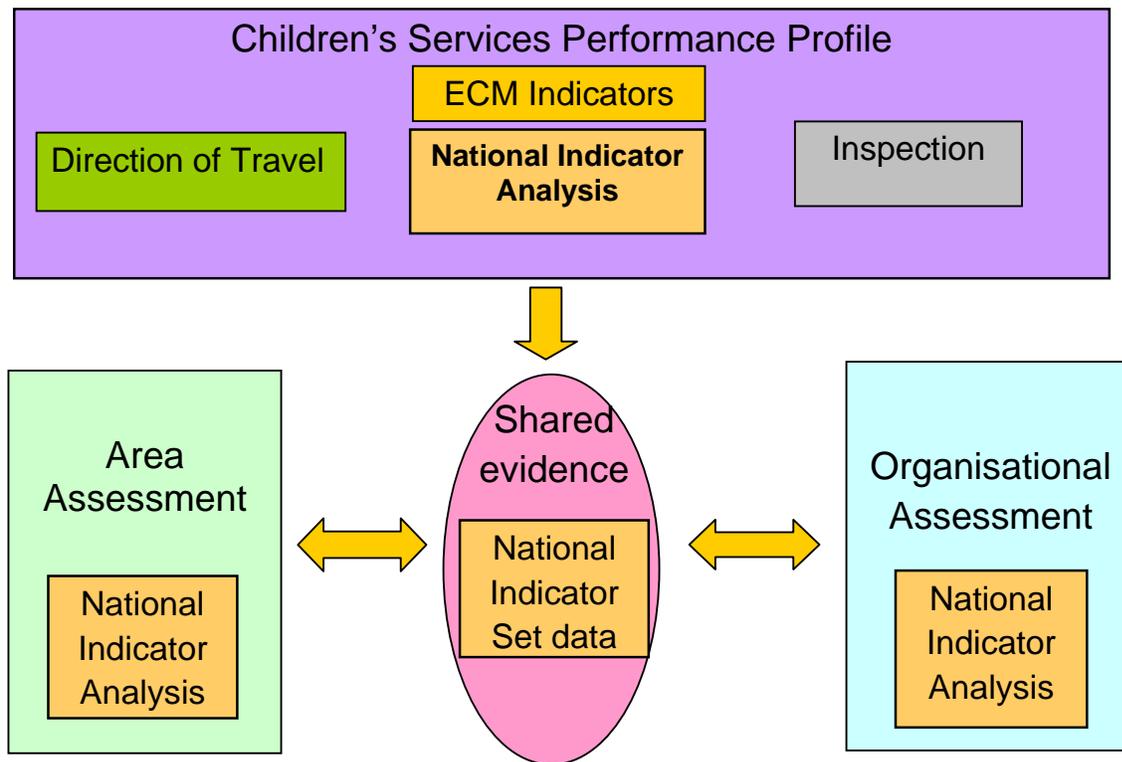


Figure 1. Diagrammatic summary of CAA with a focus on Children’s Services.

CHILDRENS SERVICES INFORMATION

Annual Performance Rating

Children's Services will have an annual performance rating which will contribute significantly to the managing performance theme of the organisational assessment and therefore to the Councils overall score. The rating will be published each November as part of the CAA organisational assessment within the joint inspectorate CAA report. The ratings are 1-4 as noted above (performs poorly to performs excellently).

Children's Services Performance Profile

A Children's Services Performance Profile is published by Ofsted. The profile has three main blocks:

1. Findings from inspected services and institutions.
2. Findings from safeguarding and looked after children inspections; unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection; evaluations of serious case reviews; safeguarding and looked after children findings from recent joint area review inspections, and findings from triggered inspections
3. Performance against Every Child Matters indicators from the NIS under 5 ECM outcome areas.

The profile gives information across multiple years and trends. Data is compared with the national average and statistical neighbour groups. The profile will have five tiers or layers allowing scrutiny of the profile in detail. The profile will be updated quarterly, as data is available at different times of the year it will contain the data available. The profile uses four fixed performance bands, cut off points are derived from analyses of national figures.

Producing the Rating

Emphasis will be on the profile sections 1 and 2 with section 3 used to support its process. Ofsted will apply a number of tests but also use professional judgement. The following key areas will be taken into account:

- the proportion of inspected and regulated services, settings and institutions across the designated categories judged good or better in their last inspection
- the proportion of inspected and regulated services, settings and institutions across the designated categories judged inadequate in their last inspection
- findings from the annual unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral for children in need or who may be in need of protection; and the findings from full safeguarding and looked after children inspections
- findings from any triggered inspections of council children's services (when available)
- joint area review inspection judgements on safeguarding and looked after children
- relevant findings from any serious case review evaluations that may have been conducted
- performance against Every Child Matters indicators from the NIS, including local performance against statistical neighbours and national figures
- trends over time (where available).

The specific tests applied can be viewed in the Annual Rating document (see Appendix 2). Tests across each of the three areas will be balanced by professional judgement. Key points are that:

- The rating is likely to be 'performs poorly' if performance in staying safe or enjoy and achieve judgements across a majority of inspected settings and institutions is in the bottom band 'red'.

- Where the performance in inspections of safeguarding or looked after children are inadequate the rating is likely to be 'performs poorly'
- The rating is likely to be 'performs poorly' if a large majority of indicators in the Nis including staying safe and enjoy and achieve is lower than similar areas.

New Inspections Overview

Inspections of LA children's homes, fostering and adoption and private fostering arrangements will continue. Amongst other data these will help determine the scope and timing of the two new inspections.

Annual Unannounced Inspections of Contact, Referral and Assessment Teams

These will occur from June 2009 carried out by HMI from Ofsted, there will be one inspection in a 12 month period, 2days on site. This is an inspection of front-line practice in relation to CADT processes. No information will need to be provided in advance, the inspectors will have access to information such as the Ofsted performance profile, NI set, judgements from serious case reviews (SCR), fostering and adoption datasets, summary of complaints, the new surveys of users and staff.

Feedback will be provided at the end of the visit about emerging findings to Director / Head of Service / Chair of LSCB. A draft letter will be sent within 5 days to the Director for a factual accuracy check, to be returned within 5 d. The letter will be put on the Ofsted website in 20d. If serious concerns are raised the full three year inspection of safeguarding will be brought forward. It may also lead to a triggered inspection of aspects of safeguarding from the Joint Inspectorate.

Safeguarding children and Looked After Children

The two inspections will usually be carried out at the same time. The inspectors are Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspectors, other inspectors e.g. Constabulary may attend. They commenced from 1 June 2009 with a visit in the next three year period. A notice period of 10 working days is given with inspectors on site for up to 10 days. Inspectors will provide regular and clear feedback during the inspection.

Grades will be applied as 1, outstanding, 2, good, 3, adequate and 4, inadequate. A single report will follow but with separate sections and grades, within 20 working days. If inadequate is reported a further inspection will occur within 12 months.

New Surveys for Children's Services

Survey	Target	Stage	Date Commence
Tellus 4	CYP through schools	In progress	Oct 2009
Care4me	CYP - LAC	Will be a consultation	2009
Aftercare	CYP - Care leavers	Will be a consultation	2009
Ofsted Annual Survey of Social Workers	Social Workers	Will be a consultation	2009
Survey of Voluntary and Community Sectors	Voluntary and community organisations	Will be a consultation	2009

OVERVIEW OF TIMESCALE

Assessment Findings	Date
Ofsted CS annual performance rating pre-publication rating	Sept 2009
CAA Report Published (include Children's Services Rating) Narrative web report	Nov 2009
Each year views fed back to Partnership by	January, March, June
Annual report refreshed	November
Ofsted Performance Profile reviewed quarterly	June, Nov, Jan, March

RECOMMENATIONS:

1. That Wirral Children's Trust Board note this report.
2. That the contents of the report are cascaded to partner organisations.

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