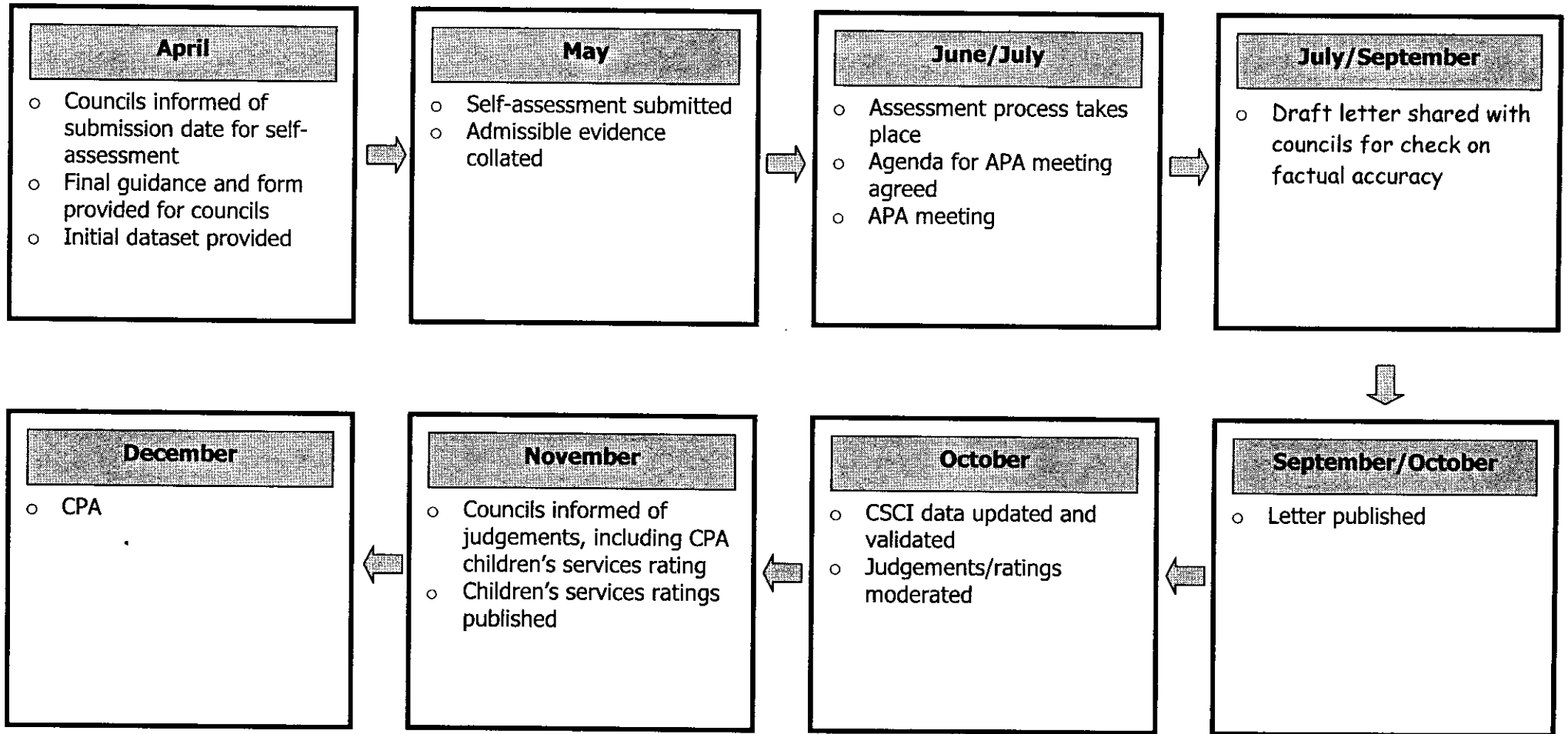


Annual Performance Assessment Timeline





Making Social Care
Better for People



Annual Performance Assessment and Joint Area Reviews

Self-assessment

Part 1: Guidance

Introduction

This paper provides guidance to inspectors and to managers of children's services in local areas on the purpose, structure, completion and use of the self-assessment document. The template for this is provided separately.

Background

1. The *Framework for Inspection of Children's Services* sets out the purpose and principles for joint area reviews (JAR) and annual performance assessment (APA). These principles underpin the self-assessment as a key element of both the JAR and APA processes. This self-assessment should:

- form a secure basis for the development and review of the Children and Young People's Plan;
- focus on an evaluation of the outcomes of children and young people and the impact of local services in improving these outcomes;
- assess how far priorities are based on an accurate analysis of needs;
- evaluate different models of service delivery and service management;
- demonstrate 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 far services work together to improve outcomes for children and young people;
- evaluate how well children and young people are consulted and their views taken into account; and
- be manageable, avoid duplication and reduce the burden of inspection.

2. An attempt has been made to make the requirements for self-assessment compatible with the production and review of the Children and Young People's Plan. By 2007, the first review of the plan will be undertaken. As this process develops the review of the Children and Young People's Plan and this self-assessment will normally form one document.

The purpose

3. Self-assessment is an on-going, integral feature of the planning, review and improvement cycle for children's services authorities and their partners. Self-assessment for JAR and APA acts as a continuing working tool rather than completed for inspection purposes alone. It recognises the importance of services scrutinising their own performance. Discussions with the DfES children's services improvement advisers for education and with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) business relationship managers will focus on this improvement cycle including the process of self-assessment.

For the local area

4. For local services self-assessment:

- provides a tool for measuring progress against objectives;
- enables evaluation of areas of relative strengths or weaknesses, and identification of aspects for improvement;
- leads into the next planning cycle and ensures that new priorities are addressed within proposed timescales;
- shows how the views of children and young people are taken into account and responded to;
- demonstrates the effectiveness of partnership working;
- allows for regular feedback to all stakeholders and helps to secure accountability; and

- is an essential component of good leadership and management, giving clear indications of the capacity to improve.

For inspectors

5. Self-assessment provides important information and evidence for APA and JAR. Judgements will be made about how far it 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.

6. The self-assessment should, therefore, enable inspectors to:
- determine how well the area knows itself and has prioritised areas for improvement;
 - establish how effectively different providers or services, working in partnership or separately, are contributing to the outcomes for the area;
 - assess the effectiveness with which management information systems are being developed to determine needs and impact;
 - evaluate how far young people are being involved in planning and review;
 - assess the strengths and weaknesses of management and capacity for improvement of local services; and
 - assess whether plans for improvement are providing value for money.

Relationship between self-assessments used in different inspections

7. When a JAR is conducted at the same time as another inspection, in particular, corporate assessment or the inspection of the youth offending team, the self-assessments will be made available to all inspection teams and may be cross-referenced. For example:

- section D of the JAR self-assessment should be used to illustrate the shared priority for children and young people in the self-assessment for the corporate assessment;
- an assessment of the outcomes achieved by children and young people provided in the JAR self-assessment could be used in the corporate assessment self-assessment to demonstrate the effectiveness of the council's work;
- illustrations of the management of services included in the JAR self-assessment can contribute to an assessment of the wider council ambitions, priorities, capacity and performance management aspects of the self-assessment for the corporate assessment; and
- the self-assessment for the inspection of a youth offending team can contribute to the self-assessment of the local area's work in reducing juvenile offending.

The involvement of partners

8. All services for children and young people in the local area should be fully involved in producing the self-assessment for the JAR.

9. Local arrangements regarding the involvement of partners in the submission for the APA may vary. It may be limited to the work of the council's education and social care functions. However, where it is more helpful to local services, a full self-assessment may be completed collectively by all partners, as for the JAR. In the case of the latter, a clear indication should be given of the specific contributions made by the council's education and social care functions.

Completing the form

10. The following section has been designed to assist in the process of self-assessment. The template for self-assessment is divided into seven parts. The questions raised in each section are not exhaustive, but provide prompts for completing the template. The focus is to evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve outcomes and implement local priorities. Therefore, it is not necessary to comment in full on each key judgement.

PART A Background	<p>In this section provide brief information about key contacts and partnership arrangements which have contributed to the completion of the self-assessment.</p>
PART B Summary statement	<p>This should provide a succinct summary evaluation of overall performance in relation to services for children and young people in the local areas and illustrate self-assessment grades. This section may include an assessment of any key contextual features that directly impact on the delivery of these local services. Include a clear statement of the priorities for children and young people. Please cross-reference this to factual information that is available elsewhere (for example, in 2001 census information, on the council's website, in your corporate assessment self-assessment or in key community plans).</p>
PART C Show how your current priorities for action are founded on an analysis of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you undertake your analysis of need and reach your decisions on priorities? • To what extent did you use the full range of data, including local data and information? • How did you focus on the outcomes for children and young people? • How did you ensure that you paid sufficient attention to the needs of particular groups, for example looked after children and those with learning difficulties or disabilities? Have any gaps emerged? • How far have gaps in provision been met through the commissioning of new services? How have you sustained and adapted existing services to meet new needs? • What action have you taken to implement any recommendation of relevant recent inspection?
PART D The impact of local services	<p>For each outcome area:</p> <p>How good are the outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they as good as they should be, especially for those identified for targeted support? If not, why not and what action is being taken? • How well do these outcomes compare with other similar areas? • Are there particular localities or groups of children and young people where progress has been better or worse than expected? If so, what are the reasons and what action are you taking? • To what extent have national and local PSA targets been achieved? <p>Are you making a difference?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have local services contributed to priorities and plans to improve outcomes? • Have there been any significant barriers to implementing your plans? • Have you taken any special or innovative actions that are having an impact?

<p>PART E Service management and the use of resources</p>	<p>Does service management help to improve outcomes for children and young people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have some approaches to service delivery been more successful than others? If so, why? • How effective are your performance management and review processes? • How far do local services have the capacity to improve? • How well are you developing your workforce to manage change? <p>How well are you using your resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How successful are your investments in and contribution to particular activities? • Have you made any significant shift in expenditure? Has this been effective? • Is your expenditure in line with projections and if so what actions have you taken to resolve this? • What has been the impact of any pooled resources? • What evidence do you have that you are providing value for money?
<p>PART F Involving children and young people</p>	<p>How well do you engage children and young people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How involved are children and young people in decision making about the development of services in the local area? • How have you sought the views of children and young people and with what success? • How do you feed back to them on the action you have taken?
<p>PART G Partnership working</p>	<p>How good is partnership working?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What arrangements have been made to cooperate with agencies and services? Are these arrangements effective? • To what extent are plans, targets and priorities agreed by service users and providers? • How have you involved the voluntary and community sectors? • How has partnership working enabled you to improve service delivery and outcomes for children and young people?

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

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

Grading

12. Local 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 whilst 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 nor contributes 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.

Supporting evidence and documents

13. For an **annual performance assessment**, approximately two to three sides of A4 should be submitted on each outcome and no additional examples of evidence, such as case studies, need be provided. The only document(s) to be submitted with the self-assessment is the Children and Young People's Plan or its equivalent(s). Normally this will be sufficient, but Ofsted and CSCI may ask for some additional evidence to be made available at or before the annual performance assessment meeting.

14. For a **joint area review**, the documents that are required are listed in *Key Judgements and Evidence* and where possible the self-assessment should refer to the appropriate pages in those documents.

Submission

15. For the **annual performance assessment**, a self-assessment will be requested each year for submission in May.

16. **Joint area reviews:** to avoid duplication local areas will be given an opportunity to update and expand the annual self-assessment if this focused on council services only. The director of children's services will be asked to coordinate this activity with key partners, covering relevant local services for children and young people and using the common format. This update should be available to the inspection team at the start of the analysis stage.