

Joint area review

Borough of Poole Children's Services Authority Area

Review of services for children and young people

Audit Commission
Healthcare Commission
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
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Introduction

1. The most recent Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for the Borough of Poole judged the council's children's services as good, and its capacity to improve as good.
2. This report assesses the contribution of local services in ensuring that children and young people:
 - at risk, or requiring safeguarding are effectively cared for
 - who are looked after achieve the best possible outcomes
 - with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.
3. The following investigations were also carried out:
 - the impact of partners on improving outcomes for 14–19 year olds, with a particular focus on health, education, employment and training for diverse and hard-to-reach groups – including settled travellers, young carers and teenage parents.

Context

4. The Borough of Poole has a population of approximately 137,100 residents, of which 32,200 are children and young people aged 0–19 years. In Poole, 7,870 (24%) of the 0–19 year olds have been identified as having additional needs, with a higher proportion of vulnerable children and young people living in the wards of Alderney, Hamworthy West, Newtown and Canford Heath East. The 2004 index of multiple deprivation ranked the borough as the 225th most deprived out of the 354 local authorities in England. It is a borough of contrast where extreme wealth is juxtaposed against relative poverty.
5. The local economy has low unemployment and high activity rates. The most significant employment sectors in Poole are the public sector, hospitality and service industries, financial services and manufacturing. The majority of the population is White British with 4% from Black and minority ethnic communities. Growth in population is migration-led with an increase in the numbers of workers from eastern European accession countries.
6. Pre-16 education in the borough operates via two and three-tier systems. Provision is through pre-schools, first schools (4–8, 4–9), one primary school (4–11), middle deemed primary (8–12), middle deemed secondary (9–13), combined (4–12) and secondary schools (12–16, 12–18, 13–18) and comprises:
 - 57 private or voluntary early years settings and four children's centres (with a further two designated to provide the same services)

- four schools (two first, one primary and one combined) that have maintained nursery provision
 - 13 first schools (10 aged 4–8 years and three aged 4–9 years)
 - eight middle schools (seven aged 8–12 years and one aged 9–13 years)
 - one primary school (aged 4–11 years)
 - seven combined schools (aged 4–12 years)
 - eight secondary schools (one boys' school, one girls' school and six mixed schools)
 - three special schools
 - one pupil referral unit.
7. Post-16 education and training is provided by:
- seven school sixth forms
 - one general further education college
 - six main work-based training providers.
8. There are no sixth form colleges (although a significant number of young people from the borough commute to Brockenhurst College).
9. Two providers have contracts for Education to Employment (E2E) training.
10. Adult and community learning, including family learning, is provided by Poole Adult Learning.
11. Following amalgamation in October 2006, primary care is provided by Bournemouth and Poole Teaching Primary Care Trust (PCT).
12. Acute hospital services are provided by Poole Hospital NHS Trust.
13. Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) is a multi-agency provision with specialist services provided by Dorset Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.
14. Children's social care services are provided through:
- 67 local authority approved foster carers and some commissioned placements from independent fostering agencies
 - one family centre

- eight field social work/support teams (five supporting children teams, one referral and assessment team, one children with disabilities team and a pan-Dorset out-of-hours team).

15. The Borough of Poole has no residential provision for children and young people. All such placements are commissioned externally.

16. There are no young offender institutions within the Borough of Poole.

17. Services to children and young people who are at risk of offending or have offended are provided through the Bournemouth and Poole Youth Offending Team.

Main Findings

18. The main findings of this joint area review are as follows:

- Most children feel safe and the arrangements for safeguarding children and young people are good overall. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) (joint with Bournemouth) is providing clear leadership with strong and effective commitment and engagement of all partners. With a clear focus on preventative services the council and its partners have made a positive impact in delivering good outcomes for children and young people.
- Good partnership working is leading to good outcomes for most children and young people who are looked after, particularly in health and education. Children and young people receive very good personal care and support to help them achieve well. However, maintaining placement stability and increasing local placement resources remains a challenge for the council.
- Services make a good contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Inter-agency working across health, education and social care is strong although there is a shortage of paediatric occupational therapy, physiotherapy and special equipment services. There are outstanding early years Portage services and for the majority of student's transition to education and employment on leaving school is very good. However, a small number of young people with more complex conditions do not have sufficient support and progression opportunities to fully meet their needs.
- The overall impact of partners' universal services on outcomes for 14–19 year olds in Poole is good and in comparison to the national average the number of young people that are not engaged in education, employment or training is low. Targeted support from services for children from Black and minority ethnic groups, settled Travellers, teenage parents and young carers is well directed and is having a positive impact on improving outcomes. Whilst overall educational attainment is good the

gap between the best and worst performing schools remains wide, reflecting the inequalities of the borough.

- Service management is good. Strong partnerships have focused effectively on the integration of services to secure many improving outcomes for vulnerable groups. Staff morale, commitment and enthusiasm are outstanding. Performance management is adequate. Strong Children's Trust arrangements, effective leadership and good financial management lead to the council having good capacity to improve further.

Grades

4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	3
Looked after children	3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Service management	3
Capacity to improve	3

Recommendations

For immediate action

The local partnership should:

- ensure that an appropriate way is found for the successful dissemination of the findings of this report to children and young people in the area.

For action over the next six months

The local partnership should:

- ensure that outcomes, including those for diverse groups, are always clearly specified in monitoring the performance of services
- ensure that effective use of local measures to better understand performance and inform practice
- improve access to after school and holiday activities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

For action in the longer term

The local partnership should:

- ensure there is an appropriate range of local placements to meet the needs of looked after children and young people with the most challenging needs
- review and strengthen the corporate parenting role of the council and partners
- increase the rate of progress in developing appropriate transition arrangements and post-16 education and employment opportunities for those young people with the most complex conditions and those needing high levels of support
- ensure there is sufficient paediatric occupational, physiotherapy and special equipment services to meet the needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Equality and diversity

19. The commitment to equality for all and respect for diversity is a new priority in the revised Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and underpins the work of the partnership. Services and partners identify and prioritise the needs of diverse groups, and services are targeted well to the most deprived areas of the borough. Effective steps are taken to consult hard-to-reach groups, such as Traveller children and their families, young carers, those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and teenage parents and to provide culturally sensitive and flexible services to meet their needs. Improved intervention and support has resulted in improved outcomes for children and young people from these communities. Planning for children with disabilities and the development of integrated working is effective; however, improving equity of access to out-of-school activities remains a priority for the partnership. Children looked after by the council have their individual needs met very well and have access to a good range of services. Despite these strengths, across the partnership, the ability to gather sufficiently detailed monitoring information about Black and minority ethnic communities to inform planning and practice is inconsistent. An added challenge for the council and its partners is that many of the borough's residents do not wish to declare their ethnicity, for example the settled Traveller community.

Safeguarding



20. The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk, or requiring safeguarding is good.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Effective, committed and well-led LSCB.</p> <p>Well-established and very effective multi-agency use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).</p> <p>Broad and effective multi-agency and locality work for early intervention and safeguarding support.</p> <p>Safe and prompt systems for handling child protection and other referrals.</p> <p>Good service provision from CAMHS and the Youth Alcohol and Drug Advisory Service (YADAS).</p> <p>Effective tracking of children missing from care and education.</p> <p>Very robust safe recruitment and vetting procedures.</p>	<p>Inappropriate categorisation of initial assessments leading to under-recording of work carried out.</p> <p>Low proportion of core assessments undertaken.</p> <p>Inconsistent recording of decision-making in case files.</p>

21. Priorities for improving services to keep children and young people safe are clear and services are improving through increased multi-agency arrangements and use of the CAF. There is a very strong commitment from the council and its partners to improving outcomes for children, and there are good examples of how children's views have led to changes in services. Those who are most vulnerable receive prompt and effective services.

22. Most children and young people feel safe in their homes, schools and the local area. In the event of a civil emergency, plans are in place that identify a clear role for children's services. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well and engagement of parents and carers is effective. Focused activities and a good range of information help parents keep their children safe and healthy. Well-targeted parenting programmes have shown very positive outcomes for children and their parents. For example, an evaluation of the Webster Stratton programme found parents/carers reported very positively on their learning experiences and outcomes for themselves and their children. All schools are participating in the Healthy Schools programme, with 66% of schools in Poole achieving healthy schools status by July 2007, exceeding the national target of 50%.

23. Health staff make an effective contribution to safeguarding and protecting children and young people and are well engaged in the collaborative requirements and standards set down in the National Services Framework and *Every Child Matters*. Although admissions to hospital for substance misuse are higher than the national average, the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy is proving effective. Proactive multi-agency working provide children and young people with good and timely access to a range of counselling, support and therapeutic services has resulted in the number of hospital admissions falling from 100 in 2005–06 to 81 in 2006–07. Sexual health and relationships education is well supported through schools. There is an effective teenage pregnancy strategy and rates of teenage conception are consistently among the lowest nationally. Access to screening for sexually transmitted infections is good and take-up rates are improving. CAMHS provide good and timely services. Effective partnerships between youth offending services, CAMHS, health and substance misuse services show an increased take-up in service provision. Offering flexible appointments, flexible venues and following up 'no shows' has improved the attendance rates and subsequent interventions for more young people. Overall waiting times for assessment are very good and a majority of children and young people, including those within the youth justice system, receive a timely assessment.

24. Stamping out bullying, both in and out of school, is a priority in the CYPP. Over 1300 children participated in the most recent local anti-bullying survey. Responses indicated a clear downward trend in the number of repeated incidents of bullying. Most young people are aware that their school has an anti-bullying policy and there is effective support in place for young people who are victims of bullying, including peer mediation and pastoral support. Good support from the police helps children and young people protect themselves from cyber-bullying, and some schools run e-safety courses for staff and parents. School inspection findings found all schools enabled learners to stay safe.

25. Arrangements to identify the whereabouts of children and young people are effective with robust procedures in place across health, education, social care and the police for the prompt tracking of children of all ages missing from school, the community and care placements. Despite the partnership working hard to inform the public of the requirement that the local authority must be told about children in privately fostered care, notification levels remain low. Where privately fostered children have been identified appropriate social care monitoring arrangements are instituted. Procedures to safeguard the welfare of children who are home-educated are well-established. Should the need arise, the council provides support to families by offering access to an educational psychologist and/or an education welfare officer. Continuing work by the council and its partners with language schools to raise safe care arrangements for children placed with host families remains a high priority.

26. The findings of this review confirm the 2007 APA, which judged the council's contribution to ensuring children's safety as good. The restructuring of the council's children's services in 2006 has had a positive effect and has led to an improved, simplified and faster service. Thresholds for access to targeted social care services

have been agreed and publicised and the development of multi-agency locality meetings has improved access to preventative services for children and young people who are below the threshold for social care. An independent evaluation of the pilot project for school-linked family support workers shows that the 160 families and schools that took part in the pilot considered outcomes to be positive and they highly value the service.

27. Social care referral and assessment work has been restructured. This has had a positive impact on ensuring good outcomes for children and young people as transfer systems are clear and there are no unallocated cases. Children and young people now have faster access to the right support. The rate of repeat referrals of children in need to social care services, at 18%, continues to be significantly below that of the national average and similar authorities (23%), which is good. Whilst the quality of initial assessments is good, there is a lack of a clear definition about what should be considered an initial assessment and what should progress to core assessment. This lack of clarity has resulted in the under-recording of initial assessments. Because of this, data, including comparative data, about work demand made upon the children's service is unreliable. The council has acknowledged this issue and is taking corrective action.

28. The 2006 APA highlighted the need to reverse the fall in the number of core assessments. In response, the council has achieved significant improvements to the number, quality and timeliness of core assessments. Although there was a 50% increase in the number undertaken between 2005–06 and 2006–07, the proportion remained comparatively low. However, local data shows that the trend of improvement has continued and the gap between Poole's performance and that of comparator councils has continued to close. The proportion of children with a child protection plan is now in line with other councils; all children with a child protection plan are allocated a qualified social worker and 100% of plans are reviewed on time. Re-registrations have decreased and are now at the same level as comparator councils.

29. Good systems are in place for independent quality assurance and auditing of case files and collated findings are used to improve service-wide performance. However, the findings of the independent case-file audits are not located within the case files, thus the impact of the audit on individual children's records cannot be tracked. Similarly, some cases inspected as part of this review demonstrated a lack of rigour in the systematic recording and tracking of managerial decision-making within individual case files. As a result, it is not always possible to determine how the case work plan has been formulated.

30. The Bournemouth and Poole LSCB is well established and is having a positive impact on improving practice. Work done to reduce domestic abuse, promote private fostering awareness and robust monitoring of performance against standards are good examples of the LSCB's effectiveness. The LSCB has identified priorities, a clear action plan, satisfactory resources and training plan. Training is targeted according to need and used to follow through and disseminate learning from serious case reviews. Satisfactory monitoring arrangements are in place

through the LSCB's working groups and arrangements are in place for appropriate scrutiny from elected members.

31. Multi-agency responses to domestic violence incidents are good, with clear criteria for action. Arrangements are in place for cases to be fast-tracked through the courts when necessary. Risk-assessment conferences are enabling improved support for children and young people through a wide range of effective intervention programmes. The women's refuge provides safe accommodation and access to good multi-agency support. Multi-agency public protection arrangements are good.

32. Partnership working to reduce anti-social behaviour and offending is good with systems in place to identify those at risk of offending. Parenting interventions are planned as part of the Youth Offending Team's prevention work but are not yet showing impact. Multi-agency working, a wide range of targeted projects and the use of anti-social behaviour contracts have been successful in ensuring no young person under 18 living in Poole is subject to an anti-social behaviour order. Current performance data shows the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system is reducing and the re-offending rate at 43% is lower than those found both nationally (50%) and among statistical neighbours (48%).

33. Complaints about children's social care services are low, well managed and mostly resolved in a timely manner at an early stage. Learning highlighted by complaints has resulted in some improvements to the way social care services are delivered and in staff training. Robust arrangements are in place across agencies for the management of allegations against staff and very robust safe recruitment and vetting procedures are in place. Improved pay structures, new working arrangements and good training opportunities have proved successful in the appointment and retention of staff within children's social care services. Good arrangements are in place for staff supervision and there is good access to appropriate external and internal training at all levels, including mandatory multi-agency child protection and equalities training.

Looked after children and young people



34. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
Good multi-agency preventative services to reduce the need for public care.	Insufficient stability of placements for looked after children and young people.

<p>Good and timely access to health support, including CAMHS and YADAS.</p> <p>Good-quality planning for individual children and young people that consistently ensures their participation.</p> <p>Good education outcomes with effective support for post-16 opportunities.</p> <p>Very good transition to independence support for care leavers.</p>	<p>A shortage of an appropriate range of placements for harder-to-place young people.</p> <p>Underdeveloped corporate parenting functions.</p>
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35. Looked after children and young people receive good personal care, have their health and education needs met well and are prepared well for independent living. There are good opportunities for children and young people to participate in a wide range of individual and group leisure activities and pastimes. The partnership invests strongly in preventative services which have resulted in a year-on-year reduction in the number of children needing public care. There are now around 100 looked after children and young people and the council is committed to placing them within reach of their local community. Currently, 90% are living in placements within 20 miles of their home address. The 2007 APA judged all outcomes to have been maintained at a good level. It also identified that for a small number of children and young people there had been a marked deterioration in the percentage that had three or more placements during the year (2006-07), from a previously very good position. Long-term stability continues to be below that of statistical neighbours and England. Prior to the APA, the council had itself identified this as a key priority and put in place a robust plan to improve the placement stability of looked after children, but it is too soon for impact to be demonstrated.

36. To support children and young people remaining safely within their families and communities the council has increased investment in preventative family services. An effective family group conferencing service and a multi-agency resource panel with the capacity to provide creative packages of preventative support has had a strong impact on appropriately reducing the numbers of children and young people entering public care. When public care is required, 91% of looked after children and young people are placed in foster care, which is good. A further 8% of children and young people are fostered by relatives or friends, which is significantly less than the national average of 13%. At its last inspection in October 2006 the council's fostering services received a good rating from the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

37. The majority of the looked after population live in good quality foster homes and a key priority for the council, as reflected in the CYPP, is to improve placement stability, choice and emotional well-being for children in care. Strenuous efforts continue to be made by the council to expand the diversity of its foster carers and

increase the number of local placements, particularly for older teenagers and those with more complex needs. It is actively developing initiatives, improving training and support to foster carers and has instituted more robust permanency planning and matching processes. However, these are new initiatives and it is too soon for impact to show. The council has no children's residential provision of its own so for the few children or young people who do require residential care their placements are commissioned from external sources. To ensure their care is safe and of a good quality there are robust systems in place to monitor placement contracts.

38. Looked after children and care leavers receive good support from health services and there is a high take-up of health reviews, immunisations, optician services and dental care. A higher proportion (93%) than the national average (84%) of looked after children and young people receive their annual health and dental checks on time. Health needs are effectively monitored by a designated doctor and nurse who have links with other services to ensure that individual children's needs are met. The nurse takes a proactive role in the promotion of healthy eating, exercise and sexual health education. Looked after children and young people confirmed they receive good health care information, have regular discussions about how to stay healthy and are actively involved in their annual health review.

39. Looked after children, their carers and care leavers have prompt access to comprehensive and effective CAMHS advice, consultation and therapeutic intervention. Historically, some foster carers and professionals experienced difficulties in accessing CAMHS for looked after children and young people in short-term placements. Improvements to the service have resulted in the appointment of a children's social care therapist, provision of additional clinical psychology sessions and access to attachment and parenting training for foster carers to help them support those in their care, thus minimising the risk of foster placement breakdowns. Although these are relatively new initiatives, foster carers value and view very positively the additional help and support provided.

40. Educational support for looked after children and young people who attend school in Poole is very good. The educational support team offers very effective, flexible and individual support to children and young people to help them achieve. Looked after children and young people have personal education plans that are targeted well to their needs and regularly reviewed. Looked after children and young people are encouraged and supported to achieve highly and all achievements are recognised and celebrated at an annual event. Whilst looked after children and young people placed out-of-borough achieve well, they do not have access to the support provided by the Poole looked after children educational support team. The council is currently reviewing what the impact may be for those young people who receive a different service.

41. There is good partnership working with schools. The council has shown good direction and leadership in raising the awareness of school headteachers and governors of the impact of low educational attainment on looked after children and young people. Specifically designated teachers and the educational support service

for looked after children have helped looked after children achieve well overall. Standards of attainment at all key stages are at least in line with national averages. Results at age 16 are good with 83% achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. However, cohorts are very small and fluctuate year-on-year making comparison difficult. There is a large proportion of looked after pupils with statements of special educational need within some cohorts. Attendance levels remain acceptable with 76% (69 children) of all looked after children and young people achieving between 90% and 100% attendance. Services work effectively together to minimise fixed-term exclusions but when these do occur alternative education is provided from the first day of exclusion. Children and young people who are looked after are well supported to pursue individual hobbies and interests and have good access to leisure opportunities.

42. There are good opportunities for children and young people to express their views. All looked after children and their carers are allocated to qualified social workers who visit regularly and, for at least part of the visit, see the child or young person on their own. A strong, independent reviewing service ensures timely reviews, with high participation from looked after children (93%), their carers and representatives from a range of relevant agencies. Children and young people report that they are listened to, that they actively contribute to their reviews and that their wishes are taken into account leading to timely responses. There is a good advocacy service that undertakes effective work with looked after children and young people who need additional support.

43. A high proportion of care leavers are in education, employment or training, with good support from Connexions. Effective multi-agency working provides a good range of interventions and activities to support care leavers through the transition into independence. All have regularly reviewed pathway plans that they have contributed to fully and young people confirm they are well supported in terms of education, training, financial and emotional support. All care leavers are in suitable accommodation, and well-coordinated inter-agency support enables them to successfully maintain their own tenancies or, despite the shortage of foster placements, remain with their foster carers after the age of 18. A training flat for care leavers has been set up for young people to practice independent living prior to having their own tenancy. A proportion of one bedroom flats are identified specifically for allocation to care leavers, which is very good.

44. The lead and support members for children's services have a good understanding of the needs of looked after children. However, although the corporate parenting group has successfully raised the profile of looked after children, it has yet to fully develop its function of challenge. Looked after children and young people inform service developments through good consultation projects and are represented on the children's shadow board. They have opportunities to meet with elected members and senior managers and have been involved in the recruitment of senior managers. The council has rightly recognised the need to develop arrangements to ensure that understanding of the role of corporate parent is embedded across the council.

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



45. The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Outstanding portage provision and early years support.</p> <p>Very good outreach work by special schools.</p> <p>Strong strategic management of special educational needs, with very good analysis of current and future needs.</p> <p>Good involvement of young people in planning and evaluating services.</p> <p>Good guidance and support for most parents and carers.</p> <p>Increasing take-up of direct payments.</p> <p>Good post-school provision for most young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p>	<p>Underdeveloped post-16 education and employment opportunities for some young people with the most complex conditions and those needing high levels of support.</p> <p>Limited access to some after-school and holiday activities.</p> <p>Insufficient paediatric occupational, physiotherapy and special equipment services to meet need.</p> <p>Insufficient respite care to meet demand.</p>

46. The 2007 APA identified the council as having made good progress in establishing a comprehensive CAMHS for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and in delivering preventative services within community settings. Good multi-agency working between health, education and social care is providing most children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with an effective and responsive service. Whilst formal arrangements for the joint commissioning of services are at an early stage, the strong partnership arrangements established ensure appropriate allocation of funding. Through consultation with parents, carers, young people and other professionals, senior managers have undertaken a thorough analysis of the current and future needs of this group and well-conceived, costed plans are now in place to further improve services and increase the opportunities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

47. Support to include children with special educational needs in mainstream education is effective. Outreach support from special schools is very good, devising individual learning programmes for pupils and providing specialist training for teaching and support staff. Schools that took part in the school survey rated the quality of the special educational needs strategy highly.

48. The total number of new statements produced has reduced from 47 in 2006 to 40 in 2007 and the proportion of children and young people with new statements of special educational need in mainstream schools has increased over the last three years to 65% which is above the national average of 61.5%. The council's performance in issuing statements within 18 weeks including 'exceptions' is 91%, which is above similar councils (82%) and the national median of 86%. However, in relation to excluding 'exceptions' performance at 91% remains below that of similar councils and the national median of 99%. Newly appointed staff and the creation of an additional post have increased the council's capacity to improve the timeliness of statements.

49. Overall, health provision to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. There are some areas of very good practice. Examples include health staff involvement in the early years support programme, sex and relationships education programmes specifically designed for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the development of care pathways for children with diabetes. However, integrated care pathways are still to be developed fully, and although assessment outcomes for older children and young people result in their needs being met, it has meant assessments have been undertaken by multiple rather than single agency processes. A very recent and comprehensive review of paediatric therapy services across Dorset as a whole, involving children, parents, staff and stakeholders identified insufficient paediatric occupational therapy, physiotherapy and specialist equipment services. Recommendations arising from the review are being taken forward to the PCT and partners in children's services.

50. CAMHS for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are comprehensive with good partnership working between agencies and a full range of services available to meet all levels of need. This has been further strengthened through a single care pathway for children and young people with mental health and learning difficulties to ensure continuity of care. The appointment of an additional nurse to the specialist team has increased capacity and resulted in the team being able to provide a good and supportive service to more children with severe autistic spectrum disorder, Aspergers syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). All special schools have attained healthy schools status and health professionals are fully involved in the delivery of good health, sex and relationships education, and support to the children and young people. Appropriate care is in place for those with specific conditions such as diabetes and chronic fatigue syndrome and health professionals work well with education services to ensure minimal disruption to the children and young people's education.

51. Portage provision and support for children in their early years is outstanding. Portage workers are particularly skilled in working with parents and families in their homes and at local centres offering a wide range of support and a flexible approach tailored to meet family need. A creative initiative to provide key worker training for Portage and early years staff has had a very positive impact and provides families with a much appreciated, improved and seamless access to services whilst leading to a more efficient use of resources. The implementation of the CAF and locality working is proving effective and is well used by staff from relevant agencies. It has had a very positive impact on pre-school children as it allows professionals to make decisions quickly and creatively and allocate resources to meet need. Through evaluation surveys and as part of this review parents and carers confirm they are becoming increasingly confident about their involvement in decision-making and in specifying the type of support necessary for their children.

52. Ofsted inspection data shows that almost all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress in both mainstream and special schools. In 44% of the primary schools and 80% of the secondary schools inspected, progress was good or outstanding. Underachieving pupils are targeted for support. Individual education plans are thorough, identify appropriate and challenging targets and contain good contributions from relevant agencies. For a small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who leave the specialist provision at the end of Key Stage 3, progression into Key Stage 4 is satisfactory with pupils moving on to appropriate independent specialist residential or day provision. The curriculum for this small group of young people is under review and plans are in place for the provision of a more comprehensive local service. Individual children's progress is monitored by the council through school visits and regular reviews. A council database is used to monitor the progress of all pupils with special educational needs and this enables schools and pupils who need additional support to be identified.

53. Schools and the Integrated Youth Support and Development Service (IYSDS) offer a satisfactory range of after school and holiday activities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Young people are well supported and encouraged to contribute to the planning of provision through the inclusion forum and other consultation activities. However, the range and choice of activities in which these young people participate are limited by access to appropriate facilities, support and transport; this has been identified as an area for further development in the CYPP.

54. The council engages very well with children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and enables many of them to participate effectively in decision-making and contribute to relevant policies, strategies and local issues. The 'Independence Day' activities are facilitated very effectively and successfully by the local advocacy service. Over the past four years, the Independence Day has enabled young people, including those with significant communication difficulties, to put forward their views on local services and facilities clearly and formally question officers and policy makers. The outcomes of some of the Independence Day activities have been used as exemplars of good practice at regional and local

events. The parent partnership service is good and well managed despite limited capacity. It provides good support to parents through access to impartial information, mediation services and where appropriate advocacy. The recently established special educational needs forum provides a good opportunity for a representative group of parents to meet with children's services officers.

55. Some parents and carers of older children are unclear about their entitlements and how to access services. This view contrasts strongly with the very positive views expressed by parents of younger children, particularly those who have been involved in the CAF process. Steps are being taken by the integrated services team and their partners to genuinely engage and involve parents in service developments such as respite care and individualised budgets, but this approach has not yet been fully adopted by all services and partners.

56. Whilst a shared care scheme and some residential respite provision commissioned from Dorset Scope and the Wessex Autistic Society provides a valuable resource, the current level of respite provision is insufficient to meet need. To provide more placements the council is actively collaborating with Dorset and Bournemouth in tendering for a short breaks service. To supplement respite care provision and ensure more children with disabilities receive services, the partnership is developing more shared care, holiday play schemes and intensive home support. The development and expansion of direct payments is allowing more families to buy care directly and more flexibly. At the end of March 2007, 17 families were accessing direct payments, which is good, and further increases are planned.

57. For the majority of students, arrangements for transition to education and employment on leaving school are good. All young people with a statement of special educational need have a transition plan and only two out of 56 young people with statements of special educational need leaving year 11 in 2006 are not in education, employment or training. The work-based National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) success rate for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is 54%, in line with the national average of 53% and close to the council's overall success rate of 63%. The range of work-based learning opportunities is good and the percentage of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in work-based learning, at 19.3%, is significantly better than the national average of 14.5%. Progression opportunities provided by the Workstep provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good with 15 out of 60 young people aged 18–24 taking part. A strong and very positive feature is the cooperation between the Workstep provision and other borough directorates, with human resources and occupational health providing good opportunities for work-based learning and progression. Links with the local further education college and Entry to Employment providers are effective and well established. Special school leavers take part in a wide range of activities to enable them to progress with confidence to the next stage of education or training. However, although they are only a small proportion of the overall group, young people with more complex conditions such as those with severe autistic spectrum

disorder, ADHD or those with chronic medical conditions do not have sufficient support and progression opportunities to meet their needs fully.

58. Although children's and adult services are now working more closely, the council has correctly identified that there is a lack of early active involvement of adult services at the transition planning stage. Involvement by Connexions personal advisors is satisfactory overall. Support and interventions by personal advisers in special schools are very good and satisfactory in mainstream schools.

Improvements in the service to mainstream schools have been made and, as a result, most young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities now see a Connexions personal advisor at an earlier stage in the transition process. This has improved the quality of their involvement in reviews.

Other issues identified for further investigation

The impact of partners on improving the outcomes for 14–19 year olds, with a particular focus on health, education, employment and training for diverse and hard-to-reach groups – including settled travellers, young carers and teenage parents

59. **The impact of partners on improving the outcomes for 14–19 year olds, with a particular focus on health, education, employment and training for diverse and hard-to-reach groups, including settled travellers, young carers and teenage parents is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Universal outcomes for this age range are good.</p> <p>Education data is being used more effectively, for example to improve outcomes for individual pupils with English as an additional language.</p> <p>Persistent and assertive work with hard-to-reach groups, such as settled Travellers is beginning to engage them with services.</p> <p>Young carers are identified and supported well.</p> <p>Young parents, including those from hard to reach groups, benefit from services tailored to their needs.</p>	<p>Inconsistent prioritisation of equality and diversity issues across the council and its partners.</p> <p>The monitoring and evaluation of services against the <i>Every Child Matters</i> outcomes for young people.</p>

<p>CAMHS provide well-targeted services for the vulnerable and hard to reach.</p> <p>Locality working and the budget holding lead professional (BHLP) pilot are providing effective tailored packages of care for individual young people and their families.</p> <p>Multi-agency work to reduce anti-social behaviour is proving effective.</p>	
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60. The overall impact of partners' universal services on outcomes for 14–19 year olds in Poole is good. Teenage pregnancy rates are low when compared to national and South West figures and the teenage pregnancy reduction plan is on course to meet the government target. All secondary schools offer a flexible 14–16 curriculum and GCSE results continue to be above the national average and that of similar councils. Attainment post-16 is above the national average and that of similar authorities. The percentage of young people achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by 19 is above average against national figures and those of similar authorities. Performance in the General and Vocational Certificate of Education, A and AS qualifications is consistently above average against both comparators. The number of young people that are not engaged in education, employment or training is low and Connexions provide good quality advice, information and guidance to young people. Connexions' surveys of young people, carried out to gather information regarding their future destinations, shows a very small percentage of young people who have no clear plans at the end of Year 11. Youth work provision in Poole is adequate with some good features. Effective multi-agency and partnership working are strengths of the IYSDS. These strengths are enabling the service to effectively engage vulnerable groups, such as settled Travellers, those vulnerable to risk-taking behaviours and those not in employment, education or training.

61. The 2007 APA identified the implementation of the council's 14–19 strategy as a key area for development. However, the council has demonstrated a realistic and measured approach to its 14–19 strategy and preparation for the introduction of specialist diplomas, following consultation with young people, is now on track after a slow start. The common online prospectus is comprehensive and easy to use.

62. Overall, the small proportion (5%) of Black and minority ethnic pupils in the school population achieve comparatively well in gaining five or more A*–C grades at GCSE. Almost all (90%) young people of Black and minority ethnic heritage are in employment, education or training. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is increasing. The Minority Ethnic and Traveller Advisory Service (METAS), in partnership with schools, is having a positive impact on the outcomes for these pupils. For example, unvalidated 2007 data when compared to 2006 validated data demonstrates an increase in the number of Eastern European pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE (including English and maths). Due to

the small cohorts, METAS focus on individual pupils' performance; better use is being made of data to ensure careful target setting and tracking of progress. Overall, there is a developing awareness of the importance of meeting the needs of the increasingly diverse population within schools, although schools' progress in developing capacity in this area is inconsistent.

63. The settled Traveller population is largely located in the area that has the highest child vulnerability index of all Poole wards. There is no reliable data on the small numbers of young people involved, as ethnicity is often undeclared. However, persistent and assertive professionals from a range of sectors, such as integrated youth services, health and the voluntary sector are succeeding in engaging young people with the wider community, for example in young parent groups, youth clubs and on school councils. An effective sexual health outreach project within a local youth club is a good example of multi-agency working, involving the teenage pregnancy reduction coordinator, a male sexual health educator, youth workers and YADAS. Young people, including settled Travellers, access the drop-in service and explore issues such as the link between alcohol misuse and teenage pregnancy.

64. Although this is not a clearly defined group of young people, particular schools in the area are popular with Traveller families and data demonstrates that pupils within these schools underachieve when compared to other young people within Poole. The council, in partnership with improved leadership and management within the schools, has effectively targeted this group of pupils. At the secondary school that most settled Travellers attend, the latest unvalidated data demonstrates that the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE has increased from 23.2% (43 pupils) in 2005/06 to 30.6% (57 pupils) in 2006/07. Attendance is improving and fewer pupils are being excluded.

65. Support for young carers is good and a high number have been identified. The well-established lead worker offers a mobile telephone contact service. Links with pastoral care workers, school nurses and youth workers are established and both individual support and group activities are provided. Presentations to raise awareness of young carers are made to education staff and chairs of governors. Headteachers are aware of young carers within schools and there are good systems in place to ensure they can attend and participate fully in school life. There has been some disruption in the frequency of group meetings following the transfer of the service to Barnardos. This has been resolved through the children's shadow board, which enables young carers to have a voice. A good, comprehensive CAMHS is proactive in the engagement of vulnerable and hard-to-reach young people. This includes targeted services for young carers.

66. Support for young parents is good. Poole has a designated lead midwife for pregnant teenagers and three targeted young parents' groups, which improve outcomes for both parents and babies. Young parents are involved in shaping and evaluating the content of the sessions. They are supported to access entitlements to free milk and healthy food during pregnancy and after birth. These services are engaging the hard-to-reach, for example the teenage pregnancy reduction coordinator nurse provides support for vulnerable young parents through individual

work at home for those who are resistant to attending a group session. Teenage parents receive support to continue education and training, for example through the provision of crèche facilities, and 70% of the estimated population of teenage parents are currently known to Connexions.

67. Locality working, and in particular the BHLP pilot project, is supporting vulnerable young people well and has led to a reduction in inappropriate referrals to children's social care. Creative and innovative support packages lead to improved levels of confidence, self-esteem and improved behaviour. Examples include funding a wide range of individual activities as well as some commissioning of services, such as a rock school. All agencies, including the police, welcome the move to locality working and the underpinning preventative strategy, as it enables both individual and specific local issues to be addressed. Potential young offenders are receiving earlier support. Good multi-agency work involving the integrated youth service, safer neighbourhood teams, the sports development service, YADAS and Connexions is having a positive impact on anti-social behaviour.

68. Overall, the council and partners demonstrate a strong commitment to diversity and equality matters and a determination to reduce inequality. However, practice across services is inconsistent. For example, in the Youth Offending Team data is not broken down into ethnic groups and within youth work equality and diversity is not given high enough priority within curriculum planning. Monitoring and evaluation of what difference the services are making in terms of improving outcomes for young people is not systematic and in some services activities rather than outcomes are monitored.

Service Management



Capacity to improve



69. **The management of services for children and young people is good. Capacity to improve further is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Challenging ambitions focusing effectively on parts of the borough, or groups, where outcomes are less good.</p> <p>Comprehensive and regularly updated needs analysis.</p> <p>Effective partnership work based on good relationships and a highly motivated work force.</p> <p>Good involvement of children and young people in consultation and the design of individual services.</p> <p>Good support for staff, particularly through professional development and training.</p> <p>Good arrangements for joint workforce planning.</p>	<p>An over-reliance on performance indicators to measure progress.</p> <p>The inconsistent quality of some action plans supporting priorities.</p> <p>Underdeveloped governance and risk management arrangements.</p>

70. The vision for children and young people's services is set out by partners in the CYPP 'Improving Opportunities for Children and Young People in Poole'. Their prioritisation of necessary actions and capacity to deliver are good. Performance management is adequate. The 2007 APA judged capacity to improve as good and confirmed that the council had addressed successfully most areas identified for improvement in the 2006 APA.

71. Ambition is good. Poole has clear and challenging ambitions set out in the CYPP. This plan has recently been refreshed, and is in line with the national agenda. Its ambitions are shared by partners and staff, and are reflected in Poole Borough Council's corporate plan and the community strategy. There is a clear commitment to improving outcomes for all children and young people and a focus on parts of the borough, or groups, where outcomes are less good. However, the link between a key corporate priority for 'Schools for the Future' and the CYPP is not strong enough. This weakens the contribution that investment in new schools and standardisation of the age of secondary transfer could make to the delivery of outcomes for children.

72. Ambition is underpinned by strong demographic and needs analysis, which is regularly updated. This analysis provides a sound basis for targeting resources to areas of greatest need, and it enables gaps in service provision to be identified and addressed. For example, the child vulnerability index has been developed to assess progress on reducing the variance of outcomes and the proportion of vulnerable children in the four most deprived wards. The original CYPP was based on extensive

consultation with children, young people, parents and carers. Feedback continues to be gathered from a wide range of sources, including a shadow board made up of young people with a key role in the partnership structure. The views of service users, parents, and carers are actively sought, including those of hard-to-reach groups and there is a culture of consultation within service delivery. This work is further enhanced through a newly established shadow board for parents and carers for the partnership.

73. Prioritisation is good. The CYPP plan sets out clear priorities for the borough to improve outcomes for children and young people. These priorities are widely shared and they are based on sound needs analysis, updated for the refreshed plan, showing the specific areas on which the partnership needs to focus. The priorities give significant attention to the full range of equality and diversity issues such as the focus on improving outcomes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, aiming higher for children with disabilities, and increasing stability for placements for children in care. There is clarity about which things are, and are not, priorities and why. Resources are used to support priority areas such as children's centres and locality working.

74. There is a clear strategy to deliver the priorities with the CYPP objectives reflected in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and other plans, for example the Poole Borough corporate plan. The CYPP sets out clearly focused activities across the five outcome areas which demonstrate the contribution of most partners. However, resource requirements are not specified in all service plans. Good relationships between partners ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities in delivering the plan. The medium-term financial strategy includes provision for increased investment to support specific future initiatives in line with the CYPP.

75. Action plans, based on a standard template, are in place to underpin most priorities and five outcome areas but they are of variable quality. However, individual service units are aware of how their work links to the priorities, and robust action is taken to deliver the strategy. For example, priority is given to providing a range of preventive services through the locality strategy so needs are addressed before problems become intractable, and partners structure their work around the borough's three localities.

76. Capacity is good. There is clear accountability and decision-making to support service delivery and improvement. Poole Borough Council is the lead agency and effectively coordinates partners through planning groups. Children's Trust arrangements are in place and were formally launched earlier this year, with the lead member chairing the Governance Board. Councillors and officers are committed to partnership working, and have created and maintained effective working relationships with partners based on trust, openness and constructive challenge. The quality of relationships within the partnership is good, but some formal procedures such as dispute resolution and arrangements for risk management are underdeveloped. The voluntary and community sector, including some smaller, local organisations such as The Church of the Good Shepherd, are

involved and well represented on the partnership executive group. They feel, however, that their contribution is sometimes made too late to impact fully.

77. Overall, value for money is good with good outcomes in a range of areas, including health and education, for low levels of funding. Though the council receives relatively low levels of funding it has the financial capacity it needs to deliver its children's services priorities. Annual savings are delivered across core budgets and resources are focused on the priority localities which ensures they are less likely to impact on children with additional needs. Budgets are aligned to support efficient use of resources through the partnership, and future needs are reflected in the medium-term financial strategy. Capital funding has been secured for the development of new school infrastructure: £12 million has been awarded from the targeted capital fund and Building Schools for the Future wave 6 participation has been supported by a further £1.5 million of council funding. Planning for services is based on good needs analysis and includes a focus on securing value for money, for example through the Schools for the Future programme and planning for special educational needs provision. However, some core services have not been routinely reviewed to identify additional opportunities to secure value for money.

78. The partnership has the people, skills and capacity required to achieve its ambitions and deliver its priorities. There are no significant recruitment or retention issues. Staff are well motivated, highly committed and are able to access good training and other development activity, which is valued. Key post-holders are in place and provide leadership, challenge and support. The partnership has developed a multi-agency workforce plan which provides a firm baseline for further joint workforce planning. There is a clear understanding of the workforce needed to deliver the CYPP, not just in terms of numbers and skills, but also in terms of culture change. There is a single assessment and recording system in place which is widely understood and used. The CAF is good and fully functioning, and most inter-agency processes for planning, delivery and reviewing provision are effective. Most children and their carers are actively involved in identifying their needs and planning, reviewing and evaluating the services provided. As a result, needs are effectively identified, recorded and communicated across the partnership.

79. Performance management is adequate. Key plans are linked, for example, the community plan, LAA, corporate plan, CYPP and service unit business plans. Performance is monitored, but there is a high dependence on performance indicators. There is a range of local measures in place to measure performance against the priorities, but these are not always clear. For example, a priority to increase cohesion and the sense of value by and amongst children and young people appears to be being monitored through targets relating only to Black and minority ethnic children and young people. This limits understanding of what is being achieved for other groups. The partnership reviews service performance, but joint performance monitoring and management arrangements are not systematic or embedded at all levels.

80. The partnership actively reviews its own performance, and has updated the CYPP in response to this evaluation. The CYPP is based on a strong needs analysis and the partnership has invested well in development of the Child Vulnerability Index to provide a clear and objective measure of progress. This is updated annually, and is used to set targets for improvement and evaluate progress against the plan. Services are aware of most strengths and weaknesses; however, performance management is not always systematic and timely. The partnership is open to external evaluation and challenge, though the scrutiny function undertaken by councillors is underdeveloped. The partnership makes good use of opportunities to capture learning, particularly through involvement of children and young people. In this way, detailed local knowledge about performance is used effectively to drive improvement in outcomes.

81. The capacity to improve is good. The Director of Children's Services leads a committed partnership which, though newly established, provides a clear sense of direction for children's services and is focused on delivering its priorities. These priorities are shared by parents, carers, children and young people and there is a robust strategy to deliver the priorities. Though impact in terms of improved outcomes for the most vulnerable is difficult to establish at such an early stage, councillors and officers are committed to partnership working and have created and maintained effective working relationships based on trust, openness and constructive challenge. The council has the financial capacity it needs to deliver its priorities and there are long-term capital plans for investment in schools for the future. Good information systems are used for comprehensive needs analysis. The council and the partnership have the people and skills it needs, and a clear vision of the culture change needed for delivery of its ambitions.

Annex A

MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE BOROUGH OF POOLE

Summary

The Borough of Poole delivers services for children and young people at a good level. A good contribution is made by services towards improving outcomes. There have been clear improvements in the extent to which children and young people are enjoying and achieving and keeping healthy. There is good integration of education and social care services in targeting resources at the most vulnerable children and young people. The authority has taken positive steps to engage with, and consult, children and young people through the Children and Young People's Shadow Board. This is being used to shape strategy and develop services in improving the lives of children and young people in Poole. A key area for development is the implementation of the authority's 14–19 strategy.

The full annual performance assessment can be found at:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=3119&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa_2007_836.pdf

Annex B: Summary of the Enhanced Youth Inspection report

Main findings

1. Youth work provision in Poole is adequate with some good features. The local authority sufficiently secures the provision of youth work. The Children and Young People's Integrated Services group is making good progress in developing an IYSDS. This has involved considerable restructuring and realignment of services, which has been well managed and communicated. Achievement and youth work practice are generally adequate and workers succeed in engaging vulnerable groups. However, standards are inconsistent with poorer practice contrasting with some good and responsive practice. The effectiveness of the planning and evaluation of youth work is also too variable. The appointment of a Locality Coordinator (Curriculum Development) is timely as it is intended to provide a focus for the development of this area of work.

2. Partnership working is well developed within the emerging IYSDS and the capacity to work in this way is a major strength of youth work in Poole. Strong partnerships are providing a good foundation for embedding the change to a locality-based approach. The strategic direction of youth work in Poole is clear and well thought through and the lead role which youth workers are taking in the implementation of the council's youth participation strategy demonstrates the service's capacity to innovate. However, there are key weaknesses in aspects of the management of delivery including quality assurance and planning.

Key aspect inspection grades

Key aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	2
	Quality of youth work practice	2
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	2
3	Leadership and management	2

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale
4: excellent/outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate/satisfactory; 1: inadequate*

Strengths

- The participation strategy is being implemented effectively and is generating some excellent outcomes for young people.

- Effective work in multi-agency locality teams to address issues affecting young people and assist specific individuals.
- Excellent partnership working with a broad range of agencies.
- The management of change.

Areas for development

- Develop more robust and varied quality assurance systems.
- Address inconsistencies in youth work practice and the achievement of young people.
- Develop the range and quality of the curriculum with a particular focus on equalities, inclusiveness and diversity.

Annex C

CORPORATE ASSESSMENT ACHIEVEMENT - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Both the 2007 APA and this review (subject to moderation) judge there to be good outcomes for children and young people living in the Borough of Poole. Children and young people are healthy and feel safe. Whilst educational outcomes are consistently good, and performance is at least in line with but mostly above that of national averages and other similar authorities, the gap between the best and worst performing schools remains wide, reflecting the inequalities of the borough. Overall, services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. However, support to young people to help them in the transition to adult services is only adequate and for some young people with the most complex conditions and those needing high levels of support there is insufficient post-16 education and employment opportunities. Looked after children and care leavers achieve at a higher level than those in similar boroughs. A high proportion of young people continue their education or training post-16, including young offenders.
2. Service management in the Borough of Poole is good and there is corporate support for further improvements to children's services. The council and its partners share common objectives and commitment to improving the well-being of all children and young people living within the area. Priorities are clearly set out in the children and young people's plan (CYPP) that link to the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and corporate objectives. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is very well established, has enhanced partnership working and is effective in improving outcomes for children and young people. There is a strong focus and shared strategy on strengthening preventative services and promoting sustainable improvements across all children's services. Service provision reflects and meets the diverse needs of children and young people from Black and minority ethnic communities.
3. The combined work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good. Effective joint planning, early intervention and a clear focus on targeting areas and communities where there is greatest need has proved effective. Children and young people are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and are benefiting from the healthy schools programme and increased participation in physical activity. Substance misuse admissions to hospitals continue to be high and relate mainly to alcohol misuse. However, the impact of the multi-agency strategy is proving effective with a decrease in hospital admissions. Child and adolescent mental health services are performing well and provide very good and timely support for both universal and targeted services resulting in good outcomes for children. The health needs of most children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are responded to promptly and effectively, however there are insufficient paediatric occupational therapy, physiotherapy and specialist

equipment services. Health care provision for looked after children is very good and of high quality.

4. Children and young people appear safe and arrangements to ensure this are good. The LSCB (joint with Bournemouth) has made a good start in identifying and addressing priorities. It reflects good collaborative relationships with partners and a commitment to incorporate learning into practice. Addressing anti-bullying and domestic violence are key priorities for all agencies. The CAF is widely used across agencies and clear thresholds for child protection services are established. An increase in the range of preventative services has been successful in reducing the numbers of children and young people needing public care. For those that do there are insufficient residential units or foster homes within Poole to meet individual need. Stability and security in longer-term placements is improving but has yet to be achieved consistently.

5. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and to achieve well is good. There are good levels of achievement and attainment of looked after children, young carers, children and young people from Black and minority ethnic communities and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are good outcomes for children at Foundation Stage and improved attainment at Key Stages 1 and 3 with standards above the national average. Children in Key Stage 2 do not do as consistently well as at other key stages and the council has instigated support programmes in several schools to raise attainment. The council's longer-term plans to change the age of transfer between schools, coupled with its Schools for the Future programme, are seen as key priorities in addressing this issue. Overall, children and young people have good access to activities they enjoy, including a good range of opportunities for sport and music.

6. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good. Children and young people are engaged in decision-making through the Children and Young People's Shadow Board and all groups are well represented. Actions to reduce anti-social and offending behaviour are having a positive impact. Offending and re-offending rates continue to fall but the number of preventative interventions provided by the Youth Offending Team remains insufficient.

7. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good. Partnerships to improve provision for 14–19 year olds are adequate. The council has demonstrated a pragmatic approach to its 14–19 strategy and preparation for the introduction of specialist diplomas is now on track after a slow start. The common online prospectus is comprehensive and easy to use. However, for most young people, including looked after children and those from hard to reach communities; attainment post-16 is good. The number of young people not engaged in employment, education or training is low and Connexions provide good quality advice, information and guidance to young people including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, transition arrangements

and opportunities post-16 for the small number of young people with the most complex needs are insufficient.

8. The capacity of council services to improve is good. There is good leadership, commitment and management at officer and councillor level. The Director of Children's Services and the Lead Councillor for children and young people have clearly defined roles known and understood by staff. Staff morale, commitment and enthusiasm for delivering good quality services with positive outcomes for children and young people is outstanding. Whilst outcomes for children and young people are good, performance management across children's services varies between adequate and good. Partnership working in delivering positive outcomes for children is excellent. The voluntary sector has a key role to play in increasing capacity and ensuring that targeted provision is in place to meet the diverse needs of the borough. However, voluntary services are not coordinated systematically and this aspect requires further review and development.

Annex D

SUMMARY OF JOINT AREA REVIEW AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under Section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors from Ofsted, the Healthcare Commission and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services*.
2. The review was linked to the contemporaneous corporate assessment of the local council by the Audit Commission and these findings plus aspects of the most recent Annual Performance Assessment are represented in the relevant part of the corporate assessment report.
3. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up in the Borough of Poole and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Together with the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services, joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being. This review explores these issues by focusing on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children who are looked after and children at risk or requiring safeguarding and a few additional investigations. It evaluates the collective contribution made by all relevant children's services to outcomes for these children and young people.
4. The review took place in two stages consisting of an analysis stage (where recorded evidence was scrutinised) and a two week fieldwork stage (where inspectors met children and young people and those who deliver services for them).