

# Joint area review

**Kirklees 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  
Ofsted

**Age group:** All

---

**Published:** 16 October 2007

---

**Reference no:** 382



---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the local authority or at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

---

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Grades</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Areas for investigation through fieldwork during the joint area review</b>	
1. Safeguarding	6
2. Looked after children and young people	9
3. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	12
4. Additional investigations	16
5. Service management	22
6. Capacity to improve	22
<b>Annex A: The APA letter</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Annex B: Children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Annex C: Summary of joint area review and annual performance assessment arrangements</b>	<b>29</b>

---

## Introduction

1. The most recent annual performance assessment for Kirklees judged the council's children's services as good and its capacity to improve as outstanding.
2. This report assesses the contribution of local services in ensuring the following for children and young people:
  - effective care for those at risk or requiring safeguarding
  - the best possible outcomes for those who are looked after
  - the best possible outcomes for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
3. The following investigations were also carried out:
  - an investigation to determine the impact of local services on reducing inequalities in the outcomes of children and young people with south Asian heritage, particularly those with Pakistani heritage
  - an investigation to determine the impact of local services in narrowing the gap between the performance of the most effective and least effective schools.

## Context

4. Kirklees Metropolitan Council is a metropolitan authority in the West Yorkshire area of England, which includes the towns of Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Batley. The borough covers 254 square miles and stretches from the high moorlands of the Pennines (including part of the Peak National Park) around Marsden and Holmfirth in the west to the edge of Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield in the east. The M62 motorway traverses the northern edge of the borough. Whilst Kirklees is a metropolitan council, over two thirds of the district is protected rural landscape. The population is 400,000. There is a large Black and minority ethnic population at 14.4%, with people of Asian origin comprising 11% of the total population. The Black and minority ethnic population is comparatively young. Children from this group account for over 28% of all school pupils, with Asian pupils making up nearly 21% of the total. Despite overall reductions in numbers, manufacturing remains a significant employing sector. Salaries in Kirklees are below the national average.
5. Pre-16 education is provided through 196 schools of which:
  - 152 are primary schools
  - 31 secondary
  - eight special schools
  - two pupil referral units
  - and three nursery schools

- there are also 199 private or voluntary early years settings and 561 registered childminders.
6. Post-16 education is provided by six school sixth forms, two sixth form colleges, two further education colleges and nine work-based learning providers working with Kirklees Collegiate.
  7. Entry to Employment provision is managed locally by a partnership led by Huddersfield Technical College with 492 places. There is also a project called Entry to Vocational which is a pre-Entry to Employment programme, led by Huddersfield Technical College. This has 30 places.
  8. Adult and community education in Kirklees is delivered by a partnership between post-16 adult learning and the two further education colleges.
  9. Kirklees Metropolitan Council provides educational and recreational leisure time activities, including youth work within the Young People's Service.
  10. Kirklees Primary Care Trust commissions children's health services (following a merger of three former Primary Care Trusts). The Primary Care Trust is coterminous with the council. The Mid-Yorkshire NHS Trust (main provider), and the Huddersfield and Calderdale NHS Foundation Trust provide acute services for children. South West Yorkshire Mental Health NHS Trust provides mental health services to Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield.
  11. Children's social care services are provided through five children's homes and 143 foster carers, 126 of whom live in Kirklees. There are 16 social work field teams and two family centres.
  12. There are no young offender institutions in the area.

## Main findings

13. The main findings of this joint area review are as follows:
  - a good Children and Young People's Plan that has the tackling of inequalities and racism as central pillars of its ambition and a clear understanding of the partnership's strengths and weaknesses
  - overall children feel safe and experience good safeguarding services
  - looked after children live in secure, safe placements and are well supported by qualified social care staff
  - there are improving health and education outcomes for looked after children and effective care plans with good multi-agency support packages
  - there is a good range of care and support available to families of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- there are good opportunities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make their views known
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for children and young people are improving, together with overall capacity of the service
- there is adequate progress in 'narrowing the gap' between all children and some vulnerable groups, both in terms of school improvement and outcomes, especially those of Pakistani heritage.

## Grades

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

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

## Recommendations

### For immediate action

The local partnership should:

- ensure that an appropriate way is found to successfully disseminate the findings of this report to children and young people in the area
- ensure that a written record of decisions taken at child protection conferences, together with the name of the lead professional, is circulated to members of the core group within one working day of the conference.

### For action over the next six months

The local partnership should:

- ensure that the pathway plan reviews of all relevant care leavers are independently chaired

- develop strategies to raise standards in the less successful schools and pupil groups by:
  - using the good data available to identify curriculum aspects and/or pupil groups for improvement more sharply
  - sharing learning from successful practice in schools in a similar context
  - targeting support for vulnerable children and young people in schools in a more timely and responsive way
- reduce the rate of fixed-term exclusions in special schools
- agree a joint approach to commissioning services, which is both strategic and transparent.

Kirklees Primary Care Trust should:

- ensure that there is adequate access to interpreters and that the use of interpreters is appropriate.

### **For action in the longer term**

Kirklees Primary Care Trust should:

- improve waiting times for accessing the specialist autism diagnostic team.

## **Equality and diversity**

14. Community cohesion is a priority for the council and its partners. Making Kirklees a place where 'Diversity is a strength' is one of the top four ambitions of the council. Maintaining community cohesion during a time of tension has been a major challenge. Partnership working between the council, established community organisations, schools and the police is ongoing. There is shared ownership of the agenda. The council has worked steadfastly and sensitively to enable open communication and discussion of the issues that face young people to take place. The situation is complex: there are inequalities across the whole community, both between and within different ethnic groups. There are areas of deprivation, especially within the north of the borough. There are gender differences in attainment with girls performing better overall than boys, although the gender gap at Key Stage 4 is reducing. A wide range of work takes place across the council to address these inequalities. There are strong twinning projects, good liaison with Madressahs and some single gender activity groups for Muslim women and girls. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good opportunities to make their views known.

15. Kirklees has been successful in bidding for the Preventing Violent Extremism Fund for 2007–08, and this money is being directed towards developing better understanding and tolerance between children and young people from different ethnic backgrounds. However, the council is well aware that attitudes, segregation and 'parallel lives' continue to impact on the lives of children and young people in the borough.

## Safeguarding



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

The council promotes children's safety well and a range of good work is undertaken to promote physical and emotional health and well-being. The contribution of local services to educating children and young people about road safety and other hazards is good. Making roads safer for all road users is a local priority. The number of children and young people injured by road traffic accidents in Kirklees has declined and the downward trend over time suggests that the challenging 2010 target will be achieved. The latest data (2006) shows a significant reduction from 2005: down from 29 in 2005 to 18 in 2006. The council demonstrates good analysis of the data, risks and trends, and there are good multi-agency plans to reduce the figure further, including skills training for driving, cycling, walking, and riding, and promoting road safety. Data indicate that this action is having a positive impact. Children and young people in residential and foster care reported feeling safe.

17. Local multi-agency public protection arrangements protocols are in place and the appointment of the Assistant Chief Probation Officer as deputy chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board has strengthened links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Local Strategic Partnership Board. Considerable effort is being made to work with all of the community to keep children safe. Strong links have been developed with some local Madressahs and good written guidance is published describing arrangements for recruitment and the safe supervision of young people. A coordinator oversees these arrangements and continues to develop relationships with the Madressahs.

18. The Local Safeguarding Children Board is supported well by all local agencies and has good representation at an appropriate level of seniority. Its capacity has been enhanced with the recent appointment of a safeguarding manager. The Board is yet to demonstrate how it will meet the more challenging and strategic agenda of overseeing the safety and welfare of all children in the area. For example, the child death protocols and work on sharing best practice for safeguarding protocols are currently ongoing. A wide



range of training is available to practitioners and organisations through the Board. This includes a challenging e-learning package that has been accessed by more than 440 people, of whom most achieved a pass rate.

19. In recent years, fewer children have been placed on the child protection register than in similar councils, although the rate has risen to be more in line with national and statistical neighbours since 2004. Children requiring immediate protection receive prompt action to safeguard them. Performance on re-registration of children and conducting reviews on time is very good. The majority of registrations reflect concerns about neglect. All children on the child protection register are allocated to a qualified social worker. More children have a detailed core assessment of their needs compared to other areas and good performance is achieved in meeting national timescales. Good work has been done to pilot the common assessment framework that has resulted in agencies other than social care taking lead professional responsibility for coordinating services. However, there remains a degree of uncertainty amongst some professionals regarding thresholds for social work intervention and the response and coordination of services for children in need outside of the formal safeguarding arrangements for child protection enquiries and registration. One duty and assessment team established in October 2006 provides a service to the whole of Kirklees and is now a consistent point of contact and consultation for other professionals.

20. Initial child protection conferences are routinely attended by parents and carers, and where appropriate young people. Delays occur in getting minutes of conferences circulated. The average time is 20 days, although longer delays of up to 44 days have been noted. Less than a third of initial conferences identify a named key worker, although a team manager does attend the conference and children are allocated a qualified social worker by the time of the first core group. The core groups are well supported by relevant agencies and professionals. Some very good examples of joint agency work were observed during the inspection.

21. Fewer children become looked after in Kirklees compared to other areas. A good parenting support strategy is in place reflecting a wide range of effective services for younger children that provide help with practical support and assessment. These include two referral-based family centres, children's centres, and a family support unit, providing short-term intensive support from six weeks to six months. Parents and families highly value these services. Practitioners use them effectively to promote safety and prevent the need for children to be looked after.

22. Good outcomes are being achieved for children where information is shared clearly. Interagency working is purposeful and guided by clear assessments and plans and there is secure cooperation between families and practitioners. There is, however, inconsistency in the quality of some assessments, in analysing the nature of risk and need, and the capacity of parents and carers to meet children's needs. Work with older, hard to reach

children or obstructive parents is not always sufficiently assertive to ensure improved outcomes.

23. A good range of initiatives has been developed to combat bullying. These include: the recruitment of a project manager to improve racist incident recording; piloting the sentinel database to improve recording; producing practical guidance for schools; a week-long anti-bullying awareness conference and training in some secondary schools. There is no doubt that the partnership is committed to resolving concerns, but the coordination of strategies and evaluation of data on bullying is underdeveloped. A few children feel that the response to reports of bullying is not sufficiently robust; this includes the action taken in some schools. A few young people report concerns about their safety within the community from other young people. A youth offending team worker seconded to the anti-social behaviour unit has worked effectively with the police and young people to tackle anti-social behaviour and prevent escalation through more formal measures, including Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). Police community support officers have also worked well on other community initiatives designed to reduce fear of crime. These are having a positive effect on the incidence of crime in local areas.

24. There is effective action to support children who experience domestic violence. The police have a good information system for alerting the child and public protection unit regarding children living in households where officers are investigating incidents of assault, which is good practice. These notifications are scrutinised by the child and public protection unit to determine whether a referral is required for social work intervention and support. Discussions are taking place between West Yorkshire Police and the Council to rationalise and streamline this process.

25. An excellent project operated by Barnardos provides a dedicated service aimed at children and young people who go missing. Some of these children are at specific risk of adult sexual exploitation. In addition to providing direct support to individual children there is proactive work undertaken with other practitioners and carers working with vulnerable children to make them aware of the service. There are clear procedures for identifying children missing from education. A health worker has specific responsibilities for working with homeless or transient families.

<b>Major strengths</b>	<b>Important weaknesses</b>
<p>Excellent targeted support to vulnerable young people through the missing children project.</p> <p>Good multi-agency involvement in core group work.</p> <p>A good range of initiatives to combat bullying.</p>	<p>Long delays in circulating child protection conference minutes.</p> <p>Inconsistent quality of assessments and plans.</p>

<p>Positive work with Madressahs in developing education packs for safeguarding practice.</p> <p>Strong support for the safeguarding agenda from key senior people.</p> <p>Improved capacity through appointment of a Local Safeguarding Children Board safeguarding manager.</p> <p>Effective work with children in relation to domestic violence.</p> <p>Good access to safeguarding training including an effective e-learning package.</p>	
--	--

## Looked after children and young people



26. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is good.** Children who are looked after live in safe, secure placements and are supported by well-trained staff; all have a qualified social worker. There is a clear policy on the frequency of social worker contact with children, which exceeds statutory requirements, particularly for newly placed children and those requiring additional support in placement. The frequency with which children are seen alone is monitored. A co-located looked after children team has been established, which includes health, education, social care and voluntary sector (Barnardos) staff. Children have effective care plans with good multi-agency support packages, and contact between children and their families is positively promoted and supported. A high proportion of children live in foster or adoptive placements. The comprehensive accommodation strategy prioritises good quality in-house family placement and has been well resourced by the council, for example by supporting enhanced skills and qualifications payments to carers, investment in a new residential unit and in adoption support services. Residential units have been upgraded and there is a pilot assessment foster carer scheme, which has been extended and is now fully operational. Because of the clear fostering marketing strategy the range and number of carers has increased and retention rates improved, resulting in an overall increase of 28 new foster placements between 2005 and 2007. The current priority is the recruitment of suitable carers for young people, including those with complex needs, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An effective placement panel is

actively managing the significant number of children in purchased placements. There is a good adoption service and a recently established adoption support team.

27. Dedicated health professionals support carers and work in innovative flexible ways with children; they prioritise good health outcomes for looked after children. Completion of health assessments is higher than the national average, which is good. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services prioritise looked after children with agreed target waiting times. The priority has been on consultancy and training for staff and carers to enable them to work with the young people in their care, with dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services workers linked to residential units, the looked after children and young people team and family placements. There is also good assessment and therapeutic work with individual young people.

28. Independent reviewing officers play an active quality assurance role in regular reviews of care plans. There are strong processes in place for problem resolution for specific issues arising from reviews and independent reviewing officers liaise with team managers around any identified areas for improvement. However, there are delays in distributing completed review minutes. Independent reviewing officers do not currently chair Pathway Plan reviews for the small number of 'relevant' care leavers under 18 years (those who have been discharged or left care between 16 and 18 years, but for whom the council still has the responsibility to provide support), so there is no independent chair of reviews for this group. Children are increasingly encouraged to participate in their planning and review meetings. The percentage of those participating has substantially increased since 2006 from 66% to 86%, although the participation rate remains slightly lower than the average for all councils. Children have been involved in the Blueprint in Practice pilot designed to improve the quality of participation of children in reviews of care plans. The achievements of children are positively celebrated in a well-attended and supported annual award ceremony. There is a similar successful celebration of care leavers' achievements. There is a productive partnership with the University of Huddersfield. The Aim Higher project has involved a small group of Kirklees care leavers in addressing the barriers for looked after children in accessing higher education. Young people have benefited greatly from this partnership with some going on to further study, including degree level. Looked after children are well supported to access leisure opportunities and the council's evaluation demonstrates a good take-up of the free leisure pass scheme by children, young people and their carers. Equipment to enable participation in a wide range of activities such as photography and judo is available on loan.

29. The annual performance assessment in 2006 identified that outcomes for looked after children were hampered by below average school attendance, high levels of final warnings, reprimands and convictions and low participation in reviews. Prompt action to improve these areas has taken place. The attendance and attainment of looked after children are being successfully addressed at a

number of levels including targeted individual support packages coordinated through the education support team. An increasingly higher proportion of looked after children achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\*–C compared to the national average, and school attendance has improved and is now adequate.

30. The council has entered into a successful partnership with the voluntary sector through the 'STALD' (success through art and literacy development) project which works closely with education support team to provide additional support to identified young people. The education support team are now responsible for coordination and completion of personal education plans to ensure that individual performance targets are agreed and met. Progress is being actively monitored through the strategy group for the education of looked after children. All schools have trained designated teachers, although support to looked after children from individual schools is variable.

31. Care leavers are positive about the support and services they receive and over 90% are in employment, education and training, which is very good. They live in safe, supported and affordable accommodation, although waiting times for accommodation are lengthening and choice of location is becoming increasingly limited. All have allocated social workers and pathway advisors appropriate to their status and need. Almost all care leavers have pathway plans and the council is actively ensuring plans are in place. There is a good range of additional support such as parenting groups and activity programmes and there is an explicit financial support policy, which links enhanced benefits to the achievement of pathway plan targets.

32. Although the number of looked after young people in Kirklees is low, too high a percentage are entering the criminal justice system. In order to address this, residential staff and foster carers have been trained in a 'restorative justice' approach which supports the management of challenging behaviour and bullying. This is having a positive impact and the number of offenders is reducing. The children's rights service, VOYAGE, provides a good range of support for looked after children. The service is currently provided in-house, and the council is preparing a service specification for tender which will create an independent and better evaluated service. VOYAGE works closely with the complaints service, which is well managed and effective in achieving resolutions.

33. The understanding of the roles and responsibilities of corporate parenting is good within children's services, but it is not yet fully embedded across all partners. Good action has been taken to raise awareness of corporate parenting, including training for council members. There is a strong commitment and lead for looked after children from the lead member and the Director of Children's Services, for example through the well-established apprenticeship and employment scheme for care leavers. A Corporate Parenting Panel, which includes representation from young people, has recently been established.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Effective interagency working to ensure good quality care plans and effective support for placements.</p> <p>Good quality placements and strong accommodation strategy.</p> <p>Very good physical health outcomes.</p> <p>Good support for care leavers resulting in high numbers in education, employment and training and the provision of safe and supported accommodation.</p> <p>The good action taken to address areas identified for improvement in the 2006 annual performance assessment.</p>	<p>Final warnings, reprimands and convictions of looked after children are higher than in similar councils.</p> <p>The delays in completion of minutes and the lack of an independent chair for a small number of 'relevant' care leaver reviews.</p>

## Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



34. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.** Increasing good interagency work is improving early identification, information sharing and assessment of children's needs. This has led to the provision of a good range of packages of care, support and education for most children and families.

35. Progress in developing the inclusion agenda locally has been good, with 83% of children with statements of special educational need placed in mainstream schools. The number of new statements has reduced and significant progress has been made in improving the percentage of statements produced within 18 weeks, although performance remains slightly lower than national and comparator averages. Overall, Ofsted school inspections judge that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in mainstream primary and special schools and satisfactory progress in mainstream secondary schools.

36. There have been no permanent exclusions from special schools since 2004–05, but the rate of fixed-term exclusions of more than one day in special schools remains higher than that found nationally. Good work between schools and the council to monitor and analyse behaviour and exclusion data in special schools indicates that there has been a significant reduction of 56% in the number of days lost

37. Children in early years and primary settings receive good support in relation to their special educational needs. Good use is made of behaviour support services, including specialist outreach services. Parents and teachers speak highly of the multi-agency Butterfly service, which offers support and advice on the management of children's emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

38. All schools have access to good advice and targeted support in order for them to meet children's individual needs. Special educational needs coordinators are able to draw on good specialist advice and support when they need it; they have access to specialist, targeted training and share good practice. This is having a positive impact in improving the range of strategies used with pupils and improving pupils' levels of achievement. There is effective joint work with the Portage service, behaviour support, learning mentors and in particular the learning disability nursing service and services for children with sensory impairment. Some schools express concern regarding a lack of capacity within the speech and language service that is leading to entitlements not being met. However, recent work to target services better towards those most in need has been seen as a positive step by schools.

39. Eighteen percent of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend work-based learning programmes, which is higher than the national average. Overall success rates are good at 62% compared to 53% nationally. While provision pre-16 is good and sufficient to meet the needs of young people, provision post-16 is less well developed, particularly for the hearing and visually impaired and those on the autistic spectrum. The council and its partners have identified post-16 opportunities for young people with severe/complex needs as a priority. The Learning and Skills Council has increased additional learning support funding for the area. Overall, young people have some choice, for example, two special schools have post-16 provision and local colleges run specific courses tailored to young people's needs. Connexions, college staff and residential care staff all support young people well in making the transition. However, special schools are not formally represented on the 14–19 Strategy Board and links between special schools and further education colleges are insufficiently developed within the collegiate.

40. Transitions at all educational stages are strong. Inclusion support teams, such as the Butterfly Project provide good support. There is good communication between agencies to ensure transitions go smoothly, for example between residential staff and special schools. Good transitional planning is in place within social care, with over 90% of young people having a

transition plan to support the move to adult services. Joint protocols are in place and agencies work well together to ensure children and young people get the support they need.

41. The Parent Partnership service is highly valued by parents and carers; it provides good support regarding special educational need processes and helps resolve disputes before they escalate. The service has played a significant role in reducing the number of cases that go to tribunals. Despite significant progress in improving the speed of producing statements, a few parents seen during the inspection report concerns regarding delays in statementing and lack of services for children on the autistic spectrum across the borough. The council is currently undertaking a full review of the special educational needs service. Good efforts are made to engage a range of stakeholders in the review, including young people, parents, carers, the voluntary sector and schools.

42. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are safeguarded well. There is good compliance with national minimum standards for residential care. An area-wide social work service for children with disabilities is in place and provides a clear focus for assessing the needs of children and families as well as managing more complex cases. The recruitment of additional experienced and skilled staff has made a marked contribution to the continuing improvement of the quality of service provided. There is now a greater focus on holistic care planning and the need to remain involved with some families over a sustained period to ensure they receive effective support. Better use is also being made of children in need plans. A dedicated reviewing officer for children in need has been in place since October 2006 and this has improved focus and progress on children's individual plans. Good efforts are being made to bring together child in need reviews and the annual special educational needs review. There is effective joint work with key health agencies, in particular the learning disability nurses.

43. Agencies work well to identify children at an early stage and to ensure that there are agreed pathways to achieving a range of packages of healthcare, support and education. Two multi-agency panels are well established and their work is impacting well; agencies now regularly share information, plan interventions, and critically review and monitor progress on agreed actions. The work of the panels also contributes to the mapping of services and the implementation of the lead professional arrangements. Multi-agency co-located teams are not in place but there is effective multi-agency work. A clear vision is developing for services, which includes coordinated joint assessments through the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework, information sharing systems and reduced duplication of efforts.

44. Families have good access to a wide range of packages of care and support, including residential and family-based short breaks, as well as longer term care for young people. Parents who use short breaks find them invaluable. Carers' assessments are being done and good use is made of direct payments to enable families to access flexible packages of care. The young people's



activity team provides good access to a range of activities for children with complex needs. The young people's service provision, Project D, is excellent and includes opportunities to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and a regional disability games event. The Dare 2 be Different project involved a small group of young people, several with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, working with and travelling to a school in India. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have a good range of opportunities to contribute to decision making in schools and other settings. Good efforts are made to involve them in reviews and plans. Their involvement in service planning is developing as their views are increasingly being sought. Some children are not able to access after school activities due to the timing of transport at the end of the school day.

<b>Major strengths</b>	<b>Important weaknesses</b>
<p>Interagency work to identify and meet children's needs early.</p> <p>Good progress on the inclusion strategy resulting in higher than national average numbers of children being educated in mainstream schools.</p> <p>Good progress made by many pupils in mainstream primary and special schools.</p> <p>The good support received by parents through the work of the Parent Partnership service and the family liaison officer based in a special school.</p> <p>The work of the young people's activity team to ensure that children have access to a range of activities outside school.</p> <p>Work to enable young people to contribute to their plans and reviews.</p> <p>Opportunities for young people to participate in activities through the young people's service.</p> <p>Good compliance with national minimum standards for residential care.</p>	<p>The high rates of fixed-term exclusions from special schools.</p> <p>The waiting times for specialist autism assessments via the specialist diagnostic team and access to services for this group of children and young people.</p> <p>The range of provision post-16 for young people with complex needs.</p>

## Other issues identified for further investigation

### **The impact of local services on reducing inequalities in the outcomes of children and young people with south Asian heritage, particularly those with Pakistani heritage**

45. **The impact of local services on reducing inequalities in the outcomes of children and young people with south Asian heritage, particularly those with Pakistani heritage, is adequate.** The council and partners have intensified efforts to identify needs and improve outcomes for this group of children and young people since the annual performance assessment in 2006. Many complex factors impact on outcomes for this group of young people. Issues such as regional heritage, socio-economic deprivation and cultural and religious practices all need to be taken into account when assessing work with families to improve life chances. For Muslim children and young people, recent events such as the Iraq war and the emerging links between their local community and the London bombings have led to an increased sense of isolation and a questioning of identity.

46. All agencies have a high level of awareness and commitment to the provision of culturally sensitive services and there are examples of good working relationships within and between agencies in developing them. However, there is no strategic approach to identifying the specific health needs of children and young people with south Asian heritage. Data collection and analysis on the use of health provision is insufficiently developed. Consequently, there is a limited basis from which to draw reliable conclusions about the relative benefits that children and young people obtain from health services. In response to this, the new jointly appointed Director of Public Health is leading a comprehensive review of data collection and analysis systems across health and council services to underpin a strategic assessment of the needs of all children in the borough.

47. The need to expand and develop Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services at all levels in order to promote the mental health and well-being of all children and young people, and to gain a better understanding of culture-specific issues, is recognised by commissioners and providers. Work is currently underway to take this programme forward. Capacity has improved because of the appointment of specialist primary mental healthcare workers to work within and between the newly forming localities. These staff work with children and young people and support primary healthcare and other staff in community settings, including nurseries and schools.

48. Good examples of responsive and culturally sensitive provision include a range of well targeted services to support south Asian women. These include specialist midwives, breastfeeding coordinators, and learning environments provided at the Elina Centre and in community centres. There is widespread provision and promotion of culturally appropriate healthy diets, through a range

of initiatives including the Healthy Schools and Healthy Choice schemes. Extensive work is being carried out to better understand and address the multiple contributory factors in high infant mortality rates and a higher than average statistical incidence of children and young people with learning and physical disabilities. There is developing and good support to parents of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Through the work of the family link worker based in Fairfield special school, parents have been supported to better engage with services and to take a more active role in their children's progress. The take-up of overnight short break care is low amongst these families, but the service works well to ensure that their preferred option of day care is available.

49. Translation services are widely available across all services. Interpreting services are provided both by dedicated in-house staff and through the Kirklees community language service. However, the availability of interpreter services, particularly in health services, is not always adequate to meet demand when needed at short notice and in out-of-hours provision. On occasions, this leads to the inappropriate use of family members and of interpreters from within the service user's own community.

50. The achievement gap between Pakistani and south Asian and white pupils at age 16 is narrowing. A very high proportion of Pakistani pupils at all key stages have English as an additional language; for example at Key Stage 2, 97% of pupils have English as an additional language compared to 12% nationally. There are also more Pakistani pupils with diagnosed special educational needs and more in receipt of free school meals than found nationally. Overall, Pakistani pupils, particularly boys, underachieve compared to most other pupil groups at Foundation Stage, and Key Stages 1, 2, and 3. Fewer pupils gain five GCSE passes at grades A\*–C than the national average for this group. However, more pupils gain one or more GCSEs A\*–G than the national average. The different regional heritage of the Pakistani population manifests itself in attainment differences between groups of pupils within this proportionately large ethnic group. The lower engagement of Pakistani parents in their children's education, although improving, is also a contributory factor to outcomes, as is some requests for long absences. The picture is complex and mixed. For example, at one primary school visited, 70% of pupils are of Pakistani origin and they are achieving well. At one secondary school visited Pakistani pupils achieve better outcomes than their white peers. There is evidence to support adequate progress in narrowing the gap, such as in mathematics at Key Stage 1, and all core subjects at Key Stage 2, where improvement can be seen. South Asian pupils are well represented on the gifted and talented programme and their achievement is good. Six secondary schools have been involved in the minority ethnic achievement project, which is proving to be beneficial. The project has raised the awareness of teaching staff of the needs of Pakistani pupils and increased understanding on how to apply strategies for developing language and literacy across the curriculum. These schools have been able to fine tune the identification of underachieving groups, in terms of gender and subjects. However, specific strategies to improve the

performance of underachieving Black and minority ethnic groups are not yet sufficiently developed.

51. The take-up of funded nursery education places at the age of three is low, but improves dramatically at age four. This means that many children start school with low levels of exposure to English, which impacts on their progress and early assessment. Pupil attendance and behaviour is good, and teachers report that most have a good level of respect for others. Permanent and fixed-term exclusions for this group of pupils are low. Projects such as the Twinning Project and the Kirklees Inter-Faith project promote social cohesion and diversity by enabling children of different ethnicity to learn about each other's religious and cultural backgrounds. South Asian young people are actively involved in decisions which affect their lives. They make a good contribution to school councils and youth forums and effectively broker the views of children and young people.

52. The council provides good support for Madressahs. A development officer provides good advice, guidance, training on child protection, health and safety, teaching, and learning. Communications between Madressahs and schools is improving but links with some are limited. A summer programme of revision and literacy support was launched in 2006 with a few Madressahs. Parents are becoming more actively involved in supporting their children's education. However, extended leave requests from some parents during term time often impedes the progress of pupils.

53. The number of young people of south Asian heritage who are not in education, employment or training is low and participation rates in education and training are good, particularly in colleges. Post-16 achievement is improving, particularly at levels 1 and 2. Most learners taking GCE AS and A2 at sixth form colleges and some school sixth forms make good progress and achieve their potential. The numbers of young people applying for higher education places are in line with the proportions in the community. The take-up of apprenticeships is low, however for those who do enter success rates are good. Good use is made of transformation funds in early years which enable families to access level 3 qualifications and foundation degrees.

54. Despite much good work, the young people's service (13–19) has no clear strategy on how to engage with hard to reach minority ethnic groups. Targeted youth work within the Pakistani community is often reliant on external funding and consequently there is some uncertainty regarding its continuity. There is a reluctance on the part of some young people to engage in community activities when participants are drawn from different ethnic backgrounds. Although the council is doing much to promote social cohesion, racial abuse is sometimes directed at families and young people.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>High level of awareness, sensitivity and commitment across the council and partners in ensuring issues are dealt with appropriately.</p> <p>Well targeted services to support south Asian women.</p> <p>Widespread provision and promotion of culturally appropriate healthy diets.</p> <p>A narrowing achievement gap between Pakistani and south Asian and white pupils at age 16.</p> <p>Good representation of Pakistani and south Asian pupils on the gifted and talented programme and high levels of achievement.</p> <p>Good pupil attendance and behaviour and low levels of permanent and fixed-term exclusions.</p> <p>Good projects directed at improving community cohesion.</p> <p>High participation rates in education and training.</p>	<p>Data collection and analysis of ethnicity within health services.</p> <p>The availability and appropriate use of interpreter services within health services.</p> <p>Lack of a specific strategy to improve standards for underachieving Black and minority ethnic groups.</p> <p>Low take-up of funded nursery education places at age three.</p> <p>Lack of a clear strategy to enable the young people's service to engage with hard to reach minority ethnic groups.</p>

55. **The contribution of local services to narrowing the gap between the performance of the most effective and least effective schools is adequate.** There are some good and improving features. Education outcomes in Kirklees are broadly satisfactory when compared to national figures, except in Key Stage 1 where standards are good and have been consistently better than national averages and in similar authorities in recent years. In the Foundation Stage, the 2006 profile shows a decline in performance from previous years, and learning is now on track to meet national targets for 2007. Performance is mixed in each of the core subjects at Key Stage 2, although year on year improvements are emerging, especially in English and mathematics. The most recent 2006 results place the Council in line with the national average in both subjects. At Key Stage 3, results have been mostly better than in similar authorities in recent years. Likewise, at Key Stage 4, GCSE scores generally compare well with similar authorities, but not against national figures. Within the pupil population, some of the more vulnerable groups of young people perform less well, notably Black Caribbean pupils and Pakistani boys.

56. Schools' performance, as judged by Ofsted inspections, has varied over recent years. While the range in performance of schools remains varied, the council has been particularly successful in reducing the number of weaker schools designated by Ofsted to be in a category of concern. Since January 2003, the proportion of schools in Kirklees requiring special measures has been higher than national averages and similar authorities. However, over the past two years, eight schools have been removed from special measures and three from notices to improve. Currently, three schools require special measures and two schools have notices to improve; as a proportion of schools within the authority, this is better than the national and statistical neighbour averages. The council's response to schools in categories of concern is targeted and effective, wholly in line with its priority to improve educational attainment and strengthen leadership and management. This often involves changing a school's senior leadership team or providing mentors and coaches to secure improvement. New headteachers in schools that are in a category of concern are well supported, and headteachers spoken to during the inspection felt that they were well supported and challenged by the council. Senior school improvement officers know the schools well and bring about rapid improvement and appropriate challenge according to the specific school contexts. Preventative mechanisms are now in place to try and ensure that schools do not fall into Ofsted categories of concern in the future; collective intelligence is available to track schools' performance.

57. The council has good capacity to improve schools' performance through the combined efforts of school improvement partners, school improvement officers and National Strategy consultants. The use of school improvement partners, as the first point of contact in secondary schools, is working well. Their clear roles, focusing on standards, relate well to the work of school improvement officers who support and target specific improvements. The good availability of useable data also helps this process, for example to focus on underachievement of different ethnic groups and to track progress at different key stages. The wide range of data and analysis support available helps schools to set good targets for improvement. Good plans are also in place to develop an interactive, online service for greater flexibility and to provide better contextual locality data for schools.

58. A good range of successful practice aimed at narrowing the gaps in performance of particular groups of pupils and by schools is evident in Kirklees. For example, in the early years the strong focus on communication, language and literacy is leading to improvements in performance, and in secondary schools the strong involvement of the young people's service is supporting a good range of extended provision for young people. Sharing effective practice between schools is also a positive feature, for example the twinning project to encourage integration of different ethnic groups in primary and junior schools, the Primary Leadership Programme involving schools in different contexts, and also the work of school networks, such as the special schools' collegiate and pyramid groupings. Excellence in Cities clusters of schools share practice across key stages in the Huddersfield, Batley and Dewsbury areas. Curriculum

improvements are also targeted, such as writing from Key Stages 1 to 2, promoted and shared by National Strategy consultants and school improvement officers. However, while much good work is shared, the council's overall strategy to disseminate the best practices and enable all schools to benefit remains unclear. Too much is left to chance for the least successful schools to benefit more systematically from the effective work in other schools, notably those succeeding in similar contexts, for example where Pakistani boys are achieving well compared to other pupil groups.

59. Managing pupils' attendance and behaviour in schools is a high priority in support of efforts to raise standards. Attendance figures for the council were lower in 2006 than in the previous year, but better than those in similar authorities and national figures. The combined efforts of schools and consultants continue to be devoted to improving attendance in all schools, for example to prevent excess absence caused by extended holidays. Reducing exclusions from Kirklees schools represents an improving picture for the council. Permanent exclusions are generally low but, until recently, exclusions of pupils for a fixed period were high when compared to national figures. Collective efforts by schools and the council have led to recent reductions in days for fixed-term exclusions, which represent a welcome improvement, as does the significant increase in the proportion of excluded pupils who receive 20 or more hours of alternative education. The successful Revolving Doors programme, which helps to reintegrate Key Stage 3 pupils back into mainstream schools, and the forthcoming programme to help non-Excellence in Cities schools to reduce exclusions, emphasise the council's drive to keep children and young people in school.

60. As children and young people move from one school to another in Kirklees, much is done to minimise any disruption to their educational progress. Schools generally work well together to prepare pupils for change, for example by arranging common transition days. These efforts, however, are not helped by the wide variety of school types and age ranges in the council. Also, reducing gaps in performance between schools, even in similar contexts, is not helped by the inconsistent quality and timeliness of some support services for the most vulnerable children and young people, for example effective support to raise standards for Black and ethnic minority pupils and those who require the involvement of children's social care.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Attainment and progress at Key Stage 1.</p> <p>The reduction in numbers of schools in Ofsted categories of concern.</p> <p>A strong focus on raising standards and improving leadership and management in all schools. Clear and</p>	<p>The systematic approach to identifying and sharing effective practice for the benefit of all schools, most notably the least successful.</p> <p>The consistency and timeliness of support services provided for vulnerable pupils in schools.</p>

<p>effective approaches to school improvement, supported by good data.</p> <p>Significant reductions in days of fixed-term exclusions and better provision of alternative education for those excluded.</p>	
---	--

## Service management



## Capacity to improve



61. **The management of services for children and young people is good. Capacity to improve further is good.** The vision for children and young people set out by the partners, their prioritisation of the necessary actions and their capacity to carry them out are all good. Performance management, based on a culture of openness and willingness to learn, is excellent. The partners are building on their existing strengths and have shown a determination to tackle areas of weakness. The annual performance assessment of 2006, which covered universal services, identified clear vision and direction, strong leadership and management, a good Children and Young People's Plan, performance management and change management as key strengths, and this review concurs. The core lines of enquiry investigated during the joint area review, relating to vulnerable groups, have been judged good. Adequate progress has been made in terms of the two additional lines of enquiry, both of which stemmed from weaknesses within the annual performance assessment of 2006. This indicates a positive direction of travel and effective change in terms of improving outcomes for children and young people.

62. Ambition is good. There is no doubt about the importance for the council and its partners of improving outcomes for children and young people. It is one of four headline themes in a revamped community strategy and in the local area agreement. A new council administration from last year preserved the strong political commitment to this agenda, based on a cross-party consensus.



This is critical given the persistent state of no overall control of the council by any one political party.

63. The Children and Young People's Plan sets out challenging ambitions, strong statements of principle and a clear value base, which includes tackling inequalities and racism. It makes clear how each of the five outcomes from Every Child Matters will be addressed. The complementary delivery plan for the local area agreement identifies the contributions of different partners and, in broad terms, the resources to deliver them. The original underpinning analysis of need was adequate but lacked more in-depth analysis, particularly of cross-cutting themes. The council and its partners recognise this and work is under way on a joint strategic needs analysis, led by the Director of Public Health, in order to provide more robust, locally based data. Children and young people were strongly engaged in drawing up the plan, through a wide range of activities and events. A comprehensive programme continues to promote their engagement in local democratic processes and in service design, development and delivery. The broad ambitions of the partnership have been promoted well and are shared among staff across the partner organisations, including schools.

64. Prioritisation to improve the outcomes for children and young people is good. Children and young people's involvement in setting priorities made a difference, noticeably through the inclusion of an emphasis on bullying and improving play and recreation opportunities. Priorities pay due attention to issues of equality, diversity and community cohesion. The partnership sensibly reviewed and refined priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan early on to get a sharper focus. The precise articulation of priorities within different plans for children and young people, however, is not always consistent, though this is often explained by the timescales for each element.

65. A clear hierarchy of plans is in place and staff know what is expected of them. The key areas for improvement are reflected in plans across the partnership. Beneath service performance plans, team improvement plans provide a good focus on tackling areas for improvement within each team. However, links between the Children and Young People's Plan and these wider planning processes are occasionally not explicit enough.

66. Resources are well directed to priorities, for example through the corporate improvement programme to support and challenge schools in Ofsted categories and to improve exclusion rates. A good emphasis on developing preventative services underpins the partnership's strategic approach. It is reflected in a robust parenting strategy and play strategy. The council is prepared to take difficult decisions, for example successfully carrying through a reorganisation of special schools and recently restructuring early years provision.

67. Capacity to achieve priorities is good. The partners have set up a solid structural framework to deliver the major change agenda in children's services, based on a Local Public Service Board. Membership of the Board has been

reviewed and enhanced to good effect. Decision making is businesslike and pays due attention to risk. The joint appointment of a Director of Public Health by the council and the Primary Care Trust helps to ensure a coordinated focus on health issues in mainstream delivery. Significant structural changes to form the new children and young people's service have been handled well. Overall, the partners are well placed to move towards Children's Trust arrangements.

68. Partnership working at the strategic level is good. The voluntary sector is involved well in developing plans and strategies, though some smaller organisations feel more marginalised. On the ground, multi-agency working is becoming well-established in centres such as the Chestnut Centre in Huddersfield. A transparent and strategic commissioning system is, however, not yet in place, with grants and contracts to voluntary organisations often awarded on an ad hoc and historical basis. Joint commissioning is also relatively underdeveloped. A draft framework has been agreed, which does not go much beyond setting out general principles and roles, but does usefully identify particular areas in which to pilot the new approaches.

69. Financial management is prudent and efficient; it is conducted within the framework of a robust medium-term financial strategy. Budgets are well controlled, including those that are demand-led, relating to pupil placements. Value for money is good. In broad terms, outcomes are satisfactory or good, at average or lower than average costs. The council shows an increasingly strong focus on value for money and is well aware of how its spending patterns compare with others. Several policy decisions have deliberately led to improved value for money, for example placing pupils with complex needs locally instead of externally and reducing places in children's residential units. In both of these examples, improved outcomes for children are being achieved at reduced cost. However, too many schools and too many surplus places mean that good value for money is not being achieved through efficient school organisation.

70. The council is working well to address the recruitment and retention of key workers. For example, the successful recruitment of social workers is reducing the use of more expensive agency staff. The council has made very good progress in setting up arrangements for a single status for all employees. Joint workforce planning is, however, relatively underdeveloped. A draft strategy, based on a satisfactory first analysis of workforce data, is the subject of consultation. It identifies the key priorities for the partnership, if it is to move to a more integrated workforce, but responsibilities and timescales for delivery are not yet determined.

71. Performance management is good, with some very strong features. It has led directly to improved outcomes for children and young people. For both the children and young people's service and the wider partnership, it is now based on a very good framework, *Performance excellence across Kirklees*, which has been phased in over the past 18 months and has improved and streamlined the previous system. Staff work within a culture which continually emphasises performance, even though the framework itself is yet to be fully embedded.

Councillors, officers and partners keep track of progress through good quality performance information and regular monitoring each quarter on an exception basis. Performance management is well integrated with financial management and risk management.

72. Scrutiny is very well organised and supported and carries weight within the council. It has made a strong impact through its work, for example on academies, where it had a significant influence on the approach of the council. The partners display a culture of openness and willingness to learn from others. Policy development is underpinned by careful benchmarking of performance and costs.

73. The council and its partners use performance management well to improve areas of weakness. For example, the council introduced significant changes to ensure it kept the services of good quality foster carers. The Corporate Improvement Programme is a particularly powerful vehicle for focusing corporate effort and resources on areas of underperformance. This played an important part in the successful removal of a number of schools from Ofsted categories of concern over the past two years. The council has improved its processes for learning from complaints. The conduct of education appeals has been overhauled, for example, following complaints from appellants.

74. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve further is good. Improvements have already been made in key areas, relating, for example, to educational attainment. The leadership provided by the Director, lead member and senior officers is dynamic, effective and well respected. Service and financial planning is good. The partners understand the complex challenges the area faces and are open to learning from each other and from outside. Performance management is strong and the focus on value for money increasingly so.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Involvement of children and young people in developing plans and priorities.</p> <p>Good financial management.</p> <p>Strong leadership from officers and members.</p> <p>Good performance management.</p>	<p>Linkages between the Children and Young People's Plan and other plans are not always explicit enough.</p> <p>Lack of transparent strategic commissioning system.</p>

## Annex A

### MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN KIRKLEES

#### Summary

Areas for judgement	Grade awarded
The contribution of the local authority's children's services in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	3
The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people	4

Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council delivers good services overall for children and young people and has excellent capacity for improvement. The Director of Children's Services has provided strong leadership and increased the momentum of change. She has established quickly a team approach to the delivery of improvement and this has already begun to have a positive impact. However, some aspects of education provision remain variable. The Children and Young People's Plan identifies clearly the council's commitment, ambition and priorities for improving the lives of children, young people and families in Kirklees. The Plan acknowledges strengths and weaknesses and has identified clear service principles, which are already delivering improved outcomes for children and young people. Routinely, the Local Public Service Board has involved children, young people and their parents in identifying what needs to be done and in the development of services.

The full annual performance assessment can be found at:

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=64208&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa\\_2006\\_382.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=64208&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa_2006_382.pdf)

## Annex B

### CORPORATE ASSESSMENT ACHIEVEMENT – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Outcomes for children and young people in Kirklees are generally good. The council is committed to improving the health and welfare of children and young people; most national targets are met and some are exceeded. Health outcomes for looked after children are very good. However, there are some poor health outcomes for children living in the north of the borough. Children and young people are effectively safeguarded. Overall education outcomes are adequate. Standards of attainment are in line with similar areas and evidence indicates an improving picture. However, achievement gaps remain for some Black and minority ethnic groups such as Pakistani boys.
2. Service management in Kirklees is good. At the time of the annual performance assessment of 2006, the Director for Children and Young People had just been appointed. She has effectively managed to maintain performance throughout a period of extensive change within the new service. A strong management team is now established. There is a clear corporate and partnership ambition to improve outcomes for children and young people. The thorough review of the Children and Young People's Plan has enabled the council to assess progress and priorities accurately. The council demonstrates a strong focus on value for money. Performance management is good and well integrated with both financial and risk management. An excellent scrutiny function has made a strong impact, for example, in the recent work to improve outcomes for looked after children.
3. The November 2006 annual performance assessment judged the combined work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people to be good and improving. The joint area review found that the promotion of health outcomes for looked after children is very good. They receive a priority service from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. A dedicated team of learning difficulties and/or disabilities nurses provide good support to children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across a range of settings such as special schools, children's homes and through the youth offending team. However, there are some health inequalities across the borough, for example the high rate of infant mortality and the high level of dental decay found in North Kirklees.
4. Children and young people appear safe and arrangements to ensure this are good in Kirklees. Looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported with good attention to need. There is strong support for the safeguarding agenda from key senior management and councillors. Kirklees has improved capacity for managing safeguarding through the appointment of a Local Safeguarding Children Board safeguarding manager and proactive recruitment of experienced practitioners. Staff across the

agencies have access to good quality training in safeguarding and child protection.

5. The annual performance assessment of 2006 judged the impact of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and to achieve well as adequate. Improving educational attainment is a top priority for the council and is reflected in the successful reduction in the number of schools in categories of concern. The management team know their schools well and the support for those in categories of concern is good. Standards attained by children and young people are broadly satisfactory overall and indicate a rising trend. The overall effectiveness of most schools is at least satisfactory. Progress has been made on all key areas for improvement identified in the annual performance assessment. Effective use of wide-ranging data is targeting intervention in areas such as the attendance of looked after children. Standards at post-16 are rising; the average point score of students aged 16–18 is above that found nationally. Young people achieve well in work-based learning.

6. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good. The annual performance assessment describes frequent opportunities for consultation and participation, and the findings of the joint area review concur. There has been a notable improvement in both the number and quality of reviews attended by looked after children. There is a strong children's rights service. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to make a positive contribution, notably through the young people's service (13–18).

7. The capacity of council services to improve is good. Since the arrival of the Director for Children's Services, the momentum of change has been strong and this trend in improvement has already had an impact in some areas, for example the development of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the reduction in the number of schools in Ofsted categories of concern.

## Annex C

### 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 Kirklees 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).