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Mr Ashley Ayre  
Strategic Director: Children's Services  
Bath and North East Somerset Council  
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Dear Mr Ayre

**Children's services annual rating**

Ofsted guidance published in May 2009 explained that the annual rating would derive from a new performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the council has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant *Every Child Matters* indicators in the new National Indicator Set (NIS).

In considering the evidence in the profile to determine the children's services rating for 2009 it has become clear that the continuing gaps in the data are significant, particularly those relating to aspects of social care and services for Looked After Children. Ofsted has decided therefore to use 2009 as a transitional year easing into the full application of the new system in 2010. As a consequence, although the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's rating, we have interpreted the performance bands with flexibility and exercised professional judgement with caution.

The annual rating derives from a four point scale:

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

Within each level there will be differing standards of provision. For example, a rating of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, a rating of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects.



## Children's services rating 2009

|                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Children's services rating</b> | <b>Performs well (3)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|

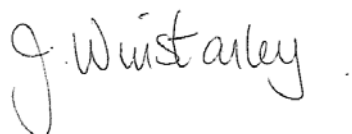
Children's services in Bath and North East Somerset Council perform well.

In the joint area review held in the summer of 2008, provision for safeguarding, for looked after children, and for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was judged to be good. The overall effectiveness of close to a large majority of inspected services and settings is good or better. However, for services providing specifically for children and young people whose circumstances make them more vulnerable the picture is not as good and the local authority's pupil referral unit is inadequate. Whilst the local authority's adoption agency is good and its fostering service outstanding, measures to identify and monitor private fostering arrangements are only adequate. However, the large majority of inspected services and settings is judged to make a good or better contribution to keeping children and young people safe and helping them to achieve educationally.

For the very large majority of performance indicators in the National Indicator Set, overall, the local authority's figures are at least in line with both the national average and the average for similar areas. For those indicators in the staying safe and enjoying and achieving groupings, the large majority of the local authority's figures are at least in line with the national average and a very large majority is at least in line with the average for similar areas. However, for all six of the indicators measuring the gap in outcomes for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable, the gap widened between the current year and the last.

The children's services rating is provided for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The rating of local authority children's services will contribute significantly to the managing performance theme of each local authority's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) organisational assessment and therefore to the score for each local authority overall.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, CAA