

1 December 2003

**Annual Review of Performance
and Star Rating 2002/2003 –
Social Services Department**

Report of Peter Kemp, Director, Social Services

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide information in relation to the Annual Review of Performance and Star Rating of the Social Services Department by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI).

Background

- 2 The Annual Review of Performance and subsequent award of Star Ratings to Social Services Departments are important elements of the Government's Performance Assessment Framework and Comprehensive Performance Assessment.
- 3 The Department's Annual Review Meeting was held 31 July 2003. The meeting was attended by the Social Services Inspector, the Council's External Auditor, Councillor Mrs Smith Cabinet Portfolio Folder for Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities and Senior Managers of the Department. Following the meeting an Annual Review of Performance Report was received from the Social Services Inspectorate.
- 4 The content of the Annual Review of Performance Report was used by the Social Services Inspectorate to determine their Star Rating. On 13 November 2003 the Social Services Inspectorate announced their Star Ratings for all Social Services Departments.
- 5 The judgements reached for Durham County Council's Social Services Department are as follows: -
 - 5.1 Services for Children
 - Serving People Well - some
 - Capacity for improvement - promising

- 5.2 Services for Adults
Serving People Well - most
Capacity for improvement - promising

- 6 The respective judgements set out above in respect of Services for Children and Adults produced combined Star Rating of 2 Stars.
- 7 The improvement from 1 Star to 2 Stars is recognition of the excellent progress made across a range of Performance Indicators and Qualitative Assessment Measures.
- 8 In their Annual Review of Performance the Social Services Inspectorate highlighted the following examples of good practice: -
- Improved performance against a key set of Performance Indicators.
 - Consistent progress in respect of the Invest to Save Strategy for Children Looked After.
 - Positive progress in the development of a Multi-Agency Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Strategy.
 - The establishment of a Children and Young People's Planning Framework within the County Durham Strategic Partnership.
 - Positive progress in the implementation of the Modernising Services to Older People Strategy.
 - Improvements in Delayed Transfers of Care (hospital discharge).
 - The growth in Direct Payments and Welfare to Work placements respectively.
 - Settlement reached on fees for Residential/Nursing Care and a framework for future negotiations.
 - A continuing commitment to involving Service Users (Children and Young People and Adults) in Service Development.
 - A corporate led programme to address race equality.
- 9 The range of Performance Indicators against which the Department was measured have improved steadily over time, in particular the numbers of People Helped To Live At Home have improved for client groups together with improvements in Unit Cost effectiveness.

Next Steps

- 10 Challenges will remain if the County Council is to maintain its 2 Stars, or indeed move to make further improvements in respect of its respective ratings for Children and Families and Adult Services. In particular, Social Services Inspectorate have highlighted the following areas for improvement: -
- 10.1 Victoria Climbié Inquiry (Laming Audit)
- The high workloads experienced by Social Workers are a priority to be addressed by the County Council.

10.2 Improved Life Chances for Children and Families

- The Social Services Inspectorate have acknowledged improved performance in the education and support of Care Leavers and have also recommended targeted work in relation to final warnings, reprimands, convictions, and absence from school.

10.3 Initial Assessments for Children and Families

- Performance is improving over time with regard to the completion of initial assessments within 7 working days. Improvements were made in the year 2002/2003 and I am pleased to inform Members that performance has risen to 38% for the first 6 months for 2003/2004.

10.4 Emergency Admissions to Hospital

- The Department must remain vigilant in terms of responding to requirements for speedy assessment and discharge from hospital. Significant progress has been achieved in adopting a whole system approach towards this area of work and the current level of delayed discharges are within the provisional targets set by the Department.

10.5 Partnership Boards

- The Social Services Inspectorate have acknowledged the innovative work pioneered by the Department in the creation of Partnership Boards for Adults/Older People, People with a Learning Disability and People with Mental Health problems. The Social Services Inspectorate will now need to see how the Partnership Working arrangements translate into improved outcomes for Service Users.

Conclusion

- 11 Elected Members are asked to note the award of the 2 Stars and the headline areas for improvement which will form part of the Department's Improvement Agenda.

Background Paper(s)

Contact: **Tel:** Peter Appleton, Head of Quality and Performance,
Ext: 3628

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance Implications regarding workloads for Social Workers.

Staffing Implications regarding workloads for Social Workers.

Equal opportunities

Accommodation

Crime and disorder

Environment

Human rights

Localities

Young people

Consultation