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17 December 2008

Ms Frankie Sulke  
Executive Director Children and Young People  
London Borough of Lewisham  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Laurence House  
1 Catford Road  
London  
SE6 4RU

Dear Ms Sulke

## **Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in the London Borough of Lewisham 2008**

This letter summarises the findings of the 2008 annual performance assessment (APA) for your council. The evaluations and judgements in the letter draw on a range of data and information which covers the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. As you know, the APA is not based on an inspection of your services and, therefore, can only provide a snapshot based on the evidence considered. As such, I am grateful to you for assuring the quality of the data provided.

Performance is judged on a four point scale as detailed in the handbook. I should emphasise that the grades awarded are based on an overall 'best fit' model. For instance, an outstanding judgement of Grade 4 reflects that overall most aspects, but not necessarily all, of the services in the area are working very well. We know that one of the features of outstanding provision is the drive for greater improvement and no council would suggest, and nor would Ofsted, that a judgement of outstanding indicates that everything is perfect. Similarly within a judgement of inadequate overall, Grade 1, there could be some aspects of the overall service that are adequate or even good. Judgements are made in a rounded way, balancing all of the evidence and giving due consideration to outcomes, local and national contexts, priorities and decision-making.



The following table sets out the grades awarded for performance in 2008.

<b>Assessment judgement area</b>	<b>APA grade</b>
Overall effectiveness of children's services	3
Being healthy	3
Staying safe	3
Enjoying and achieving	3
Making a positive contribution	4
Achieving economic well-being	4
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	4

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

## Overall effectiveness of children's services

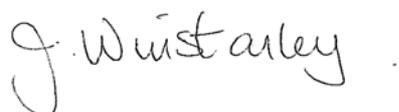
Grade 3

The London Borough of Lewisham consistently delivers good services. The council has made good progress in responding to the recommendations made in the 2007 APA and the joint area review report published in October 2007. In particular, the council has been successful in narrowing the gap for vulnerable groups. There has been good progress in taking steps to fully implement the practice audit systems within children's social care and reducing the number of social care vacancies. The council has improved its performance in enabling children and young people to stay safe, which is now good, by ensuring compliance with the practice audit, reducing the proportion of children and young people in residential care, and improving long-term stability for looked after children and young people. There is continued good performance in enabling children and young people to be healthy and to enjoy and achieve in their education. Lewisham's accelerated improvement over the past four years has outstripped the national trend at Key Stages 3 and 4 and is closing the gap with the national average at GCSE. However, continued improvements are needed in some areas to keep up with rising national standards. The council has sustained outstanding performance in enabling children and young people to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic well-being. For these reasons the council's capacity to improve is outstanding, as it was last year. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development is consistent with the evidence. There are no additional recommendations to make as a result of the APA.

The children's services grade is the performance rating for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It will also provide the score for the children and young people service block in the comprehensive performance assessment to be published by the Audit Commission.

We are grateful for the information you provided as part of this process and for the time given by you and your colleagues in preparing for the assessment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager  
Local Services Inspection

## Major strengths and important weaknesses

Major strengths	Important weaknesses and areas for development
<p><b>Being healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong focus on promoting health through well developed, community based collocated services.</li> <li>▪ Effective and comprehensive child and adolescent mental health services.</li> <li>▪ Effective integrated approach to screening for sexually transmitted diseases, resulting in improved rates of identification and treatment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Being healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High levels of teenage pregnancy above statistical neighbours.</li> <li>▪ High levels of childhood obesity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective prevention and early intervention infrastructure with strong commitment to multi-agency working.</li> <li>▪ Good and improving performance and practice in improving stability of placements for looked after children.</li> <li>▪ Effective progress made in addressing safeguarding issues identified in the Joint Area Review; in particular quality assurance of frontline practice.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High levels of children who are made subject of child protection plans for a second or subsequent time.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good achievement and particularly rapid progress for Black Caribbean boys.</li> <li>▪ Good or better overall effectiveness of most schools with a significant reduction of schools below floor targets.</li> <li>▪ Effective provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at risk of exclusion.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Below national average attainment at all key stages, in line with statistical neighbours.</li> <li>▪ High numbers of looked after children have missed 25 days of schooling, although the numbers are reducing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very effective channels for seeking the views of children and young people, and involving them in decisions that affect their lives; particularly the most vulnerable.</li> <li>▪ Good preventative multi-agency work to support young people, resulting in low levels of young people involved in the youth justice system.</li> <li>▪ Innovative community based multi-agency</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p>

<p>universal and targeted provision to engage and support young people.</p>	
<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very high numbers of young people, including young mothers and young offenders, in education, training and employment, and the trend is rising.</li> <li>▪ Strong 14–19 partnership providing a comprehensive range of opportunities and excellent information, advice and guidance for all young people.</li> <li>▪ Excellent support for looked after children, care leavers and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help them achieve independence.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Below average number of young people achieving Level 2 qualifications at age 19, although the trend is rising.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Innovative and creative leadership driving improvements in most areas.</li> <li>▪ Exceptional prioritisation with partners to successfully target key areas of need.</li> <li>▪ Significant increase in capacity through strengthening front line services and strong partnership working.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p>