

Joint area review

**London Borough of Lewisham Children's Services Authority
Area**

Review of services for children and young people

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

1. The most recent annual performance assessment (APA) for Lewisham council 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:
 - children at risk or requiring safeguarding are effectively cared for
 - those who are looked after achieve the best possible outcomes
 - those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.
3. The following investigations were also carried out:
 - the contribution of local services to the educational outcomes of Black Caribbean children and young people up to the age of 19
 - the contribution by local services to the improvement of the sexual and reproductive health of young people.

Context

4. Lewisham is an inner-London borough located in the south east of London. The population is currently 250,000 and forecasted to grow to 290,000 by 2026. Children aged 0–19 make up 25% of the borough's population and 19% are under the age of 15. Forty-three percent of residents, and 69% of the school population, are from minority ethnic groups. The largest ethnic group is Black Caribbean.
5. In general, levels of deprivation in the borough are high. Almost one third of children and young people live in workless households. Thirty-eight percent of children and young people overall live in single parent households, increasing to 60% of Black Caribbean children. Over a quarter of children in secondary and primary schools are eligible for free school meals and this increases to almost half of the children in special schools. The public sector is the largest employer in the authority, with the private sector characterised by small retail-based units. In recent years there has been the development of an artistic and creative industry in the Deptford area.
6. Education is provided by two nursery schools, 69 primary schools, 14 secondary schools, including two academies, six special schools and two pupil referral units. A further all-age academy opens in September 2007.

7. Post-16 education is provided by Crossways academy, a 16-19 school federated with four secondary schools; Hillside, comprising a federation of three secondary schools, Haberdashers' Aske's comprising two federated academies; Christ the King, a sixth form college and Lewisham College.

8. Adult education is provided by Lewisham College and Community Education Lewisham. A range of family learning is provided by these providers and by schools as part of a family learning strategy Work-based learning is provided by a mix of local and national providers.

9. Primary and community health services in Lewisham are provided by Lewisham Primary Care Trust. Acute services are provided primarily through University Hospital Lewisham but services are also commissioned from King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. Mental health services are delivered by South London and the Maudsley Mental Health Foundation Trust.

10. The local authority has a mayoral model of governance and cabinet portfolio structure. Since 2004, the borough has held elections for a young mayor and advisors. In the most recent election, voter turn-out for the young mayor was 43%. The young mayor and her advisers are consulted on council policy and have an annual budget of £25,000. Children's Trust arrangements are in place, led by the executive director of children's services.

11. Children's social care services are provided through referral and assessment teams and specialist teams for family support and intervention, looked after children, care leavers, placement and procurement, children with disabilities and fostering and adoption. Accommodation for looked after children is provided by 107 local authority foster carers, of which 20 are kinship carers. This is supplemented by a number of independent foster carers provided by private agencies. The authority does not have any residential children's homes, though it does use private providers when required.

12. There are no young offender institutions in the borough.

Main findings

13. The main findings for this joint area review are as follows:

- there are improved outcomes in many areas and good multi-agency working and information sharing across agencies. Effective partnerships and shared vision provide a seamless service to children and young people within the borough
- early and accurate identification of health, social care and learning needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps to ensure they make good progress. Services are well targeted through an effective integrated service

- services for looked after children are good, and well-focused support is helping many to progress well, with a significant number moving into further education, employment and training
- arrangements for audit in some aspects of social care are insufficiently developed and have not addressed all practice issues
- good partnership working has resulted in a reduction in the rates of teenage pregnancies
- the contribution of services in raising attainment for Black Caribbean boys is outstanding
- service management is outstanding. Strong and dynamic leadership, very good established partnership working and an excellent performance management culture ensures that the well-embedded improvement agenda is shared by all partners. The capacity of the council to improve is excellent.

Equality and diversity

14. The children's partnership and services pay strong regard to issues of equality, diversity and human rights and are effective in addressing inequality in a number of areas. Lewisham Council has been recognised nationally for its work in this area. Service planning reflects the diverse nature of the borough. In education, there has been excellent collaborative work among agencies leading to a good improvement in the attainment of boys from Black Caribbean communities. All schools have anti-bullying policies which cover racial and sexual bullying. The needs of gay and bisexual children, young people and adults are fully incorporated at all levels of service delivery. Good efforts are made to ensure that diversity permeates the partnership's approach to involving and consulting children and young people, a good example of which is the young mayor's advisory group.

Grades

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

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	2
Looked after children	3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Service management	4
Capacity to improve	4

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 all children on the child protection register are visited by social workers within expected timescales and that core group meetings are held regularly
- take action to reduce the amount of time between child protection referrals and the initial case conference.

For action over next six months:

The local partnership should:

- take steps to improve the practice audit systems within children's social care to track outcomes of recommended improvements.

Safeguarding



15. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or requiring safeguarding is adequate.** There is a strong commitment to multi-agency working, effective preventative work and good early support. However, systems for auditing practice in social care do not address all areas of practice.

16. The majority of children and young people feel safe in their schools and communities. The APA 2006 judged the council's contribution to be good, and outcomes and practice have significantly improved over the last three years. There is good performance in reducing childhood road traffic accidents, which have reduced by 57% since 1998. This includes traffic calming, education on road safety, pre-driver training for all Year 11 pupils, cycle training, a kerb craft pilot for under-fives, and funding for road safety training for hard to reach groups. The Local Safeguarding Children Board has produced an attractive leaflet for children and young people on staying safe on the streets, which is widely available in schools. There are clear and up-to-date emergency and business continuity plans. Over the last year there has been a 5% reduction, to 39%, of children and young people who are worried about bullying. All schools

have anti-bullying policies, including racial and religious bullying, and implement them well. Cyber bullying guidance is currently being developed. Schools have used a restorative justice approach to good effect and this is being extended to youth centres, colleges and children's homes. There are positive inter-agency approaches to dealing with gangs and knife crime, and staff and foster carers have received training in managing and caring for young people involved in gangs and violent crime. Youth inclusion support panels consider the needs of young people presenting risks to others and support packages are agreed. Child and adolescent mental health services provide a comprehensive service including a forensic service to high risk young people.

17. The Local Safeguarding Children Board has a strong focus on preventing and responding to domestic violence, with a project to improve the response to lower levels of domestic violence. There are clear roles and responsibilities for members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, the Board is still at an early stage in leading the safeguarding agenda within the authority. Quality assurance processes are still developing and there are no arrangements for regular audit of case work. Action plans from serious case reviews are monitored and well implemented.

18. Arrangements for the recruitment and vetting of staff are robust, and existing staff that have contact with children are subject to updated Criminal Record Bureau checks.

19. All schools and health trusts have designated child protection staff that receive regular training and take their responsibilities seriously. Policies and procedures are comprehensive, clear and well presented. Arrangements for information sharing are progressing well, with the Lewisham information sharing and assessment, (LISA) system increasingly being used. The Common Assessment Framework and the lead professional role are increasingly being used as a means of supporting children in need within universal services, so reducing the need for referral into the social care system.

20. There are clear processes for identifying privately fostered children, including awareness raising in schools. All privately fostered children have an allocated social worker. Parents, children and young people are encouraged to participate in the child protection process. An excellent parent advocacy project has succeeded in increasing parental participation to 80%. The complaints procedure for children and young people is being revised to meet the new legal requirements and includes a leaflet for children and young people on how to complain.

21. The quality of practice within children's social care has improved significantly over the last three years. Policies and procedures are clear and well understood amongst partners. Duty and assessment arrangements are well managed, with clear roles and responsibilities across teams and clear arrangements for progressing work. All children on the child protection register have an allocated qualified key worker and numbers of children on the child protection register have reduced from 38.6 per 10,000 to 35.4 per 10,000. This

is now comparable with similar authorities. Re-registration rates for 2006–07 are 10.5%, which is slightly lower than those for similar authorities at 11%. The percentage of initial assessments completed within timescales has improved rapidly from 54% in 2004–05 to 71% at the end of 2006–07, which is comparable with similar authorities, and timescales for core assessments are now 86%, which is better than similar authorities. Assessments are of good quality and child protection plans are clear and focused. Review conferences are held within timescales. Timescales for progressing from the final strategy discussion on a referral to an initial conference are poor, with too few cases meeting the national requirement of 15 days for this process to be completed. Core group meetings for children on the child protection register do not happen on a regular basis for all children, and the minimum visiting requirements by social workers to children on the child protection register are not adhered to in all cases. However day to day practice arrangements are working effectively to protect children.

22. Recruitment and retention of social care staff has improved, although staffing shortages remain in the family support and intervention teams. Supervision is regular and highly valued by staff, with reflective practice groups to promote learning. There is evidence of managerial oversight of case files. Performance management against most performance indicators is good across social care but some audit arrangements are underdeveloped with no consistent processes for ensuring that recommended improvements are always acted upon.

23. Robust action is taken to prevent the need for children and young people to be looked after. There is evidence of sustained and strenuous attempts between agencies to enable children to remain safely in their own homes. The family centre provides intensive support to vulnerable parents, which is highly valued by them and has resulted in improved outcomes for these children. Decisions to provide local authority accommodation are appropriately made at service manager level.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Significant improvements in practice within social care over the last two year.</p> <p>Higher percentage of core assessments within timescale than comparator authorities.</p> <p>Clear thresholds for need and intervention across agencies.</p> <p>Well-established information sharing systems and use of the Common Assessment Framework.</p>	<p>Audit arrangements in some aspects of social care.</p> <p>Frequency of core group meetings.</p> <p>Lengthy timescales between initial child protection referrals and case conferences.</p> <p>Length of time between social work visits to children on the child protection register.</p>

<p>Good quality initial and core assessments with clear analysis.</p> <p>Good quality child protection plans.</p> <p>Good performance in reducing childhood road traffic incidents.</p>	
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Looked after children and young people



24. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is good.** The APA 2006 reported good contribution of services to improving outcomes for looked after children, including improved stability of placement and good quality of borough-wide support. Outcomes have significantly improved and are good in most areas. Local data shows some further progress in identified areas requiring improvement. The number of children adopted from care is now at the London average and the proportion of looked after young people leaving school at 16 with no qualifications has reduced. The number of children who are looked after continues to fall, from 478 in March 2006 to 459 in March 2007.

25. The council has high aspirations for all young people and supports this by providing a good range of activities to overcome some of the barriers faced by looked after children. Participation in education, employment and training at age 19 is 73%, which is good compared with the national average of 63% for care leavers generally. Progression into further education is particularly good, with a wide range of opportunities on offer; looked after young people take part in the increased flexibility programme operating within Lewisham helping them make informed choices about future opportunities. All looked after children at Key Stage 4 have an entitlement to additional tuition by a specialist tutor or learning mentor and this additional support has recently been extended to Key Stage 3. In 2006, 67% of the 45 looked after young people eligible were entered for GCSE exams and over 64% of these achieved one GCSE or equivalent at grade A*–G. The proportion achieving at least five GCSEs or equivalent at grade A*–C remains low at 15% compared with all children living with their families in Lewisham, although above the national average of 13% for looked after children generally. All schools have designated teachers who receive good support and communication from the council and work well together to provide effective measures for supporting looked after children.

26. The number of looked after children absent from school is high at 17.6% compared with the national average of 12.2%. However, current data provided by the council shows a good reduction in the number of looked after pupils of primary school age who are absent from 12.5% to nil and secondary absences

have also reduced from 44 to 23%. Reducing absences is a council priority and targeted action is beginning to have a positive effect. The attendance and welfare service is providing frequent up-to-date information about looked after children who are at risk of long-term or regular absences. Welfare Call is effectively used to support the drive to improve attendance. When an at-risk child is identified, additional resources, including a learning mentor or youth worker, are used to support the child or young person. Good links between social workers, designated teachers and borough resources support the policy of no exclusions for looked after children. Foster carers are also given additional support where necessary.

27. The number of looked after children involved in offending behaviour in Lewisham is 3%, which is low compared with other similar London boroughs and the national figure of 9.6%. Young people who are at risk of developing offending behaviour are identified early and effective and well-integrated services from relevant partners are put in place. Looked after children involved in offending behaviour are screened for substance abuse and where necessary offered a discussion and further interventions from specialist staff. Children's homes receive good training in restorative justice to help them manage looked after young people and reduce the numbers entering the criminal justice system.

28. The child and adolescent mental health service provides good and effective support that is responsive and highly focused on individual need. The service is well-integrated, with good use of the wide range of specific professional skills. It is quick to respond when required and is highly effective in its work with partners. Interventions to avoid children and young people entering care are effective and imaginative, with a particularly good use of therapeutic activities to help children and young people overcome traumatic experiences. Partnership work across the Primary Care Trust and with neighbouring boroughs is good and productive; joint professional development and the sharing of expertise takes place regularly.

29. The council is increasingly taking its responsibilities for corporate parenting seriously and is beginning to establish and expand the role. Corporate parent meetings involve elected members, officers of the council and looked after young people. The young people who attend are able to put across their concerns and make suggestions for improving the service. Where it can, the council responds quickly. For example, young people wanted more information about the foster carers they are placed with and wanted free public transport for looked after young people over 16. As a result, the council now provides biographies of Lewisham foster carers and provides the same level of transport subsidy for all looked after children and young people. Council traineeships in carpentry, administration and painting and decorating are currently offered to five young people, although there is no guarantee of a permanent job at the end of the traineeship. However, valuable experience and training are provided, backed up by exceptional personal support in some cases. The council has recently agreed to expand this programme whereby every council department will offer at least two traineeships.

30. The highly effective and responsive service for care leavers prepares many of them well for independence. The care leavers' resource base is well used by young people preparing to leave care and those living independently. A structured programme of activities provides young people with many of the skills necessary to lead productive and stable lives. Social workers, key workers and personal advisers have very good, in some cases excellent, relationships with care leavers. Many young people appreciate the supportive and appropriately challenging approach of staff and value their expertise and knowledge. A particularly good partnership is developing with the local Jobcentre Plus team. Jobcentre Plus staff attend the care leavers' centre to give accurate information about government-funded employment training programmes. They also provide advice and encouragement to young care leavers who have difficulty in finding and sustaining work. A local agreement is in place that enables care leavers to join New Deal programmes without having to meet all of the eligibility criteria.

31. The interests of looked after children and young people are well represented by the challenging and effective independent reviewing officers and advocacy service. Seventy-two looked after children or care leavers used the service in the first year of the contract. The service meets senior borough officers quarterly to report on interventions made and support provided. The vast majority of representations are resolved through informal contact with officers; however, where a complaint or allegation is particularly serious, the formal process is appropriately used. The advocacy service is promoted through the Make It Better magazine, which provides a valuable forum for looked after children and care leavers, encouraging them to contribute poems and stories, and provides information on topics such as healthy eating, bullying and sexual health. Independent reviewing officers fulfil their role in supporting looked after children and contributing to improving services well.

32. Too many looked after children do not receive their annual health assessment. At the time of the joint area review, 76.2% had received their annual health assessment compared with the local target of 85% and the national average of 83%. This is a slight improvement on the previous year's figures of 73.6%, although significant decline on the 2004–05 figure of 84.7%. Action has been taken to improve performance, including appointing an additional looked after children's nurse who will also visit looked after children placed outside of the borough where necessary, and dedicating staff to identifying why some looked after children refuse health assessments. Social workers identify at an earlier stage when an assessment is due. Team managers monitor the number of assessments to ensure agreed targets are achieved.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
Very good progression into further education, employment or training.	Insufficient annual health assessments of looked after children and young people.

<p>Challenging and effective independent reviewing and advocacy services.</p> <p>Low number of looked after children involved in offending behaviour.</p> <p>Good and very responsive service for care leavers.</p> <p>Improved placement stability.</p>	<p>Too many looked after children absent from school.</p>
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Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



33. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.** Lewisham's APA in 2006 reported good outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It noted effective joint agency assessments for children in the early years, secure safeguarding arrangements and accessible specialist health services, particularly for those with complex needs. At 16 and beyond, more young people were moving into training, further education or employment than in the past.

34. The reality of an integrated service is developing well and the range and quality of multi-agency work for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are improving. Early multi-agency identification of health, social care and learning needs is effective and the reliability, speed of response and availability of advice and support have improved, particularly from health and social care services. Eligibility criteria for access to provision are clear and key workers are working well with the procedures. The co-location of staff from different agencies providing services at the new Kaleidoscope Centre has resolved the problems of children and their families having to access different services from multiple sites. Multi-agency teams based at Kaleidoscope reach out to schools, clients' homes and community settings and there are named professionals for each school covering medical, nursing and therapy services. The multi-agency planning pathway (MAPP) approach has been developed for working with complex cases and such actions are providing an improved and increasingly child-centred response between agencies, disciplines and service users. The complex needs panel is a further illustration of effective joint working and planning. Nonetheless, whilst progress on joint working has been rapid at Kaleidoscope and more generally, full integration has not yet been achieved.

35. Children and young people with autistic disorder are well served by the child and adolescent mental health service, and the neuro-development team based in GP practices is good. For those with an established diagnosis, access to services is good and timely but for those without a diagnosis or who do not meet the threshold of complex needs, there can be a long wait for an appointment. Delays exist in accessing specialist hospital services such as audiology and orthoptists. Whilst speech and language therapy services are targeted at those with the most complex needs, and alternative approaches are adopted to support parents, a waiting list remains. A much welcomed community-based pool of occupational therapy equipment has been established but some parents have to wait for assessments prior to gaining access to the equipment.

36. Respite services at House on the Hill are of good quality but are insufficient overall, especially for home-based respite for those aged under eight. Opportunities for short breaks are provided by the voluntary and private sector for those with complex needs. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good quality child protection services and staff located in the children and disabilities team are trained in specific communication skills to support safeguarding processes.

37. The local authority and its partners are responsive to the needs of parents and carers of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents report improvements in service delivery but rightly express concern about some lack of continuity of social workers. The complaints leaflet is straightforward and its content appropriate. Guidance and support for parents and carers on their children's education is good and a well-managed and independent parent partnership provides sound advice on special needs issues. Parents are well involved in their choice of key worker and in transition planning. They receive good support at the time of transition from school and college staff as well as the Connexions service.

38. Across services, young people contribute well to their various reviews. Effective support is provided to them at transition, and appropriate protocols are in place. The transition team is now located in children's services to ensure a clearer focus than hitherto was the case. Local consultation events on provision for young people generally include representation from those with a learning difficulty and/or disability.

39. In terms of their wider education, the achievements and progress of children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. Recent inspections indicate that provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in nurseries is excellent. In primary schools more than three quarters is good or very good, and the same proportion of secondary schools is satisfactory or better. With few exceptions, mainstream schools provide a good or very good education for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those attending special schools are making good or better progress. There have been no students excluded from special schools for three years.

40. Provision for young people between the ages of 14 and 19 is also good overall with accreditation available at level 1 for key skills and life skills as well as preparation for employment. Lewisham College offers a very good range of programmes and many young people attend. The multi-agency transition steering group identifies those with complex needs well before they transfer to the college. However, the later transition for these young people into support from adult services is less good. Links with Connexions work well and the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training is declining while work-based training is rising.

41. The progress of children and young people is well monitored by schools and the local authority. Information on individual needs, attainment and progress are used well to indicate starting points for further progress. Monitoring reports give some consideration to value for money of the service, though this is less well developed.

42. The statutory assessment processes for a statement of special educational need are well managed and the procedures for the decision-making panels are clear and informative. The borough is in the top quartile nationally for completion of statements within the recommended time. The special educational needs panel and the multi-agency panel work well across agencies to make the best decisions to meet needs.

43. Lewisham spends well above the national average on special educational needs. In some aspects, its current data demonstrates that equalities and inclusion for children with special educational needs has not been best served by the previous strategy. For example, the borough still has an above national average number of pupils with statements of special educational need, although that is now falling. Alongside this it has a below average number of pupils with statements in mainstream schools. In addition, the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities placed in schools outside the borough, away from home and community, is above the norm.

44. The emerging special educational needs strategy is securely on track following good and thorough consultation with parents and schools. Head teachers are strong in their support of the strategy. These developments aim, firstly, to ensure the maximum number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive an education in a mainstream school with specialist support from a skilled workforce. Secondly, they aim to make greater provision for those needs that are increasingly common, and thirdly to provide for highly complex needs in specialist school settings within the borough whenever possible. An outline workforce development plan is in place to support these changes. It has been possible to delegate additional special educational need funds to mainstream schools from April 2007, and the relatively high number of special educational need tribunals has begun to decline.

45. A suitable and adequate range of leisure and recreational facilities for children and young people is available, with choice for parents and carers. The under-fives are particularly well catered for. Young people participate in sports

activities and pan-London special sports competitions. There are also school clubs and voluntary provision. Recreational interests in the arts, drama, dance and music are often provided by schools and local arts organisations.

46. Children and young people are encouraged to contribute to their school life in a number of ways. This is done well in annual reviews and can be effectively managed to enable children with profound and multiple difficulties to participate using body maps and other stimuli. Appropriate communication techniques are used to gain their views about the many projects that they attend, and recently an officer has been commissioned to facilitate this work.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Good standards and progress of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>Very effective identification of needs, well-targeted intervention and good service integration.</p> <p>Good and improving multi-agency provision of services.</p> <p>Support for complex healthcare needs.</p> <p>Responsive provision from the child and adolescent mental health service.</p> <p>A good emerging strategy for a more inclusive special educational need service.</p> <p>Support for parents.</p>	<p>Delays in access to services and treatment for those children who do not meet the threshold for services.</p> <p>Delays in accessing specialist audiology and orthoptists services.</p>

Other issues identified for further investigation

The contribution of local services to improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes for children and young people

47. **The contribution of local services to improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes for children and young people is adequate.** The findings of this review confirm the earlier findings of the APA 2006 and show evidence of further improvement. The incidence of sexually transmitted infection and teenage conception rates remain a concern but the Partnership Board's focus and direction is improving multi-agency universal and targeted services provision, resulting in improved outcomes. The under-18 conception rates show an overall decline of 14.7%, which is encouraging. However, teenage conception rates remain higher than both the London and England averages, and the current rate of reduction has not been sustained at a sufficient rate to confidently predict achievement of both the 2008 and 2010

targets. The partnership has provided additional resources to support the teenage pregnancy, parenthood and sexual health action plan.

48. Commissioned services are focused on targeting hotspot neighbourhoods, educational institutions (secondary schools and Lewisham College) and youth clubs in raising young people's awareness of sexual health issues and the services available. This has helped in improving young people's access to screening services and individualised support and guidance following conception in order to prevent further unintended pregnancies. Younger men are increasingly attending sexual health clinics, which are located at a range of accessible community venues. Lewisham now has the highest coverage for chlamydia and gonorrhoea screening in the country, resulting in the early identification of sexually-transmitted infection. As a consequence of the high proportion of young people screened, rates of infection are also high, however it is important to note that young people from outside Lewisham also attend the community clinics, hence the reported infection rates are wider than Lewisham alone. Chlamydia is the commonest sexually transmitted infection but rates of infection have been falling. Rates of maternal screening for HIV are high at 99% and speedy treatment has resulted in a less than 1% transfer of infection from mother to child.

49. Healthy lifestyles for children and young people, including young parents and their children, are promoted well through a range of effective multi-agency services. Partnership work across the voluntary and statutory sectors is good and agencies work effectively together to increase the uptake of services. Good consultation and engagement of key partners, including young people, has helped local services to prioritise the tackling of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection rates, and targeted resources to meet these and other young people's needs. Children and young people have open access to universal and outreach services, which are held regularly and are available from a variety of locations, including Connexions. This has improved antenatal attendance, and a reduction in smoking during pregnancy and babies low birth weight. The overall smoking rates for Lewisham during pregnancy are better than the England averages since 2003–04, but remain higher than similar authorities. Infant mortality rates have declined since 1998. Rates of stillbirth are still high at 6.7/ per 1000 births compared to 5.4 nationally, but the rate is declining. Sexual health and relationships education and personal social and health education are being rolled out in schools successfully and 58% of the schools have achieved the Healthy Schools standard. However, there is an acknowledged need for full expansion of the sexual health and relationships education programme to enable schools to achieve the Healthy Schools standard by 2009, which will also cover vulnerable groups of children and young people.

50. A number of focused programmes offer good advice and support to young people, for example the young fathers' project, a specialist midwifery service and the GALLY project for gay, lesbian and bisexual young people. These services are part of the Sure Start Plus virtual team which provides well

coordinated services, resulting in better outcomes for young parents and their children.

51. The young fathers' project, also part of the virtual team, uses young mothers effectively as a conduit to reach young fathers and this has helped increasingly in identifying, supporting, advising and directing young fathers to other services. Overall, multi-agency staff relate to and support young people well. However, some professionals are not equipped with the required knowledge and skills to handle young people's sexual health issues and the latter sometimes feel stigmatised by the behaviour of some front-line staff.

52. Community sexual and reproductive health services' staff work well with other partners, including GP practices, schools and youth clubs. Staff have provided tailored sexual health and relationships education training to foster parents, social workers, teachers and other primary care staff. A tailored sexual health and relationships education training programme is planned for the staff of partner agencies in 2007–09. Fifteen pharmacists have also been trained and supported to provide contraceptive services. Chlamydia screening is being rolled out in pharmacies. Young men and women have also been trained as peer educators to raise other young people's awareness on sexual health issues and available services. Young people found the training very useful in helping them to make informed decisions about sexual health and conception and in equipping them for outreach work. However, numbers trained or being trained to date are still small and it is too early to see any noticeable impact of such outreach work.

53. The sexual and reproductive health of looked after children and care leavers are addressed well. Looked after children have a good understanding of sexual health and how to avoid pregnancy and contracting sexually transmitted infections. The use of the simulation 'virtual baby' by some care leavers helped them to be more aware of the practical implications of looking after a baby and was also a powerful factor in helping them to minimise the risk of pregnancy. Effective interventions and referral pathways have now been developed and are addressing the sexual health needs of looked after children and young people adequately. The looked after children's designated nurse undertakes proactive work with multi-agency professionals and ensures issues related to the sexual health needs of looked after children are picked up and addressed adequately through either clinic sessions or one-to-one sessions. The health of looked after young men is addressed through effective partnership working between the looked after children designated nurse, Connexions, Young Men Project and other agencies.

54. The sexual health needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, addressed through the personal, social and health education in special and mainstream schools and other community settings, is improving. Specialist workers have encouraged early identification of inappropriate behaviour and are providing effective support to foster carers and other professionals in addressing the sexual health needs of these young people.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Effective screening for sexually transmitted diseases resulting in higher rates of identification and treatment.</p> <p>Good consultation and involvement of key partners, including young people, in health promotion.</p> <p>Low infant mortality rate.</p> <p>Increased breastfeeding uptake rates.</p> <p>Early identification of young pregnant women and good antenatal clinic attendance.</p>	<p>Teenage conception rates higher than both London and England averages.</p> <p>High numbers of still births.</p> <p>Higher rates of smoking during pregnancy than similar authorities.</p>

The impact of local services in improving Black Caribbean children and young people's attainment and progress

55. The impact of local services in improving the attainment and progress of Black Caribbean children and young people is outstanding.

The very youngest Black Caribbean children have lower levels of language and communication skills than found nationally, but the good support and intervention for families at this point makes a significant impact on their progress. The attainment of Black Caribbean boys between the ages of five and seven is below the national average and girls are in line with or above that figure. The same is broadly true at age 11, but the gap between boys and girls is reducing. By the age of 14, boys have improved overall in mathematics and English and girls are close to the national average. At 16, young people's attainment shows a clear upward trend. GCSE outcomes for the group have risen faster than the Lewisham and national averages for the last four years. This is excellent progress.

56. From the time children enter school to the age of 16, the value added by schools is good. Black Caribbean students in some low performing secondary schools have achieved very good improvements in recent years. The targets set by the local authority and schools are aspirational, highly challenging and taken up by all, but they have not been met in the last few years. However, the expectation that national averages at GCSE will be met over the 2008/09 period is realistic given recent improvements and the energy and commitment given to the task by adults and young people alike.

57. Standards of attendance of this group are now above the Lewisham average and permanent exclusions of Black Caribbean boys, an area for improvement highlighted in the APA in 2006, have reduced significantly. Overall exclusions are now amongst the lowest in London. The successes of Black Caribbean young people as they move through school to the age of 18 are

demonstrated by the fact that now 19% of acceptances for higher education are in this group, which is equal to their proportion in the school population. They are doing as well as all other groups in the borough. Additionally, the percentage of Black Caribbean young people who are not in education, employment or training after 16 has fallen by 14% between 2006 and 2007.

58. Numerous well-considered and targeted strategies account for these successes. Under the framework of Achievement for All, the local authority and its partners are investing high commitment and energy to raising standards overall and especially for Black Caribbean children and young people. Very good use is being made of the comprehensive pupil performance data from the local authority with its detailed focus on particular criteria and pupil groups, for example between free school meal and non-free school meal pupils. The value of this is the subsequent ability of schools and services to target precisely and rely on having data that will continually inform for the future. Coupled with this facility is the working culture of a strengthening partnership between the local authority, schools, young people and their parents and carers. Success is growing because Lewisham has a strong and potent mix of: a well-researched strategy that grows and improves; some outstanding leadership and implementation by senior and service managers and schools; very good targeting of resources; and a partnership based on a critical mass of colleagues, including parents, who are passionate about the cause. This begins to represent a paradigm shift in the leadership and management of services to raise the achievements of children and young people.

59. The increasing involvement of parents and carers, both with officers and schools, is a real strength. They work with schools to support their children and are involved in family learning and extracurricular activities. The well established parents'/carers' day conferences involve them with teachers and young people in discussion on curriculum, learning and personal development matters for young people. They also give young people a powerful voice for their achievements and aspirations.

60. Well targeted projects are used to support Black Caribbean children and young people to raise their attainment. Of particular note is the small and well managed ethnic minority achievement service that works as part of the school improvement service to promote the secondary and primary achievement programmes for black pupils. National strategies for English, mathematics, science and technology are well coordinated and monitored across the services. Wider support, including that for parents and carers is given by the ACE project. It aims to raise young people's achievements and self-challenge and has an objective of achieving excellence. The project provides regular group opportunities, outside curriculum time, to develop attitudes to learning, future aspirations and endeavour that firmly put the responsibility on the young people themselves. There is evidence, through conversation with young people and parents, of success with the project. Recently improved GCSE results and higher education offers to Black Caribbean students are testimony to this, with two secondary schools achieving 100% success in offers of university places to this group.

61. The local authority has also made a long-term investment in restorative approaches (restorative justice) in schools. Young people movingly describe how meetings with the instigator and the victim have helped both sides to overcome the bullying and aggression that has occurred between them. As well as reducing the tendency to resort to conflict, the processes have helped them to improve relationships and develop resolution skills that they can use in the future. Whole-class discussions, facilitated by staff, are also having success and parents find their involvement very illuminating and helpful. In some schools, trained peer mentors facilitate small discussions with success. Though these outcomes may not directly impact on standards, they are making a significant difference to the climate, culture and relationships in schools. Young people explained that they can work and concentrate much better and attendance is rising and exclusions are much reduced. Extensive further training in restorative approaches for staff, young people and parents is planned from September 2007.

62. Other effective projects include those to support Black Caribbean boys' reading and writing, including speech and language and behaviour management. There is good work that enables teachers and students to act as researchers to see the issues and possibilities for improvement through the lens of groups of young people in each school. It provides valuable self-reflection on approaches to learning. Black Caribbean children and young people are supported with their learning, personal development and interests outside school through programmes such as those at the 13 supplementary schools, the Mandiani project, 21st Century and SEAL programmes. For post-16 students, the youth services provide good support to retain underachieving Black Caribbean students on programmes that enhance their employability. Though improving, the annual points score for post-16 students on accredited programmes is below the Lewisham average.

63. From September 2007, the work for Black Caribbean children and young people will incorporate a new life programme that will focus on the greater integration of services, extending the involvement of parents and carers, enhancing school leadership and closer tracking of black pupils' progress. It aims to make a reality the objective of a team around the family for the most vulnerable.

64. To sustain and develop the existing and new programmes, the authority has a clear focus on workforce development for the future. Recruitment and retention of staff for children's services is positive. Succession planning is well supported by the broad development of staff skills at all levels and is an imperative as these Black pupils' achievement programmes are further implemented and expanded.

65. Overall, Lewisham and its partners are in a strong position with the work for Black Caribbean children and young people. The strengths are considerable and improving, they know their weaknesses and stubborn difficulties and where to target support and challenge. The commitment and leadership that has contributed to the progress already seen for Black Caribbean children and

young people is of very high quality and the services have very good capacity to improve.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>The significant improvements made in the attainment of Black Caribbean children and young people in recent years.</p> <p>The excellent leadership, management and implementation of the Black pupils' achievement programmes.</p> <p>The active involvement of Black Caribbean children and young people, their parents and carers in the implementation of programmes designed to raise achievements.</p> <p>The range of strategies and projects used to raise attainment through effective partnerships.</p>	

Service management



Capacity to improve



66. **The management of services for children and young people is outstanding. Capacity to improve further is outstanding.** The APA 2006 judged children's services as good and, as in the APA 2005, capacity to improve continued to be excellent. The area has made very good sustained progress in addressing issues identified for improvement by, for example, raising standards of educational attainment, better information sharing, the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework and joint approaches to the assessment of children. The area has also strengthened its partnership capacity through setting clear joint commissioning priorities that focus on improvement and

maximise outcomes for children and young people. The council is achieving significant progress in improving attainment rates and closing the gap with national averages, in particular with some underachieving and challenging groups. The comprehensive review of the Children and Young People's Plan has demonstrated continuing commitment to effective and mature partnership working. Strong and dynamic leadership, very good established partnership working, sound financial capacity and excellent performance management culture, ensures that the area has excellent capacity to improve further.

67. Ambitions for children and young people are excellent. Children and young people are at the centre of the Children and Young People's Plan and the partnership's decision-making processes. This is effectively captured within the Children and Young People's Plan with its overall challenging ambition to improve the lives and life chances of children, young people and their families. Shared partnership objectives are highly visible and clearly linked within the community strategy, the Local Area Agreement and corporate planning. Good analysis of need, underpinned by excellent data, ensures the differentiated targeting of both universal and specialist services. Diversity issues are central to all planning and service delivery, recognised formally by the equality standard level five awarded to Lewisham Council. Innovative ways are used to involve children and young people in shaping service developments and inform future policy and planning. A very good example is the young mayor and young advisers' governance structure, which is now in its third year. This well established and articulate group meets every two weeks and provides both a valuable sounding board in its own right, and a route to gather and facilitate consultation and engagement with children and young people more widely. Lewisham has Beacon Status for the involvement of young people. Elections for the third young mayor had an increased turnout, higher than that in the adult local elections. The young mayor, her advisors and the young commissioners are actively involved in the shaping and delivering of council policy and services.

68. Prioritisation is excellent. Priorities and objectives are very well constructed across the five Every Child Matters outcomes and clearly presented within the Children and Young People's Plan. The children and young people's version of the Plan, designed and edited by children and young people, helps to make it more accessible to parents, children and young people and carers. The commitment to these priorities across the children and young people's partnership is evidenced by senior managers physically signing up to the plan. This rightly promotes a seamless approach to tackling and owning priorities in Lewisham. The Plan, and review of the Plan, includes budgets across the partnership, aggregated by types of service within levels of vulnerability, for example acute, complex, vulnerable and universal services. This supports the structure throughout the Plan and highlights one of the overarching Lewisham priorities to focus on preventative services and, where appropriate, to move resources from highly complex services to preventative and universal services. This strategy is founded on a good analysis of data, which is used to set a secure baseline position.

69. The Children and Young People's Plan in Lewisham is underpinned by supporting evidence detailing improvement targets to be achieved year on year over the next three years. This is summarised comprehensively at directorate level but targets do not fully appear within all service plans. Priorities cascade from the Children and Young People's Plan into service plans and provide a good framework to focus team activity and improvement. Staff across the partnership understand the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan and they take ownership of them through their team and service plans. The approach to risk management is good.

70. A good corporate approach within the council is in place to ensure resources are targeted at priorities. This is enhanced by a genuine willingness across the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board to align additional resources to drive improvements, for example in reducing teenage pregnancies and improving the school attendance of looked after children. Priorities have been revisited across the partnership as part of the review of the Children and Young People's Plan. As a result, additional prominence has been given to youth crime and obesity issues.

71. Capacity to deliver priorities is good. Mature and well-established governance arrangements, built on mutual respect and trust between partners, form the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board. Strong and very dynamic leadership across the partnership, particularly by the Executive Director of Children's Services, has led to a culture characterised by high expectations and focused improvement. The combined strategic capacity of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board is enhancing capacity by challenging the contribution each partner can make to improved outcomes. A good example is the summer holiday programme, where aligned resources of over £265,000 and streamlined activity across all agencies, including the police, Connexions and the voluntary sector, contributed to a drop in reported street robbery during summer 2006.

72. Very good partnership working is demonstrated by: an embedded culture of joint working over many years; an expectation that all partners will be inclusive; a common agenda; transparent performance data across the partnerships; and a commitment to improve the life chances of children and young people.

73. Overall, value for money is good but there are a number of high cost services, including out-of-borough placements and the cost of looked after children. Action plans are in place to reduce both of these, mainly through more effective procurement and building local capacity, although these will take time to have a major impact on costs.

74. The out-of-borough placements costs present the greatest opportunity to improve value for money further as the special educational needs element is over a third higher than statistical neighbours. In-borough provision has started to be expanded at Greenvale School through the group school PFI project. The major opportunity to improve capacity in the borough will come as part of the

renewal of the secondary estate through Building Schools for the Future, with a total estimated contract value of £256m.

75. Good use is made of best value reviews to target areas of high cost and to find alternative ways of delivering the service, for example by providing special educational needs transport. This concluded that, by investing in staffing and reviewing policy, substantial budget savings would be delivered. Value for money is not fully integrated into all service plans and not enough use is made of financial benchmarking data. Good budgetary control is in place which links future pressures and changing service demands to the corporate medium-term financial plan.

76. There are many examples of the co-location of staff and multi-agency teams working effectively together. A very good example is the Kaleidoscope Centre, a new building constructed using NHS and council capital funding, which provides a single point of assessment for children with special needs and coordinated access for parents and carers. This integrated facility brings together under one roof Primary Care Trust paediatric services in the community, child and adolescent mental health services, special educational needs and the children's disability services. Children and young people were involved in the design of the Kaleidoscope Centre.

77. Good progress has been made in recruiting and retaining social care staff and reducing the need to rely on agency staff. This has improved services for children and young people and has led to improved outcomes, particularly in social care. A draft workforce strategy is in place which includes a good level of current workforce data on the Primary Care Trust and council children and young people's services, but it does not yet cover all partners, particularly those from the private and voluntary sectors. There are many small private and voluntary organisations across the borough and coordination is acknowledged as a real challenge. Lewisham has been successful in attracting some additional grant funding for development and capacity building. Good progress is being made on staff training and implementation of the Common Assessment Framework and lead professional roles. This has identified duplication in training provision across the partnership, and efficiency savings have been made as a result.

78. A good well-structured approach has been taken to commissioning across the partnership. Priorities have been set for the current year, which are to maximise partnership commissioning and concentrate capacity on strategic and important areas. Some success has already been achieved in the summer holiday programme, and commissioning and aligning aids and adaptation budgets between the council and the Primary Care Trust.

79. Performance management across the partnership is judged good overall rather than excellent, due to the social care quality audit issues. There is an excellent corporate culture of focusing on improvement. This is supported by very good presentation and monitoring of national and local performance indicators. The council and the wider partnership receive a dashboard of

indicators which monitor progress of performance indicators against both targets set and comparators. Supporting information also highlights where absolute performance is increasing and where it is not. The dashboard is effectively produced in various layers of detail for different levels of management. This approach effectively displays and brings together the various performance management frameworks in place across the wider partnerships. This promotes a transparent approach to monitoring performance across the whole partnership, provides comprehensive data to challenge progress, and escalates action planning. Members are regularly presented with a version of the excellent performance management data set. The lead member for children's services uses the data to keep informed of overall performance and specifically challenges performance indicators which are showing below target. Scrutiny is improving and rightly focusing on areas of low performance and emerging areas of concern. Topics selected for in-depth scrutiny have included the special educational needs review and obesity.

80. The partnership is very aware of its strengths and weaknesses, mainly through its relentless focus on performance information. Financial information is increasingly linked to performance data, particularly in areas selected for in-depth review. There is a track record of using performance management to drive improvement in many areas, in particular educational attainment and within social care. However some specific quality audit systems within social care are not robust, as referred to earlier in this report.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Ambitions and priorities fully owned across the partnership, putting children and young people at the centre of decision making.</p> <p>Very good leadership and partnerships, with an embedded culture of joint working.</p> <p>Good analysis of need, underpinned by excellent data.</p> <p>Centrality of diversity issues to all planning and service delivery.</p> <p>Track record of improvement driven by performance management.</p>	<p>Comprehensive data across the whole partnership to inform future workforce planning.</p> <p>Lack of robustness in some specific quality audit systems within social care.</p>

Annex A

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

Summary

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

The London Borough of Lewisham consistently delivers services above minimum standards to children and young people. There is robust senior management across the authority's children's services supported by a clear strategic vision, high ambition, a cogent Children and Young People's Plan and strong partnerships with schools, health and community sectors. Good progress has been made in the majority of areas for improvement in last year's performance assessment and clear strategies are in place to address remaining challenges. Outcomes are improving for children and young people and capacity for further improvement is excellent.

The full annual performance assessment can be found at:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=61758&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa_2006_209.pdf

Annex B

CORPORATE ASSESSMENT ACHIEVEMENT – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Outcomes for children and young people in Lewisham are generally satisfactory or good. Many children start from a low base in relation to deprivation and opportunity. The council and its partners take robust steps to maximize opportunities for children and have achieved considerable success in improving outcomes across many areas.
2. Service management in Lewisham and the capacity to improve are outstanding. The council and its partners use data effectively to target resources and monitor the impact of their interventions. There is a clear track record of redirecting resources where action has not been effective.
3. The combined work of local services in securing the health of children and young people is good. Key outcomes are improving and there are many examples of effective interagency action. The teenage pregnancy strategy is beginning to reduce conceptions, although rates remain higher than the national or London average. The council has redesigned its provision of sexual health services into community bases, leading to an increase in the numbers attending and better opportunities for early identification and treatment. However, not all looked after children receive an annual health assessment and or dental check.
4. Children and young people appear safe and arrangements to ensure that this is so are adequate. The partnership takes child safety very seriously, with effective work to reduce deaths from road accidents and increase community safety. All schools have anti-bullying policies, and protocols for tracking children missing from school, home or care are good. The quality of assessment and response within children's social care has improved considerably over the last three years. All children on the child protection register have the support of social workers. Effective processes for responding to child protection concerns are in place and children benefit from good quality assessments. Management information is used effectively and there has been an improvement in many outcomes. However, practice audit systems are not understood or embedded well enough, and have failed to tackle some poor performance. As a consequence, not all children whose names are on the child protection register receive regular visits, and timescales for the progression from the final child protection strategy meeting to the initial case conference are not met in the majority of cases.
5. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and to achieve well is good. There is an improving trend in most educational outcomes and evidence of effective action to reduce inequalities. The rate of improvement for Black Caribbean boys has been

considerable and the authority is on target to close the attainment gap between this group and the wider population by 2008/09.

6. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is outstanding. The council and its partners have a strong commitment to involving young people in service delivery and the democratic process. A young mayor has been elected for the last three years, with voter turnout and engagement by young people in the process increasing year on year. The young mayor and advisors are consulted by the council on issues of strategy. Arrangements for increasing the participation of looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good and improving.

7. The impact of the council and its partners in improving the economic well-being of children and young people is excellent. Levels of participation in post-16 education are increasing and outcomes are improving, particularly for groups that historically have done less well. The council takes its corporate parenting responsibilities seriously and provides an expanding number of traineeships for care leavers. The numbers of care leavers in employment, education and training are improving. Opportunities for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to access post-16 education are good and they are well supported. The numbers of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities not in education, employment or training are lower than national averages and comparator groups.

8. The capacity of the council to improve is excellent. Strong political and officer leadership drive a well-understood improvement agenda which is shared by all partners. Goals and ambitions are clearly laid out in the Children and Young People's Plan, alongside realistic allocation of resources to achieve those goals. The council and its partners have a track record of building on improvement and delivering improved outcomes for children and young people in the borough.

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 Lewisham 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 focussing 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).