

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA): Proposals

Simon Bird, Chair of PIRGE has also prepared a summary and commentary on this 33-page consultation, which seeks views on proposals for assessing children's services and Ofsted's inspection of services for children in care and safeguarding as part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Ofsted to provide an annual performance rating for each local authority's children's services. This is currently undertaken through the annual performance assessment (APA) of local authorities' services for children and young people. APA and Joint Area Reviews (JARs) of local children's services come to an end in December 2008 and are replaced by CAA which begins on 1 April 2009.

The main characteristics and proposals can be summarised as follows:

- LAs to receive an annual rating for children's services from Ofsted
- LAs to submit an annual self-assessment for children's services to Ofsted
- LAs to receive an annual letter from Ofsted in November
- Ofsted to introduce a new 'performance profile' for LAs updated quarterly
- new performance profile used to arrive at a rating and trigger inspection
- new 'performance bands' based on fixed cut-off points, rather than quartile distribution
- overall rating subject to new thresholds e.g. where indicators for either staying safe or enjoying and achieving are in the inadequate band
- new three-yearly programme of thematic inspection of services for children in care and safeguarding carried out together from 1 April 2009
- Ofsted to apply thresholds to key judgements for thematic inspections
- notice period will be set at four weeks in the first instance
- Ofsted will carry out pilot inspections from January 2009
- short unannounced safeguarding visits to social care services carried out annually.

Although the consultation closed on 3rd December, colleagues might still be interested in accessing Simon's seven – page briefing, which is available on the SSRG website.

SCIE Report 19: Learning together to safeguard children

SCIE Report 19: Learning together to safeguard children: developing a multi-agency systems approach for case reviews

By Dr Sheila Fish, Dr Eileen Munro and Sue Bairstow

On 2nd December, SCIE responded to the Ofsted report by highlighting a new systems approach to learning. The approach, which SCIE developed by building on the experience of two successful pilot case reviews, aims to address the difficulties in learning from serious case reviews in the past.

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/reports/report19.asp>