

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

1. Summary

This report informs members about the final set of CPA results for single tier and county councils published on 5 March 2009.

2. Recommendations

That the report be noted.

3. Action

As agreed by members.

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Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Background

1. The final set of CPA results for single tier and county councils was published on 5 March along with District Councils use of resources scores for 2008 and an Audit Commission report “Final score” reviewing councils’ improvement over the life of CPA.
2. The headline results are as follows:
 - More councils were improving strongly than ever before. By 2008, 35 councils (24 per cent) were improving strongly, up from 26 councils (17 per cent) in 2007.
 - Forty-two per cent of councils (62 councils) performed at the highest level (4 star) in 2008, more than in any other year of CPA reporting. Twenty-seven councils maintained their position as 4 star councils for the fourth year running.
 - Eighty per cent of councils were 3 star or 4 star in 2008. London councils and county councils were most likely to perform in the top two categories, at 91 per cent and 88 per cent respectively.
 - For the third year running, no councils were categorised as 0 star. Only four councils were 1 star in 2008. However, this was an increase from only two councils in 2007. The four councils that were categorised as 1 star in 2008 were Doncaster, Haringey, Milton Keynes and Surrey (subject to judicial review of Children and Young People’s score for Surrey CC)
 - 29 councils improved their star category whilst 26 received a lower category in 2008 than in 2007
 - Councils continued to improve how well they are using their resources with 91% performing consistently or well above the minimum requirements and 78% of councils performed consistently or well above the minimum requirements for value for money in 2008.
3. A key feature of the results was the deterioration in scores for children and young people’s services. This service was the only service assessment to have a net deterioration in scores in 2008 and also had the lowest proportion of councils that scored 4 in 2008, falling from 12 in 2007 to 9 in 2008. At the last meeting members agreed proposals for coordinated improvement activity by the LGA Group and key partners to offer councils with low APA scores for safeguarding children.
4. In the run up to the results LGA Office Holders and Improvement Board lead members discussed the publication arrangements at the recent Liaison meeting and subsequently agreed a handling strategy involving the following key elements:

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- strenuously rebutting any negative coverage in the national media and trade press before publication and on the day;
 - Demonstrating to targeted MPs and national partner organisations what the sector, together with the LGA Group, is doing to improve services and outcomes for residents;
 - Working with individual councils to develop and provide tailored programmes of support appropriate to their needs;
 - Developing national initiatives to tackle specific concerns. Cllr Margaret Eaton, Chairman of the LGA, will soon be announcing a campaign to offer better support to social workers doing a very difficult job and we will shortly be launching a consultation exercise with the sector to develop a new approach to sector led support aimed at reducing crisis intervention from national government, and the extra burden that can entail, to an absolute minimum;
 - Continuing to engage the Inspectorates and Government Depts about the new CAA regime in order to ensure that the burden of inspection and assessment is reduced and that where it remains inspection is focussed on providing assurance and specialist challenge in areas of high risk and where the impact of failure is high.
5. At the same time as publishing the CPA results the Audit Commission published “Final Score” which looked at the impact of CPA over 2002-08. This was supplemented by an IDeA publication “Looking back, moving forward” providing leading politicians’ accounts of improvement in their councils. Copies will be available at the Board meeting.
6. Results for District councils’ use of resources demonstrate continued improvement between 2005 and 2008, as follows
- 68% of districts (162 out of 238) performed consistently well or above minimum requirements (scoring 3 or 4) compared to 60% in 2007;
 - 8 councils performed below minimum requirements (scoring 1) falling slightly from 9 the previous year;
 - There was an overall improvement in council scores for all themes covered by the assessment – with the exception of financial reporting.

Financial Implications

7. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Implications for Wales

8. None.

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