

Performance Ratings for Social Services in England

November 2003

**Performance Ratings for Social
Services (England) 2003**

Social Services Inspectorate
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NA
November 2003

Rt Hon John Reid MP
Secretary of State for Health

Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP
Secretary of State for Education

Dear Secretaries of State,

I am pleased to present the latest social services performance ratings for English councils with social services responsibilities. The ratings were last published in November 2002, and this is the second year in which they have been produced. There has been a significant overall improvement in the performance of councils. More councils have received two and three stars, and fewer councils now have zero or one star.

The ratings have been formulated by SSI, drawing on evidence from performance indicators, inspections, reviews and monitoring information for each council, and using a set of published standards as a framework to guide judgement. The ratings are issued in conjunction with an improvement report for each council, and give a rounded picture of each council's performance in carrying out their social services functions. Separate judgements for services to children and adults are included. The ratings will continue to form a part of the comprehensive performance assessment of local councils, led by the Audit Commission.

Subject to legislation, it will be the responsibility of the proposed Commission for Social Care Inspection to publish the ratings for social services from 2004. Combining the SSI functions with the social care functions of the National Care Standards Commission, and incorporating the work of the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review team, the new Commission will strengthen the public accountability of social services and help to drive forward further improvement.

Yours sincerely

Averil Nottage
Acting Chief Inspector
Social Services Inspectorate

INTRODUCTION

Performance Ratings for Social Services

1. In October 2001, the then Secretary of State Alan Milburn announced the introduction of performance ratings for social services. A letter to Directors of Social Services from the Chief Inspector of the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) in April CI (2002) 4 described how the ratings would be produced. Ratings were first published in May 2002, and were “refreshed” with additional information in November 2002.

2. This document now presents the performance ratings for councils in England with social services responsibilities at November 2003. The star ratings summarise the Social Services Inspectorate’s independent judgements of performance across all social services, on a scale of zero to three stars. Supporting this, separate judgements for services for children and services for adults are also given.

Why are ratings being published?

3. The ratings aim to improve public information about the current performance of services, and the capacity for improvement at local, regional, and national levels. Social services have wide responsibilities for the care and support of families in difficulty, and the protection of children at risk of harm: for helping older people to live as independently as possible, and for supporting people with disabilities. People have a right to know how well their councils are performing in meeting these responsibilities, whether they are receiving such services themselves, have a family member receiving such services, or are a council tax payer. Central government needs to know how well each council is meeting the aims and objectives for improvement it has set for social services.

Who produces the ratings?

4. The Social Services Inspectorate works independently of the councils to assess their performance, drawing on evidence from inspections, reviews, monitoring and performance indicator data. The ratings summarise this evidence in a way that is both accessible to all and soundly based on all the available information.

What do the ratings mean for councils?

5. The ratings provide an objective starting point for reviewing and planning improvements to services. This is important for all councils, whether their performance is good or poor. The best performing councils have an increasing level of freedom in the way they use centrally provided grant funds. They also have a reduced programme of inspection and monitoring, and reduced requirements for planning information. Councils with zero stars receive additional support, return fuller information, and are subject to more frequent monitoring.

How the ratings are presented

6. As well as the overall star, judgements for children and adults services are given, and these carry equal weighting. In both cases, a judgement for both current performance and capacity for improvement is also shown. The categories for judging current performance (serving people well?) are *no*, *some*, *most* and *yes*. The categories for judging capacity for improvement are *poor*, *uncertain*, *promising*, and *excellent*. Current performance is weighted more heavily than capacity for improvement.

7. This results in a total of four judgements underpinning the overall rating, as shown in the table of examples below. Once the judgements have been reached, a set of rules is used to combine them with the weightings to produce a final star rating. The rules are detailed in the Chief Inspector’s Letter CI (2002)4, and are also available electronically at <http://www.doh.gov.uk/pssratings/guidance>

	Performance rating	Children’s services		Adults’ services	
		Serving people well?	Capacity for improvement?	Serving people well?	Capacity for improvement?
Council 1	-	No	Poor	Most	Promising
Council 2	☆	Some	Uncertain	Some	Promising
Council 3	☆☆	Most	Promising	Yes	Uncertain
Council 4	☆☆☆	Most	Excellent	Yes	Promising

Additional Information about local performance

8. In addition to the judgements and star ratings, reports of summaries of SSI's annual review of each council's improvement and performance are being published on the DH star ratings web-site (www.doh.gov.uk/pssratings). These reports are sent by SSI to the council following the annual review meeting, and are entered onto the web-site once they have been seen and considered by local councillors. The reports highlight performance strengths, areas for development, and priorities for improvement for the coming year.

How the ratings have been produced

9. Star Ratings are a product of a wider performance assessment process bringing SSI and the councils into continuous contact throughout the year. Assessment includes evidence from inspections and reviews, monitoring and performance indicators, to form an overall picture of performance over time on both qualitative and quantitative aspects of performance. The assessment culminates in an annual review meeting with each council, normally during the summer. The purpose of this meeting is to review past performance and consider the priorities for further improvement. Following the annual review, provisional judgements of performance are formed and then subjected to a series of consistency checks before a final determination is made by the Chief Inspector of SSI.

Criteria used in reaching performance judgements

10. The criteria for judgements are set out in a set of published standards and criteria. These describe good and poor performance in six areas, and are used by SSI inspectors as a framework for organising and reviewing the evidence. The specific local evidence sources for 2002 – 03 are set out for each council in a performance report sent after the annual review meeting.

The role of Key Performance Indicators

11. To ensure that performance indicators have sufficient weight in the star rating system, and to provide an additional check that councils are treated in the same way, a set of performance indicators are defined as the "Key Performance Indicators". For these, a council cannot be judged to be performing well if it fails to reach a specified band of performance. This year, the set includes new indicators, including the audit of child protection services that followed the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, and a progress check on the implementation of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Links with performance ratings for NHS and other local government services

12. Social services are provided or arranged by local councils, but are often planned and delivered in partnership with the NHS and other council services. The social services star rating is designed to be compatible with performance information for both the NHS and other local government services.

13. A new comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) for all local government services was introduced in 2003. This fulfils the same function as the social services stars, but for all local government services. The social services star ratings judgements feed directly into the local government CPA. The social services star rating also appears in the CPA report card, alongside assessments of other council services. A council must receive a good star rating for their social services in order to receive the highest comprehensive performance assessment rating.

THE RESULTS

How well are councils performing overall?

14. Just under a third of all councils have a changed rating, compared to November 2002. More councils have received two and three stars and fewer councils now have zero or one star.

Figure 1: Distribution of Ratings (numbers of councils)

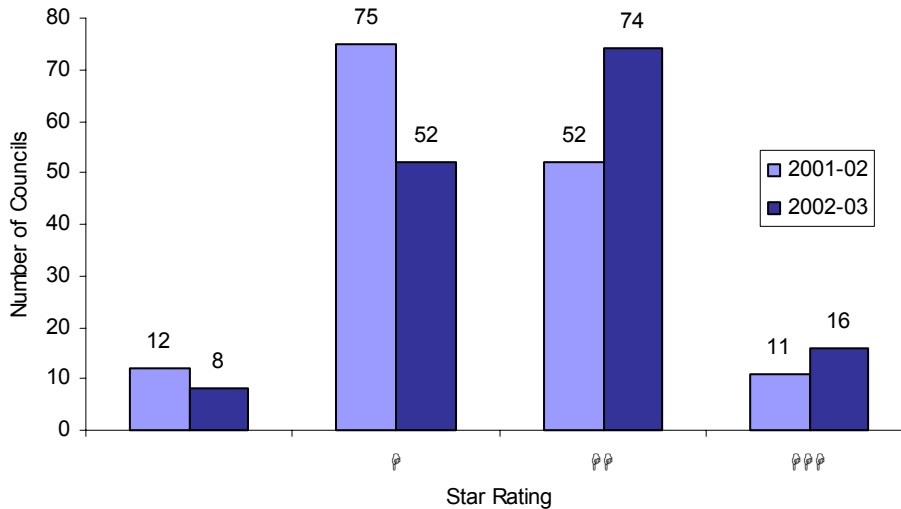
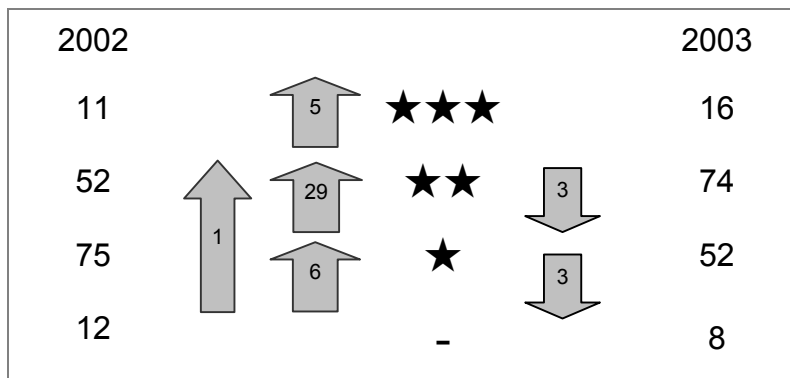


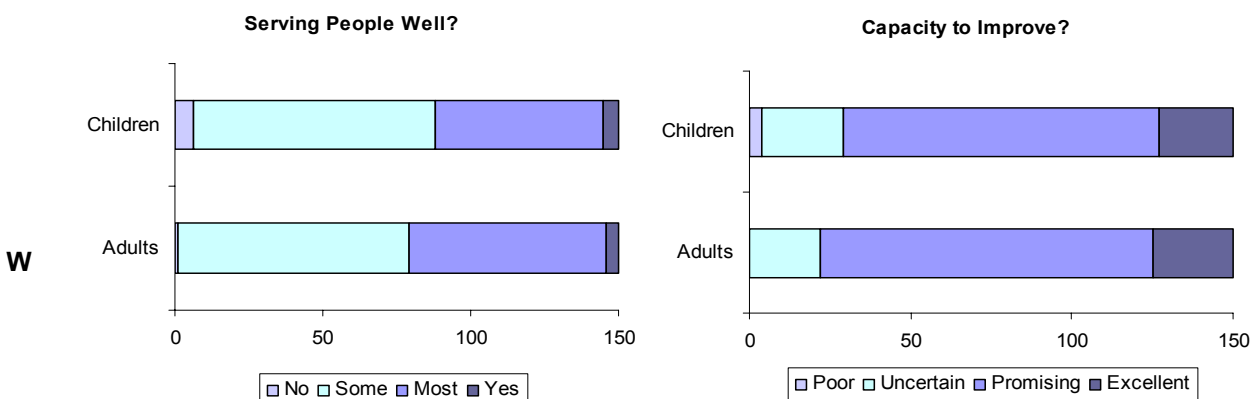
Figure 2: Changes to Ratings 2002 to 2003



Which services are performing best?

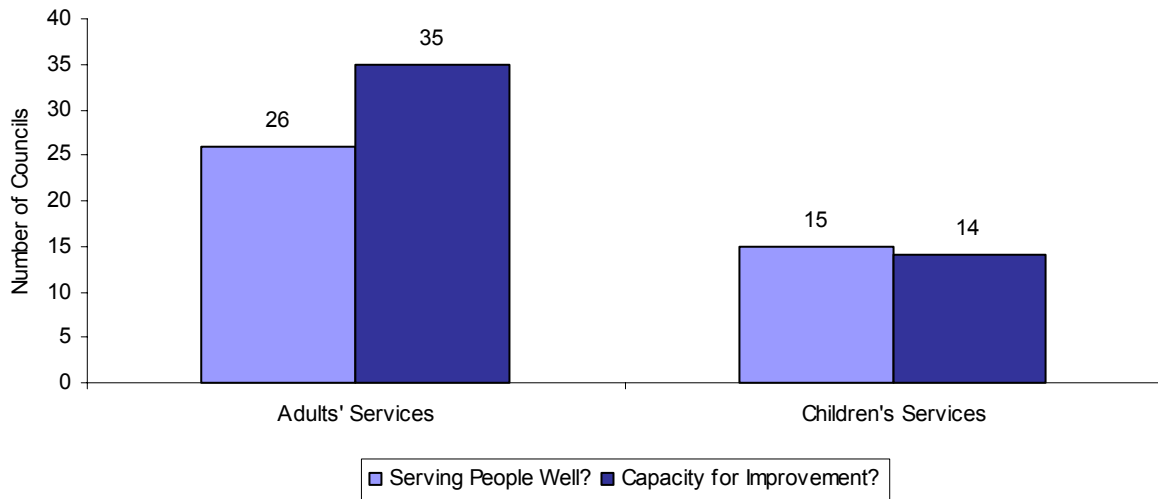
15. The ratings are built up from four judgements, two each for children’s and adult services respectively. The charts below show a fairly even spread of current (serving people well?) performance, but with slightly greater strength in services for adults. Six councils were “not serving children well” – the lowest level of performance judgement. Similarly, the capacity for further improvement shows a little more confidence in services for adults. The capacity judgements continue to reflect confidence that substantial further progress can be made in more than 80% of councils.

Figure 3: Judgements for Children’s and Adults Services



16. The star rating changes result from changes to the underlying judgements. Figure 4 shows the extent to which judgements about services for children and for adults have shown improvement since last year. There has been more improvement in the “serving people well?” judgements for adults services than those for children; the same applies to judgements of capacity for improvement.

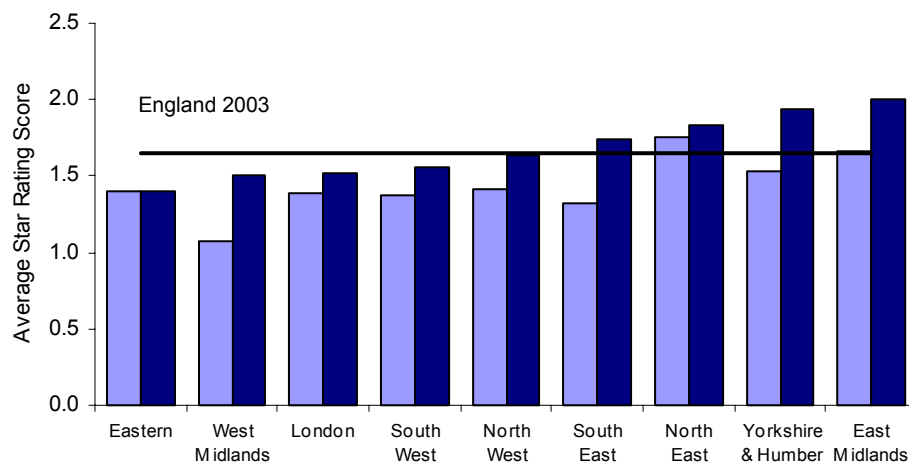
Figure 4: Net Improvement to Adults, and Children’s Services between 2002 and 2003



How does performance compare in different parts of the country?

17. The strongest performance is evident in the East Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber regions. The West Midlands and South-East, together with Yorkshire and the Humber and East Midlands regions have seen the strongest rate of improvement over the last year.

Figure 5: Average Rating Score by Region¹ between 2002 and 2003

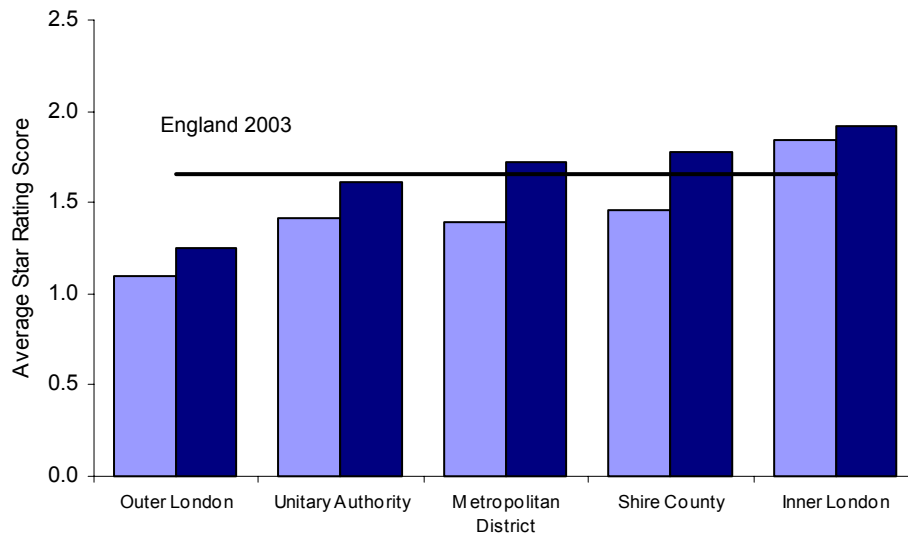


¹ The average rating score is calculated by attributing scores to each rating (zero stars = 0, one star = 1, two stars = 2, three stars =3) and then dividing by the number of councils.

How does performance compare across different types of council?

18. Performance was strongest, on average, in the Inner London councils, and in the Shire Counties. Improvement has taken place in all types of council since last year, but has been most pronounced across the Metropolitan Districts and in the Shire Counties.

Figure 6: Average Rating Score by Type of Council between 2002 and 2003



What progress has been made amongst the councils performing least well last year?

19. Of the twelve councils that were awarded zero stars in 2002, more than half were able to improve performance sufficiently to gain one or more stars. Six were awarded one star, and one was awarded two stars.

20. Of the 9 councils *not* serving **children** well in 2002, seven improved and were rated as serving *some* children well: one other was rated as serving *most* children well in 2003. Of the three councils *not* serving **adults** well in 2002, all improved their performance and were rated as serving *some* people well in 2003.

21. Five of the councils with zero stars in 2002 remain on zero stars. In addition, a further three councils have been newly rated at zero stars. Overall therefore, the number of zero star councils has reduced.

Changes to performance ratings in –year

22. SSI's policy on star ratings is that they will be published each year, and for the most part will not be changed during the year. For councils with a zero star rating, a higher rating may be awarded later, if robust and substantial evidence of improvement becomes available. Conversely, if serious concerns about performance arise during the year, a council's rating may be adjusted to zero stars, and special monitoring arrangements put in place.

Annex 1: Judgements and Ratings for all councils

Key: Arrows indicate a change in judgement and/or star rating since November 2002.

Council	Type of Council	Region	Adults			Children			Performance Rating			
			Serving people well?	Capacity for improvement?		Serving people well?	Capacity for improvement?					
Three Stars												
Bexley	OL	L	Yes	↑	Excellent		Yes	↑	Excellent	***		
Blackburn with Darwen	UA	NW	Most		Excellent	↑	Most		Excellent	↑	***	↑
Bolton	M	NW	Most	↑	Excellent		Most		Excellent		***	↑
Cornwall	S	SW	Most		Promising		Yes		Excellent		***	
Derbyshire	S	EM	Yes	↑	Excellent	↑	Most	↑	Promising		***	↑
Kensington & Chelsea	IL	L	Yes		Excellent		Yes		Excellent		***	
Kent	S	SE	Most		Excellent		Most		Excellent		***	
Kingston upon Thames	OL	L	Most		Excellent		Yes		Promising		***	
Kirklees	M	Y&H	Most		Excellent	↑	Most		Excellent	↑	***	↑
Knowsley	M	NW	Most		Excellent	↑	Most	↑	Excellent	↑	***	↑
Leicestershire	S	EM	Most		Excellent		Most		Excellent		***	
Newcastle upon Tyne	M	NE	Most		Excellent		Most		Excellent		***	
North Lincolnshire	UA	Y&H	Most		Excellent		Most		Excellent		***	
Sunderland	M	NE	Most		Excellent		Most		Excellent		***	
Wandsworth	IL	L	Most		Excellent		Most		Excellent		***	
Westminster	IL	L	Yes		Excellent		Yes		Excellent		***	
Two Stars												
Barnet	OL	L	Most		Promising		Some		Promising	↑	**	↑
Barnsley	M	Y&H	Most		Excellent		Some		Promising		**	
Bath & NE Somerset	UA	SW	Some		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Bracknell Forest	UA	SE	Some		Promising	↑	Most	↑	Promising	↑	**	↑
Bradford	M	Y&H	Most	↑	Promising		Some		Promising		**	↑
Bristol	UA	SW	Some		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	↑
Bury	M	NW	Some		Promising	↑	Most		Promising	↑	**	↑
Calderdale	M	Y&H	Most		Promising		Some		Promising		**	
Cambridgeshire	S	E	Some		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Camden	IL	L	Some	↓	Excellent		Most		Promising		**	
Cheshire	S	NW	Most		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
City of London	IL	L	Most		Promising		Most		Promising		**	

Croydon	OL	L	Most	↑	Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	↑
Derby	UA	EM	Some		Promising		Most		Promising	↓	**	
Devon	S	SW	Most	↑	Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Doncaster	M	Y&H	Some		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	↑
Dorset	S	SW	Some	↓	Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Dudley	M	WM	Most		Promising		Some		Promising		**	
Durham	S	NE	Most	↑	Promising		Some		Promising		**	↑
East Riding of Yorkshire	UA	Y&H	Most		Promising		Some		Promising		**	
East Sussex	S	SE	Some	↑	Promising	↑	Most		Excellent	↑	**	↑
Essex	S	E	Some		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Gateshead	M	NE	Some		Excellent	↑	Most		Excellent	↑	**	
Gloucestershire	S	SW	Some		Promising	↑	Most	↑	Promising	↑	**	↑
Hackney	IL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Most	↑	Promising		**	↑
Hammersmith & Fulham	IL	L	Most		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	
Hampshire	S	SE	Most	↑	Excellent	↑	Some	↓	Excellent	↑	**	
Hartlepool	UA	NE	Most		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	
Herefordshire	UA	WM	Some		Uncertain	↓	Most		Excellent	↑	**	
Hertfordshire	S	E	Most		Promising	↓	Most		Promising		**	
Isle of Wight	UA	SE	Most	↑	Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Kingston upon Hull	UA	Y&H	Most	↑	Uncertain	↓	Most		Uncertain	↓	**	
Leeds	M	Y&H	Most	↑	Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Leicester	UA	EM	Most	↑	Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	↑
Luton	UA	E	Most		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	
Manchester	M	NW	Most		Promising	↑	Some		Promising	↑	**	↑
Medway Towns	UA	SE	Some	↓	Uncertain	↓	Most		Excellent		**	
Middlesbrough	UA	NE	Most		Promising		Some	↓	Promising		**	
Milton Keynes	UA	SE	Most	↑	Promising		Most	↑	Promising	↓	**	↑
North Yorkshire	S	Y&H	Most		Promising		Most	↑	Promising	↑	**	↑
Northumberland	S	NE	Most		Promising		Some		Promising		**	
Nottingham	UA	EM	Most		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Nottinghamshire	S	EM	Some		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Oxfordshire	S	SE	Some		Promising	↑	Most	↑	Promising	↑	**	↑
Poole	UA	SW	Most		Promising		Some		Promising		**	
Portsmouth	UA	SE	Most	↑	Excellent	↑	Most		Promising		**	
Redbridge	OL	L	Most	↑	Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Rutland	UA	EM	Most	↑	Promising	↑	Some		Promising	↑	**	↑

Salford	M	NW	Most	↑	Promising		Some	↓	Promising		**	
Sandwell	M	WM	Most		Excellent		Some		Promising		**	
Sefton	M	NW	Most		Promising		Some		Promising		**	
Sheffield	M	Y&H	Some		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	↑
Shropshire	S	WM	Most		Promising		Some		Promising		**	
Solihull	M	WM	Most	↑	Promising		Some		Promising		**	↑
Somerset	S	SW	Most	↑	Excellent	↑	Some		Promising		**	↑
South Gloucestershire	UA	SW	Some		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Southampton	UA	SE	Most	↑	Excellent	↑	Some		Excellent	↑	**	↑
Southwark	IL	L	Most		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	
St. Helens	M	NW	Most	↑	Promising		Some		Promising		**	↑
Stockport	M	NW	Most	↑	Promising		Some		Promising		**	↑
Stockton-on-Tees	UA	NE	Most		Promising		Some		Promising		**	
Surrey	S	SE	Most	↑	Excellent	↑	Some		Promising	↑	**	↑
Tameside	M	NW	Most	↑	Promising		Some		Promising		**	↑
Telford & the Wrekin	UA	WM	Some		Excellent	↑	Some		Excellent	↑	**	↑
Thurrock	UA	E	Most		Promising		Some	↓	Promising		**	
Tower Hamlets	IL	L	Most	↑	Promising		Most		Excellent		**	
Warrington	UA	NW	Most		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Warwickshire	S	WM	Some		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	↑
West Sussex	S	SE	Some		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Wigan	M	NW	Most		Promising		Most		Promising		**	
Wiltshire	S	SW	Most	↑	Promising	↑	Some	↓	Promising		**	↑
Wokingham	UA	SE	Some		Promising		Most	↑	Promising		**	↑
Worcestershire	S	WM	Most	↑	Promising		Some		Promising		**	↑
York	UA	Y&H	Some		Promising		Most		Excellent	↑	**	

One Star

Barking & Dagenham	OL	L	Some		Uncertain		Some		Promising	↑	*	
Blackpool	UA	NW	Some		Uncertain		Some		Uncertain		*	
Bournemouth	UA	SW	Some		Promising		Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
Brent	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising	↑	*	
Brighton & Hove	UA	SE	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Uncertain		*	
Buckinghamshire	S	SE	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising	↑	*	
Coventry	M	WM	Some		Promising		Some	↑	Uncertain		*	↑
Darlington	UA	NE	Some		Promising		Some		Promising		*	
Ealing	OL	L	Some		Uncertain		Most	↑	Promising		*	

Enfield	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
Greenwich	IL	L	Some		Promising		Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
Halton	UA	NW	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising	↑	*	
Haringey	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some	↑	Uncertain		*	↑
Harrow	OL	L	Some		Uncertain		Some		Promising	↑	*	
Havering	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising		*	
Hillingdon	OL	L	Some		Uncertain		Some	↓	Promising		*	
Hounslow	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising		*	
Isles of Scilly	S	SW	Some	↓	Uncertain		Some		Uncertain		*	
Islington	IL	L	Most	↑	Promising		Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
Lambeth	IL	L	Some		Uncertain	↓	Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
Lancashire	S	NW	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising		*	
Lewisham	IL	L	Most		Promising		Some		Uncertain		*	
Lincolnshire	S	EM	Some		Promising		Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
Liverpool	M	NW	Some		Uncertain	↓	Some		Promising		*	
Merton	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising	↑	*	
Newham	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising	↑	*	
Norfolk	S	E	Some		Promising		Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
North East Lincolnshire	UA	Y&H	Some		Promising	↑	Some	↑	Promising	↑	*	↑
North Somerset	UA	SW	Some		Promising		Some		Promising		*	
North Tyneside	M	NE	Some		Uncertain		Some		Promising		*	
Northamptonshire	S	EM	Some		Promising		Some		Promising	↑	*	
Peterborough	UA	E	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising		*	
Reading	UA	SE	Some		Excellent	↑	Some	↓	Promising		*	↓
Redcar & Cleveland	UA	NE	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising	↑	*	
Richmond upon Thames	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising		*	
Rochdale	M	NW	Some		Promising		Some	↓	Uncertain	↓	*	↓
Rotherham	M	Y&H	Most		Promising	↓	Some	↓	Uncertain	↓	*	↓
Slough	UA	SE	Some		Promising		Some		Promising		*	
South Tyneside	M	NE	Some		Promising		Some		Promising		*	
Southend-on-Sea	UA	E	Some		Promising		Some		Promising		*	
Staffordshire	S	WM	Most		Uncertain		Some		Promising		*	
Stoke-on-Trent	UA	WM	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
Suffolk	S	E	Some		Promising		Some		Promising		*	
Sutton	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	Some		Promising		*	
Torbay	UA	SW	Some		Uncertain		Some		Uncertain		*	

Trafford	M	NW	Some		Uncertain		Some		Uncertain		*	
Wakefield	M	Y&H	Some	↑	Promising		Some		Promising		*	↑
Walsall	M	WM	Some	↑	Promising	↑	Some	↑	Promising	↑	*	↑
West Berkshire	UA	SE	Some		Promising		Some		Promising		*	
Windsor & Maidenhead	UA	SE	Some		Uncertain		Some	↑	Uncertain		*	↑
Wirral	M	NW	Most	↑	Uncertain	↓	Some		Uncertain	↓	*	
Wolverhampton	M	WM	Most		Promising		Some		Uncertain		*	

Zero Stars

Bedfordshire	S	E	Some		Promising	↑	No		Uncertain		-	
Birmingham	M	WM	Some		Promising	↑	No		Uncertain		-	
Bromley	OL	L	Some		Promising	↑	No		Promising	↑	-	
Cumbria	S	NW	Some		Uncertain		No	↓	Poor	↓	-	↓
Oldham	M	NW	Some		Uncertain		Some		Poor	↓	-	↓
Plymouth	UA	SW	Some	↓	Uncertain		No	↓	Poor	↓	-	↓
Swindon	UA	SW	No	↓	Uncertain	↑	Some		Uncertain		-	
Waltham Forest	OL	L	Some		Uncertain		No		Uncertain		-	

ANNEX 2:

Distribution of Star Ratings in percentages, for November 2002 and November 2003 by region and type of council.

	Star Rating - % of councils							
	-		P		PP		PPP	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
Eastern	10%	10%	40%	40%	50%	50%	0%	0%
East Midlands	0%	0%	44%	22%	44%	56%	11%	22%
North East	0%	0%	42%	33%	42%	50%	17%	17%
North West	0%	9%	59%	32%	41%	45%	0%	14%
London	9%	6%	58%	52%	18%	27%	15%	15%
South East	11%	0%	53%	32%	32%	63%	5%	5%
South West	6%	13%	56%	25%	31%	56%	6%	6%
West Midlands	21%	7%	50%	36%	29%	57%	0%	0%
Yorkshire & Humber	13%	0%	27%	20%	53%	67%	7%	13%
Inner London	0%	0%	38%	31%	38%	46%	23%	23%
Outer London	15%	10%	70%	65%	5%	15%	10%	10%
Metropolitan District	11%	6%	44%	31%	39%	50%	6%	14%
Shire County	6%	6%	51%	23%	34%	60%	9%	11%
Unitary Authority	7%	4%	48%	35%	43%	57%	2%	4%
England	8%	5%	50%	35%	35%	49%	7%	11%

Distribution of Star Ratings in numbers and percentages for 2003, by region and type of council.

	Star Rating - Number of councils					Star Rating - % of councils				
	-	P	PP	PPP	0	-	P	PP	PPP	
Eastern	1	4	5	0	10%	40%	50%	0%		
East Midlands	0	2	5	2	0%	22%	56%	22%		
North East	0	4	6	2	0%	33%	50%	17%		
North West	2	7	10	3	9%	32%	45%	14%		
London	2	17	9	5	6%	52%	27%	15%		
South East	0	6	12	1	0%	32%	63%	5%		
South West	2	4	9	1	13%	25%	56%	6%		
West Midlands	1	5	8	0	7%	36%	57%	0%		
Yorkshire & Humber	0	3	10	2	0%	20%	67%	13%		
Inner London	0	4	6	3	0%	31%	46%	23%		
Outer London	2	13	3	2	10%	65%	15%	10%		
Metropolitan District	2	11	18	5	6%	31%	50%	14%		
Shire County	2	8	21	4	6%	23%	60%	11%		
Unitary Authority	2	16	26	2	4%	35%	57%	4%		
England	8	52	74	16	5%	35%	49%	11%		