



for an independent overview
of local public services

News Release

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COLLABORATION IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR BETTER SERVICES AND VALUE FOR MONEY, CAA REVIEW SAYS

A review of Comprehensive Area Assessment, published today, says that councils, the police, NHS, business and voluntary organisations all need to learn from each other and work more closely together if they are to improve services and increase value for money. Journalists can download the embargoed review from <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/oneplaceoverview>

The report from the six inspectorates (see note 1) responsible for assessing local public services in England looks at the first year of the new assessments. An independent report evaluating CAA and its costs will be published in Spring 2010.

The picture across public services is broadly one of improvement, and the review reflects CAA's focus on local priorities, showing a wide variation in what different areas of England consider pressing issues. But it also indicates that there must be a greater focus on achieving better value for money.

The CAA website www.direct.gov.uk/oneplace, launched in December 2009, brings together independent, expert views of how well local areas are being served, based on the combined assessments of the inspectorates. It was designed to help those using and paying for local public services, to hold them to account. The information is also a way for those providing services to learn from effective action elsewhere.

- Devon brought together councils, health services, police, courts and the voluntary sector to counter domestic violence. Since the scheme began there has been a six-fold increase in the number of victims helped, 6,000 staff from local services and businesses have been trained to recognise signs, and prosecution and conviction rates have also risen.
- Wolverhampton's Keep it Safe programme made the city centre safer and more enjoyable place to be at night. The primary care trust worked with police, fire service, council and voluntary groups and business. Focusing on sensible drinking, safer sex and getting home safely, the partnership secured a 29 per cent decrease in violent crime, as well as reductions in alcohol related ambulance calls and visits to A and E.





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Michael O'Higgins, the Chairman of the Audit Commission, said:

'Oneplace has made a lot of interesting information available for the first time in straightforward language to local people. It shows that much progress has been made, although stubborn problems persist, including pockets of bad health, inadequate housing and inequality.

'It highlights examples of really imaginative solutions to serious problems that other parts of the country should steal or adapt. It is encouraging that places like Camden and Sunderland are building on existing good practice by looking at what can be learnt from green flag examples from other areas. But it is frustrating that more are not learning from each other.

'The good news is that for every problem local public services face, this review shows someone, somewhere, is tackling it intelligently and innovatively.'

The report contains examples of both cross-organisation and cross-boundary working

- Manchester saw a cut of more than 90 per cent in gang-related firearms incidents in 2009. Manchester City Council worked with Trafford Council and Greater Manchester police on young people at risk of getting involved with gangs and guns.
- In 2008 South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils formed shared management teams saving £500,000.

Councillors and other local leaders must ensure they know all they can and that their data is relevant and up-to-date.

- Tameside Council found out more about family eligibility and its own spending patterns and was able to redesign free school meals, increasing uptake while cutting the cost of processing applications from £16.07 to 6 pence each.
- In 2009 Oldham managed to buck the national upward trend in the number of young people not in education, employment or training. Better qualifications were achieved, particular by those from poorer backgrounds. A 'junior university' targeted those who may otherwise have left education at age 16, and there was success in attracting teenage mothers into education or training. The council worked closely with the sixth form college, university and other partners to achieve this.
- East Riding of Yorkshire reviewed the cost and quality of its drugs and alcohol service and what people thought of it, and used the information to save £250,000.





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The review found freedom and flexibility matter and many of the innovations highlighted in oneplace involved local leaders adjusting national programmes to suit their areas.

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