

## **Cabinet**

**29<sup>th</sup> February 2012**



### **Children and Young People's Services: Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services**

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#### **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**David Williams, Corporate Director, Children and Young People's  
Services**

**Councillor Claire Vasey, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and  
Young People's Services**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides Cabinet with the outcomes of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services.

#### **Background**

2. All local authority areas are to have at least one inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in the 3 year period following April 2009.
3. The inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services took place in County Durham from 28 November 2011 – 13 December 2011.
4. The inspection focussed on evaluating outcomes for children and young people and the impact that practice and services have on improving outcomes including through managing risk and minimising the incidence of child abuse and neglect. The programme of inspection was carried out by 5 experienced inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission under section 20 of the Children Act 2004.
5. The wide range of evidence evaluated during the inspection process included:
  - interviews and focus groups with front line professionals, elected members, community representatives, managers and senior officers from Durham County Council, Durham Primary Care Trust, Council Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV);
  - analysis of reports and data;
  - audit and review of 58 case files for children and young people;
  - outcomes of the most recent annual unannounced inspection of local authority contact, referral and assessment services undertaken in Feb 2011; and
  - discussions with children, young people and families receiving services.

6. All inspection judgements are made using the following four point scale.

Outstanding (Grade 1)	A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good (Grade 2)	A service that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate (Grade 3)	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate (Grade 4)	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

### Ofsted Judgement and Gradings

7. There are four key summary judgements. Safeguarding services in County Durham were judged to be **outstanding for both overall effectiveness and outstanding for capacity for improvement**. Services for looked after children were rated as **good for overall effectiveness and outstanding for capacity for improvement**.

8. The tables below contain a full breakdown of all judgements made as part of Ofsted's inspection.

<b>Safeguarding services</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Capacity for improvement</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people	
Children and young people are safe and feel safe	Outstanding
Quality of provision	Good
The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe	Good
Leadership and management	
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Performance management and quality assurance	Outstanding
Partnership working	Outstanding
Equality and diversity	Outstanding

<b>Services for looked after children</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Capacity for improvement</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?	
Being healthy	Good
Staying safe	Good
Enjoying and achieving	Good
Making a positive contribution, including user engagement	Outstanding
Economic well-being	Adequate
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Performance management and quality assurance	Outstanding
Equality and diversity	Good

## **Comparison with other Local Authorities**

9. Nationally, as at 5 January 2012, there had been 92 reports published by Ofsted of inspection of Local Authorities' safeguarding and looked after children's services. Durham has achieved the joint best judgement nationally in the 92 inspections. Alongside Lincolnshire, Durham is the only other Local Authority to achieve 3 'outstanding' judgements out of the four key summary judgements. The County Council and its partners can be rightly proud of this achievement

## **Key findings**

10. Ofsted publishes a report to evidence how the judgements have been derived. A full copy of the report is attached in Appendix 2. The report cites numerous examples of good and outstanding work in the areas of safeguarding and looked after children's services. Members may wish to note the particular feedback in relation to their own work. "Elected members are strong and effective champions for the children and young people of Durham and are committed to improving their life chances wherever possible.... The Overview and Scrutiny committee provides robust scrutiny of children's safeguarding services. The committee uses consultation with young people to inform their work and is passionately committed to improving services and the life changes of children and young people in Durham." (para 79). Political commitment is described as 'very strong' (para 100) with elected members championing the needs of looked after children and demonstrating improvement in outcomes as a result of their effective corporate parenting. (para 99)

## **Areas for Improvement**

11. As part of the report Ofsted identify actions for improvement. A detailed action plan with clearly identified roles, responsibilities and timescales is being developed based on these suggested areas to drive further improvement.

## **Risks**

12. Whilst the inspection has highlighted the outstanding work in the area of safeguarding, this must not lead to complacency. Safeguarding children and young people always carries a high degree of risk. The County Council can take much assurance that systems, provision, leadership and management and social work practice have all received such positive comment in the report. However, experience nationally shows that safeguarding tragedies can and do occur when, for example, the safety of children can rely on every single judgement and the action of very many professionals from a range of agencies being sound. Durham is well placed to minimise these risks but it can never be wholly eliminated.

## **Summary**

13. The inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services in County Durham was extremely positive and evidenced the highly effective multi agency work in the county that focuses on improving outcomes for children,

young people and their families. County Durham has achieved the joint highest performance to date across England for overall effectiveness and capacity for improvement for both safeguarding and looked after services.

### **Recommendations and reasons**

14. Cabinet is asked to note the report.

### **Background papers**

15. Ofsted inspection reports of all local authority areas (all available on Ofsted website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk))

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**Contact: Suzanne Carty**

**Tel: 0191 383 3880**

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**Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – N/A – Report for information only

**Staffing** – N/A

**Risk** – Covered in body of report

**Equality and Diversity** – N/A – Report for information only

**Accommodation** - N/A – Report for information only

**Crime and Disorder** - N/A – Report for information only

**Human Rights** - N/A – Report for information only

**Consultation** - N/A – Report for information only

**Procurement** - N/A – Report for information only

**Disability Discrimination Act** - N/A – Report for information only

**Legal Implications** - N/A – Report for information only

## Appendix 2 – Ofsted Report

To insert once final report received