# ILACS Inspection Durham

May 2022

# Outcome of the Inspection

- Impact of leaders on social work practice - **OUTSTANDING**
- Experiences and progress of children who need help and protection - **GOOD**
- Experiences and progress of Children in care and care leavers - **GOOD**
- Overall Effectiveness - **GOOD**

# Key headlines and themes

- Services have improved since 2019
- Swift and purposeful response to the areas identified for priority action in the focused visit in 2021
- Leaders have an  acute and accurate knowledge of the needs of children in Durham with  an accurate self assessment
- Effective and responsive services have been developed
- Political leaders are committed and scrutinous
- Children are a high corporate priority
- Strategic partnerships are strong
- Corporate parenting strategy is ambitious

# Key headlines and themes

- Highly innovative and specialist teams are providing high quality support to the most vulnerable children
- Core social work practice is effective
- Relationship based practice is a strength
- Partnership work with families to achieve sustained change is a strength
- Children and families are making sustainable progress

# Areas for improvement

- The response to children who go missing from home and care
- Sufficiency of short break placements; respite and sessional care for disabled children
- Pathway assessments and planning for care leavers

# Children in Care - Feedback

- Children are brought into care at the appropriate time
- Well supported by committed social workers
- Early consideration given to permanent care options
- Children live in caring and stable homes where they make progress
- IRO's know their children well
- Parents, carers and children are encouraged to participate in review meetings
- Opportunities for children to share their views and opinions in different forums
- A vibrant and enthusiastic CICC

# Children in Care - Feedback

- Children speak highly of their social workers and feel listened to
- Children are making good progress
- Virtual School is championing the educational needs of CIC
- Leaders are working hard to increase sufficiency and choice of placed for CIC
- An increase in the number of foster carer households
- Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers is rigorous
- LA has widened the pool of adopters via the RAA
- Children aged 16 and 17 are well supported in supported accommodation

# Care Leavers

- Strong relationships with Young People's Advisors (YPA's)
- YP described feeling cared for and were exceptionally positive about their YPA
- Education, employment and training needs are identified
- Vast majority live in appropriate accommodation of their choice
- Staying put arrangements are increasing
- Care leaver's hub is a positive achievement and YP are proud of its development

# Impact of leaders on social work practice

- Strong practice model – Signs of Safety
- A drive to achieve sustainable change for families
- Good understanding of the needs of Durham's children
- Development of highly innovative, specialist teams
- Service restructures have been welcomed by children and staff and have significantly enhanced social work services
- QA programme is comprehensive

# The workforce..

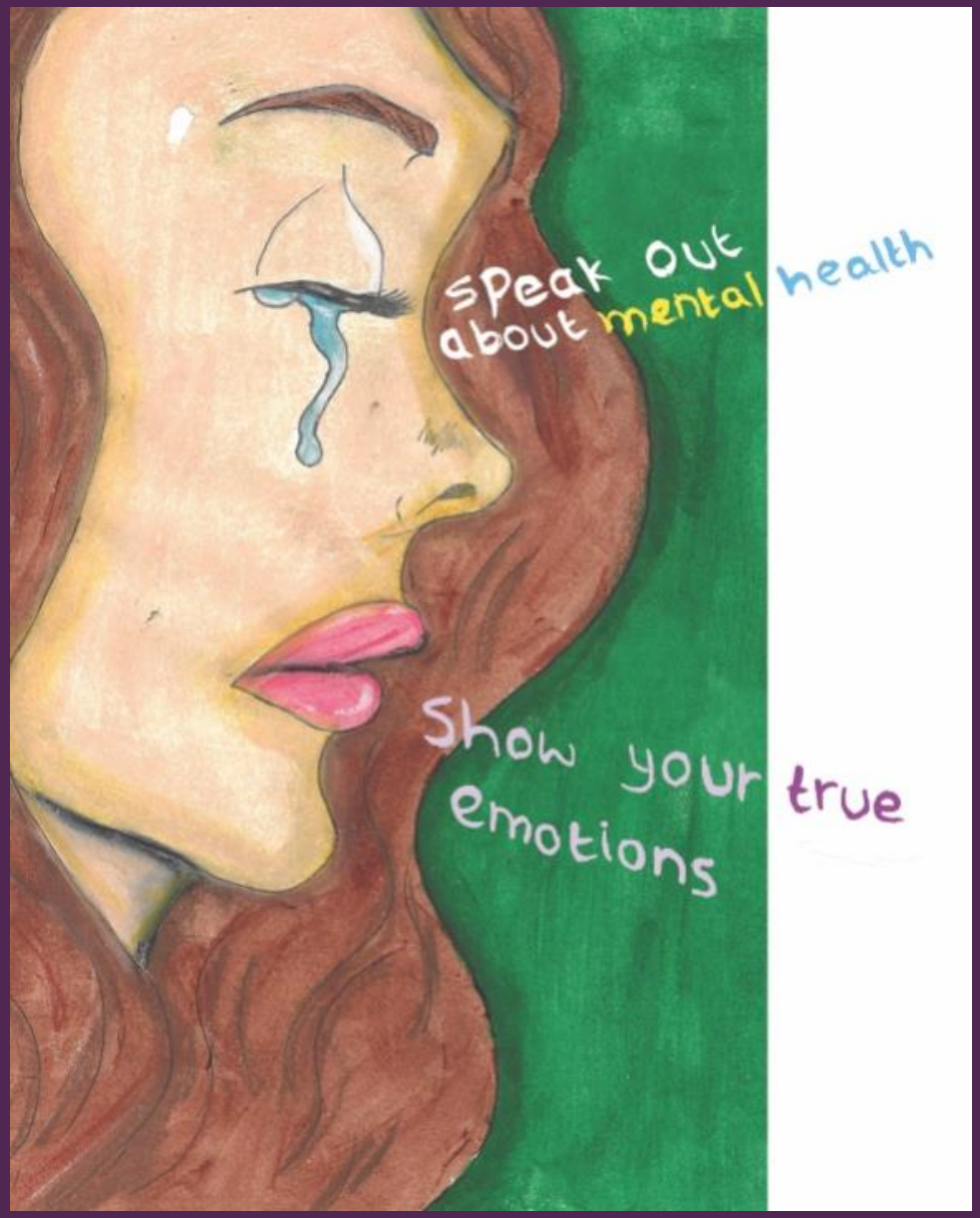
- Inspectors met a range of highly skilled and motivated social workers with aspirational aims for their own practice and are proud that this practice is achieving positive outcomes for children
- They like working for Durham
- The workforce offer is substantial
- Ambitious aims for Durham to be an employer of choice locally
- There is mutual respect between leaders and social workers that creates a positive and open working culture
- This is having a direct and positive impact on services for children

“Sensitive and proportionate early help”

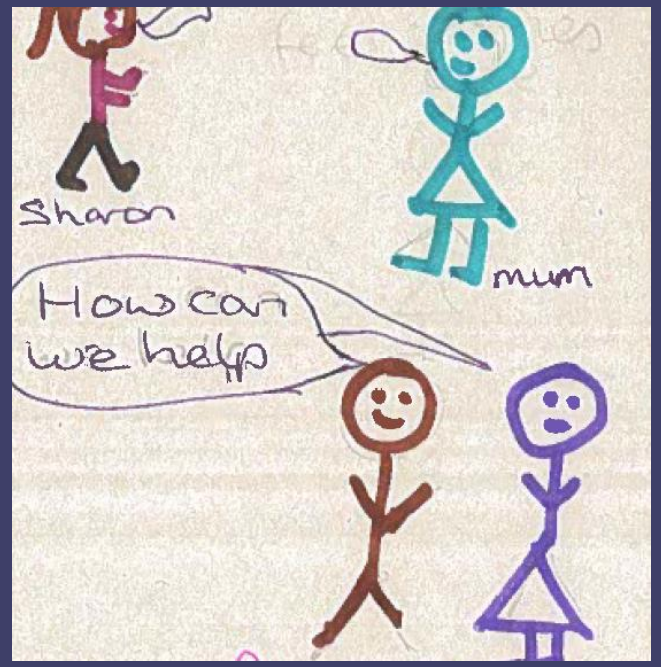
“Timely allocation of a social worker”

“Effective use of family network meetings”

“Robust and helpful family led support plans”



# “Robust management oversight and grip of children in legal proceedings”




# “Prompt assessments of children who present as homeless”

“Children receive an effective and proportionate response”

“Risks reducing”

“Circumstances improving”

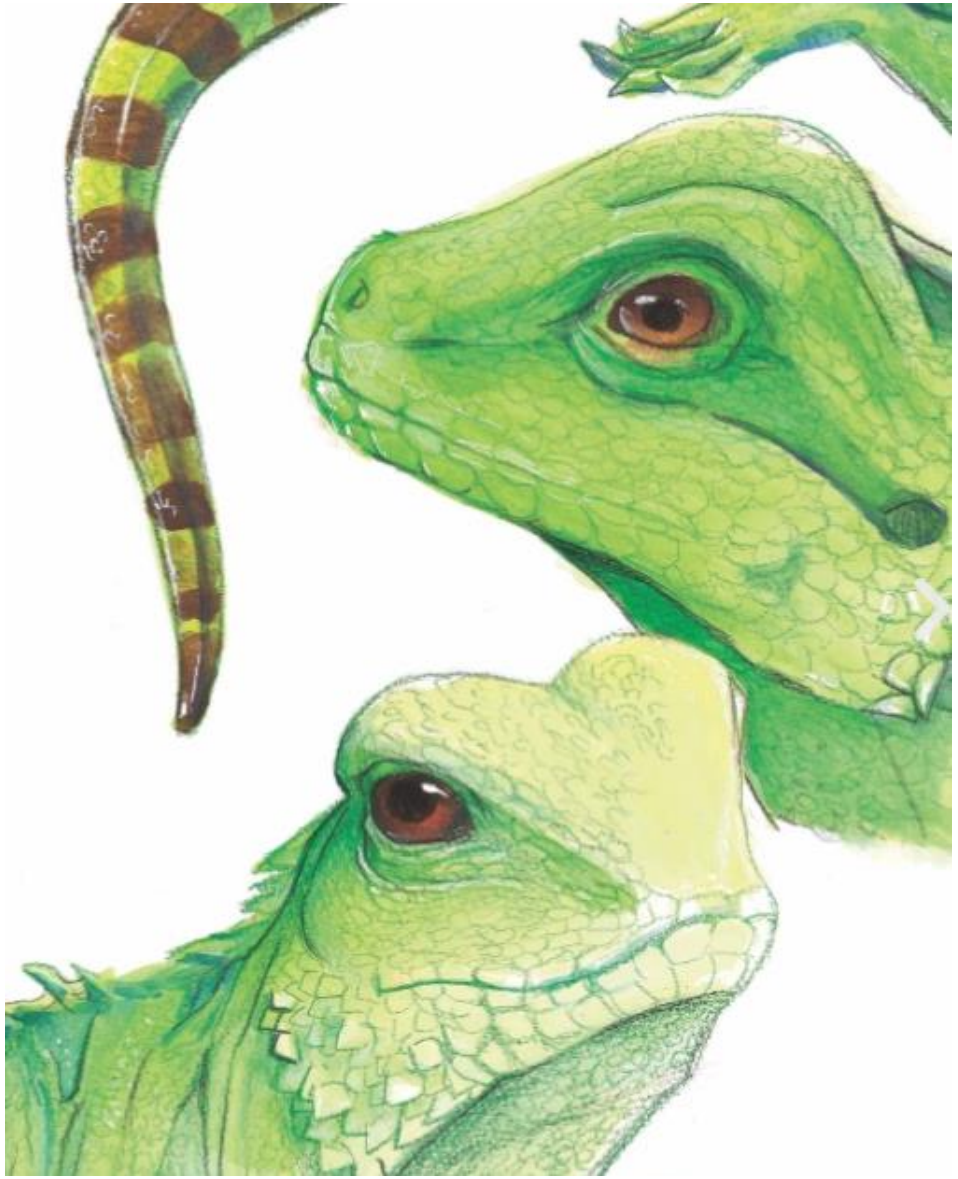
“Strong pre-birth assessments”

“Rigorous pre-birth planning”

“Partnership with families”

“Robust analysis of risk and strengths”

“Achieve real sustainable change”



“Highly innovative specialist teams”

“High-quality support”

“Children make progress and their circumstances improve”

“Proactive culture”

“Track children’s and families’ progress accurately”

“Improve children’s circumstances in the longer term, preventing multiple re-referrals”

# “Timely and robust decisions about children’s long-term arrangements”

“Children at risk of exploitation are appropriately identified”

“Working hard with local partners”

“Shared understanding of the model of practice”

“Children are involved in a wide range of hobbies and interests”

“Children meet their full potential”

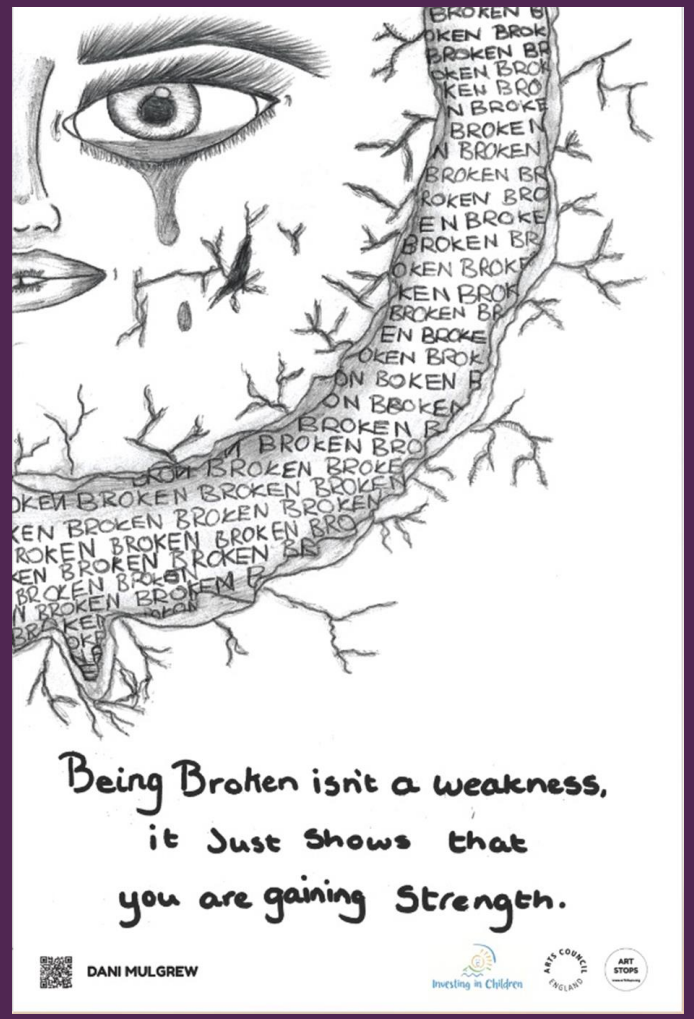
“Tailored and effective support from the ‘Full Circle’ team”

“Durham provides a range of services that offer extra support to both children and their carers when they are under pressure”

"The local authority designated officers are experienced and effective"

"IROs know their children well"

# “Children’s aspirations are being recognised”



“Assessments of connected carers are completed promptly”

“The recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers and adopters are rigorous”

Foster Care Stars 2022

Durham County Council

#Fostering Durham

“Strong practice model ”

“Children are benefiting from relationship-based practice”

“Skilled social workers and other professionals”

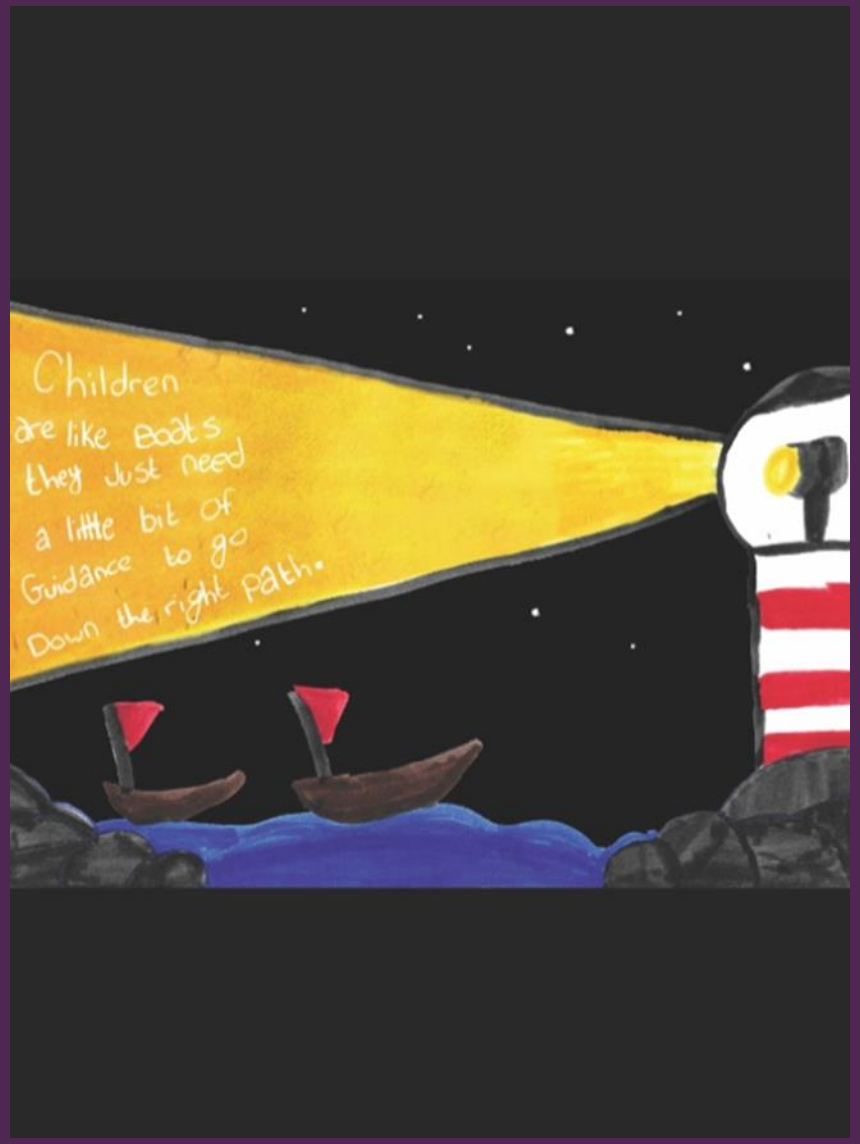
“Creative work to engage with children”

“Children report ‘feeling cared for’”

“Children in care live in caring homes”

“The virtual school is championing educational needs”

“Comprehensive systems in place to ensure parents who elect to home educate are providing an appropriate education”



"Care leavers were exceptionally positive about their YPA"

"YPA has been a long-term consistent figure in their life"

“Care leavers are extremely proud of the hub”

“Widens their horizons and begins to prepare them well for adulthood”

“Very vibrant and enthusiastic Children in Care Council”

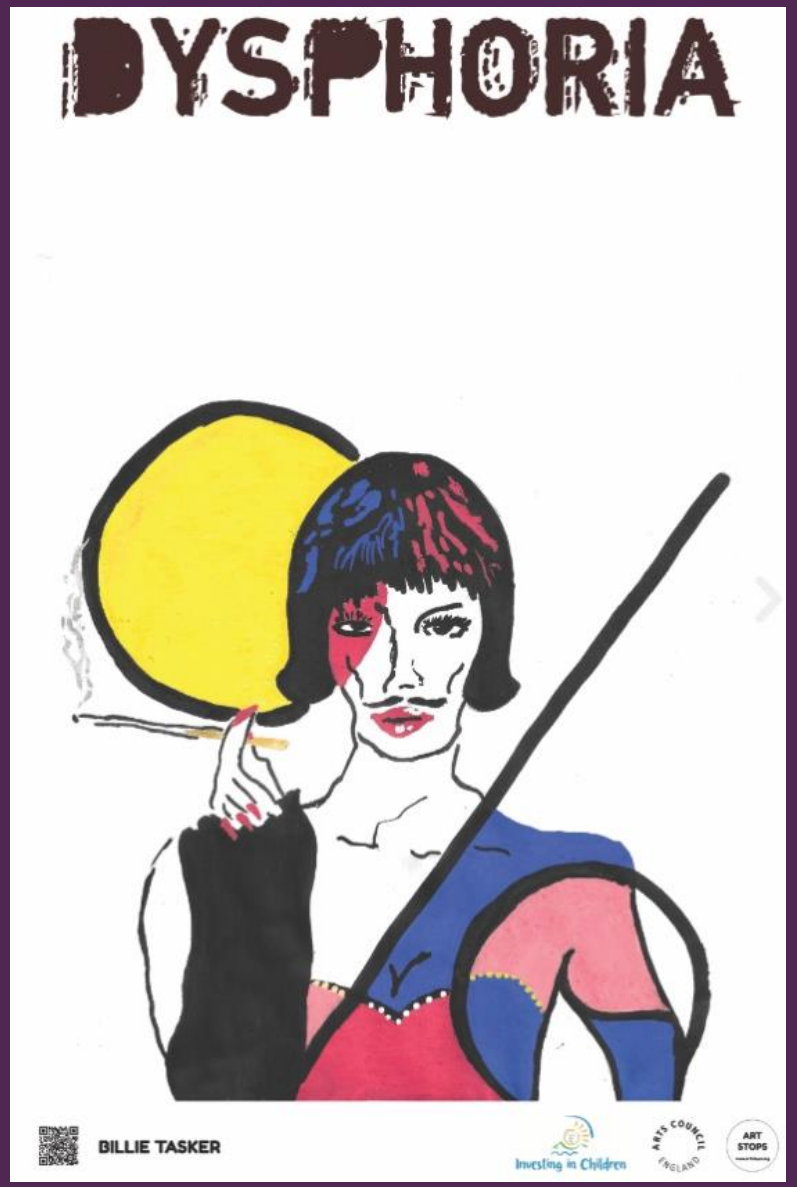
“ A clear commitment to hear from a wide range of children”

“Child protection chairs welcome participation of children”

“Opportunities for children to share their views and opinions in different forums”

“Ensure children’s voice is influencing key strategies”

“Children have a good access to participation activities”




“Social workers fully understand the importance of promoting children’s identity”

“Workforce offer is substantial”

“Wide range of training and development available”

“Structured career development pathways”

"Social workers like working for Durham"

"A positive and open workplace culture"

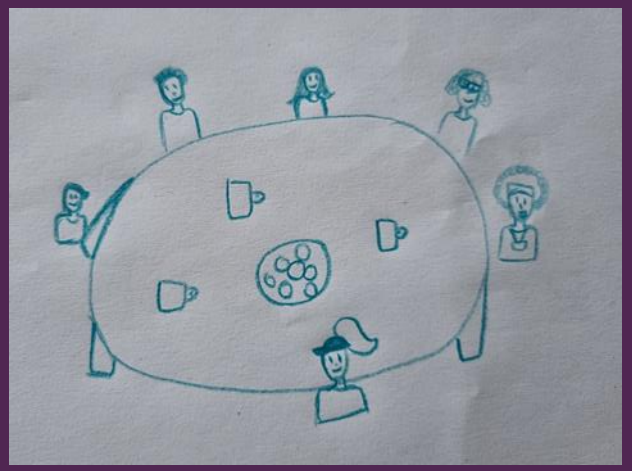
"Mutual respect between leaders and social workers"

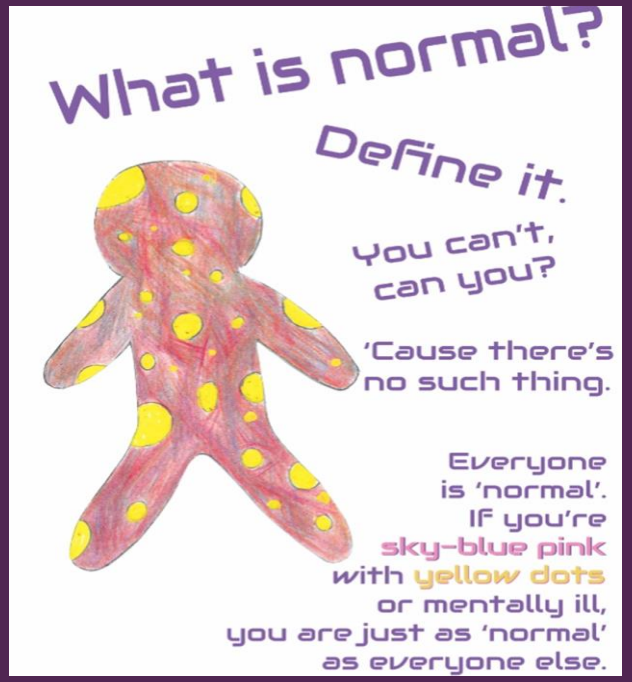
“Newly qualified social workers receive high levels of support”

“Impressive leadership academy”

“There is a focused sufficiency plan”

“Quality assurance programme is comprehensive”






"Political leaders are committed and scrutinous"

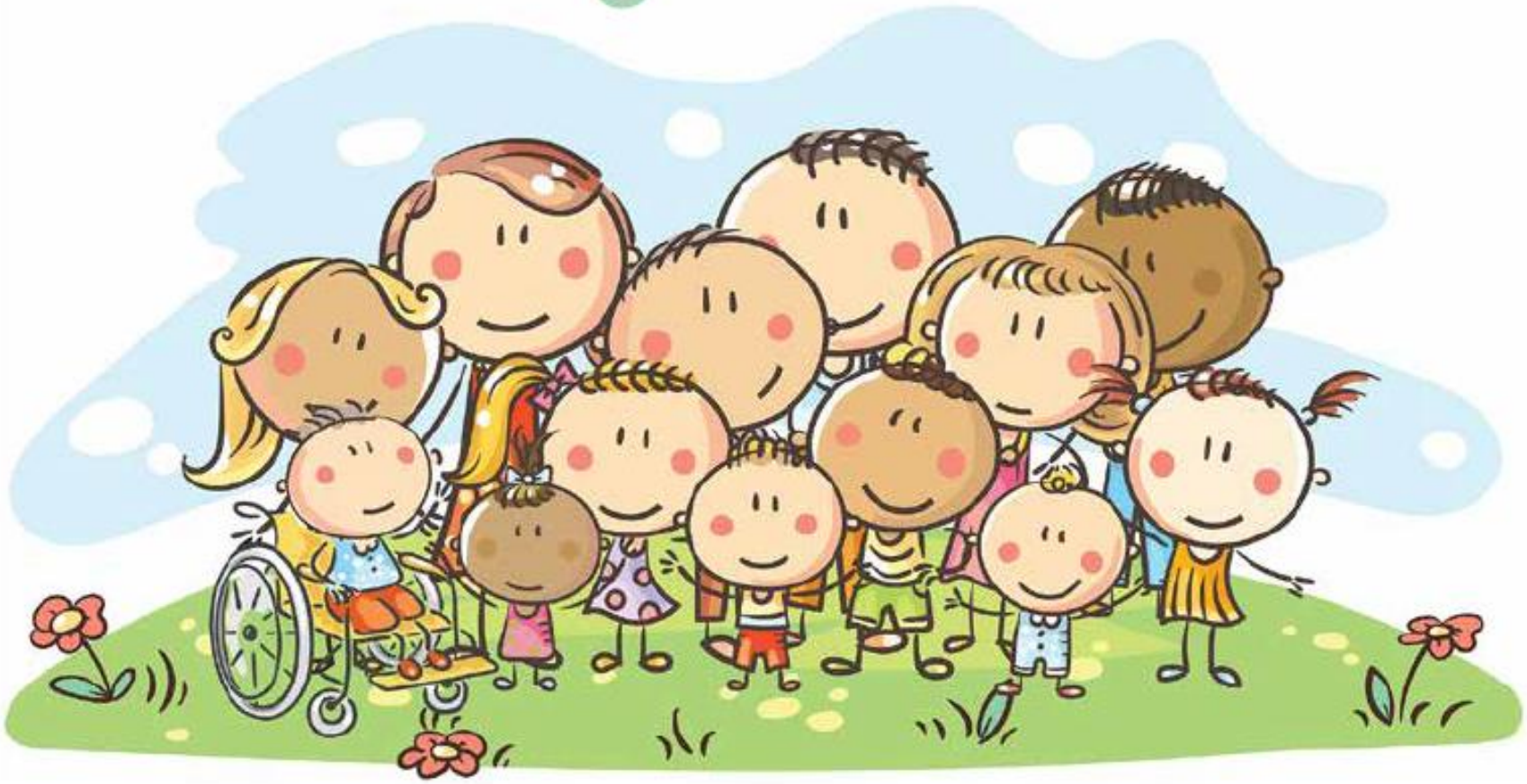
"There is ongoing investment "

"Leaders and managers at all levels continually strive for excellent social work"

"Ambitious aims to make them an employer of choice"

# Thank you

Durham County Council



Dear Colleague

# Thank you for all you have done

and continue to do to support, safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, their families and carers.

Our recent inspection has shown that your commitment and dedication is impressive. Let's keep working together to support our ambition of achieving the best possible outcomes for all our children and young people in County Durham.

John Pearce

Helen Fergusson

Martyn Stenton

Jim Murray

Thank you
Durham County Council
Durham County Council
NHS

The link to the full report on the Ofsted Website is here:

https://t.co/BhC0BE1nOU