

# Ofsted ILACS Inspection Durham May 2022

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23 September 2022



## Outcome of the Inspection

- 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

## 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 scrupulous
- 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
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## 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 Need of Help and Protection – feedback

- Well established and coordinated early help hubs
- Families receive sensitive and proportionate early help support
- Appropriate and timely management decision making of contacts
- Children are promptly transferred to Families First teams where immediate concerns are identified
- Good attendance and information sharing at strategy meetings
- Child protection enquiries are timely
- EDT response is prompt and proportionate
- Assessments are detailed and analytical
- Strong pre birth work
- Prompt assessments for children who are homeless

# Children in Need of Help and Protection Feedback

- Comprehensive assessments for Disabled children with creative direct work and sensitive partnership work with parents
- Effective use of family networks
- Robust and helpful family led plans leading to children's needs and risks reducing
- Child protection conferences involve parents and participation of children is welcomed
- Robust management oversight of legal proceedings
- Children at risk of exploitation are identified and risk assessed through multi agency meetings
- LADO are experienced and effective
- Improvements in Private Fostering arrangements for children
- Comprehensive systems in place to ensure children who are electively home educated receive an appropriate education

# 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

## Next Steps..

- Inspection Action Plan to address the areas for development identified
- Service Improvement Plan to be updated using all of the feedback received
- Addressing ongoing challenges in service demand and capacity
- Aim for the stars!



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Questions?