



Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE: AUDIT

DATE: 23 MAY, 2018

REVIEW OF EXTERNAL INSPECTION REPORTS – ADULTS & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Report of Cath McEvoy, Executive Director of Children's Services and Vanessa Bainbridge, Executive Director of Adults Social Care and Commissioning

Cabinet Members: Councillors Wayne Daley and Veronica Jones

1. Purpose of report

To inform Audit Committee members of the findings from external inspections that have taken place in the last 6 months (1st October 2017 to 31st March 2018) pertaining to Adults and Children's Services, and to provide assurance that the resulting reports are receiving due scrutiny.

2. Recommendations

Members acknowledge the findings and assess the effectiveness of the scrutiny arrangements.

3. Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the health and well being and education priorities in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

4. Key issues

Several inspections were made by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for Adult services within the period. All inspected services remain compliant.

Our five residential homes for children and young people including our National Secure Children's Home continue to be judged as good or better. Coanwood

was inspected in January as good with outstanding leadership, and Thorndale and Barndale were inspected in March and judged as outstanding in all areas.

For all Council-run residential homes, where the inspections result in areas for improvement, action plans are in place, which are reviewed regularly, to secure improvements and prepare for the next inspection. Inspections are over 2 to 5 days.

Children's Social Care received one of the new Focused Visits undertaken by Ofsted in February. The inspection looked at the Front Door which deals with referrals, assessments, child protection enquiries and initial child protection conferences. The conclusions were that we were taking steps to address the issues identified in the previous full inspection (2016) and positive progress was noted. The newly introduced Annual Conversation with Ofsted in March 2018 recognised these improvements and said the Council now knew itself well and had an effective improvement plan in place to make the changes necessary to improve practice.

In relation to school inspections that took place in this period, Ofsted has judged 86% of primary schools as good or outstanding at the end of March 2018, below the regional average and national average (90%), but a 5% increase on the end of September figure. The proportion in the secondary school sector is lower, 69% compared with 79% nationally. Members should note that once a school has been placed in special measures it will either close or become an academy, therefore statistically these percentage figures are unlikely to change quickly. In addition to the content herein, a detailed annual report from the Director of Education, updating members about education in Northumberland, went to Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny committee in the winter.

There were no inspections of Children's Centres, youth offending, special educational needs nor adult learning in the period. It is strongly expected that there will be an inspection in relation to Special Education Needs and Disabilities and Adult learning within the near future.

5. Background

The report focuses on external inspection activity in Adults and Children's Services between October 2017 and March 2018. CQC inspects Adults' provision and Ofsted inspects Children's provision, apart from the Youth Offending Service which is inspected by the HMIP (Probation inspectorate). The report identifies the outcome judgements of the inspections and assurance that appropriate actions are being taken in response to any recommendations. The full inspection reports are available on request.

ADULT CARE CQC INSPECTION STATUS

The table below lists the services inspected by CQC. NHFT (Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust) manages adult social care services on behalf of

the Council with several shared management posts in place. There were 2 inspections during the period and all services (see below) remain compliant, with 3 as outstanding:

Table 1

Provider	Date last inspected	Judgement	Comments
Chibburn Court	18.12.17	Good	
Sea Lodge	4.5.16	Good	
Tynedale House	24.4.17	Good	Caring outstanding
Shared Lives			Inspected May 2018
STSS - Central/SE	29.8.17	Outstanding	
STSS - Alnwick	20.2.18	N.A.	Awaiting draft report
STSS - Berwick	27.6.17	Outstanding	
STSS - West	4.7.17	Outstanding	

All recommendations arising from these inspections are supported with an action plan and monitoring reports are scrutinised by senior managers and arm's length Governance staff.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

This report features three types of inspections in Children's services: the Council's residential homes for children, the new Focused Visits and school inspections.

CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL OFSTED INSPECTION STATUS

Ofsted's and the Council's aim is that all children and young people deserve to live in children's homes that are judged outstanding or at least good. At the 31st March 2018, all of the Council's residential homes for children and young people were judged to be good or outstanding. Encouragingly, Thorndale and Barndale were once again judged to be outstanding in all areas and Coanwood was judged to be good with outstanding leadership. This is an excellent outcome.

For all children's homes, there are action plans in place to respond to any recommendations or areas for improvement identified from the inspections. These actions and the progress against them are updated by the Registered Managers and circulated to the Performance team. Where appropriate, there is internal challenge to assess if the areas for improvement are sufficiently addressed by the action plans. Where progress has not been sufficiently timely, challenges and agreed changes have been made by the service to meet recommendations accordingly.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE FRONT DOOR: FOCUSED VISIT

Children's Social Care received one of the new Focused Visits undertaken by Ofsted in February. It looked at the effectiveness of the Front Door which deals with referrals, assessments, child protection enquiries and initial child protection conferences. Following a 5 day period of notice, the visit lasted 2 days and reviewed work across the county.

The outcome letter noted there were robust arrangements in place with a redesigned Front Door and MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub), good early help pathways used well by partners, good assessments by newly qualified staff, and appropriate thresholds. The visit reported that our Improvement Plan was focused on the right priorities, and that good use of a wide range of performance and audit information led to managers identifying what needed to improve regarding the quality of practice. Encouragingly, there were no Priority Actions emerging from this visit. Developing assessment tools where domestic abuse or child sexual exploitation are suspected were areas for improvement. The Annual Conversation with Ofsted in March 2018 recognised these improvements and said the Council now knew itself well.

Progress on the Council's Improvement Plan is monitored monthly by the Children's Social Care Leadership Team and is reported through the Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Advisory Group (S&CPAG) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Members can access the most recent report to Overview and Scrutiny committee in March, on request.

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

There have been 20 primary school inspections between October 2017 and March 2018. Of those, none were judged to be outstanding, 19 to be good, one to be requires improvement and none to be inadequate.

Schools judged to be less than good receive monitoring visits from Ofsted and the outcomes of those are reported to the Senior Management Team. Two primary schools received monitoring visits during the period and both were judged to be taking effective action.

Those schools judged as inadequate and placed in special measures (due to concerns over the ability of the current leadership to bring about improvement) either close or become an academy.

Cumulatively, this means that at the end of the period, 86% of Primary schools were judged as good or outstanding at their most recent Ofsted inspection, an increase of 5% since September 2017. This is still below the North East average of 92% and the national average of 90%. Overall the number of children who are in primary schools not yet judged to be good or outstanding has fallen from 3781 in September 2017 to 2872. It is the prime responsibility of the governing bodies and head teachers of those schools to ensure improvements are made and those

schools and academies that buy into the Council’s school improvement service level agreement receive support and challenge from school improvement partners.

There have been seven published inspection reports of secondary and middle schools in this period. Of those, none were judged to be outstanding, four to be good, two to be requires improvement and one to be inadequate. Cumulatively, this means that at the end of the period, 69% of secondary schools were judged as good or outstanding at their most recent Ofsted inspection. Whilst this is a slowly improving picture, Northumberland remains below the national average of 79% (September 2017) and equal to the regional average of 69%.

One secondary school that had been judged to require improvement previously received a Section 8 monitoring visit during the period. The school was deemed to be taking effective action. In real terms, there are 7574 children (or 33.6%) who are in secondary or middle schools not yet judged to be good or outstanding at the end of the period. Working with schools to improve this is a continuing priority for the Council.

The Council commissions School Improvement Partners (SIP) to assist, monitor and challenge those schools to improve, one of the products being a termly SIP visit report which includes what judgement they conclude the school would receive if they were inspected at that point.

Members should note that periods between inspections range from 18 months to 3 years therefore statistics of this nature are slow to change and short term trend patterns difficult to identify. Thus the task of turning round this pattern of underachievement will take at least 3 years based upon the revised Ofsted inspection schedules.

6. Implications

Policy	Raising standards in social care and education are Council priorities.
Finance and value for money	None
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	Regulatory inspections of residential homes assess compliance with HR policies.
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None

Risk Assessment	Audit Committee reviewing a schedule of incoming inspection reports mitigates the risk of the council not taking appropriate action in respect of such issues. It also improves the governance framework.
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	Ensuring that external inspections are properly followed up will provide assurance to customers that service weaknesses are being addressed.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	All

7. Background papers:

Care Quality Commission inspection reports; Ofsted inspection reports; NCC Overview and Scrutiny reports

8. Report sign off

Officers	
Finance Officer	N.A.
Monitoring Officer/Legal	N.A.
Human Resources	N.A.
Procurement	N.A.
I.T.	N.A.
Executive Director of Adults Services and Commissioning	Vanessa Bainbridge
Executive Director of Children's Services	Cath Mcevoy
Portfolio Holder(s)	Wayne Daley / Veronica Jones

9. Author and Contact Details

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