



# Northumberland

## County Council

### **COMMITTEE: AUDIT**

**DATE: 27 NOVEMBER, 2019**

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

**Report of Cath Mcevoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adults Social Care and Children's Services**

**Cabinet Members:** Councillors Veronica Jones and Wayne Daley

#### **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 April 2019 to 30th September, 2019) pertaining to Adults and Children's Services, and to provide assurance that the resulting reports are receiving due scrutiny.

#### **2. Recommendations**

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

#### **3. Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the Living, Learning and Thriving corporate priorities.

#### **4. Key issues**

- All inspected services remain compliant in Adults social care. All Short term support services are judged Outstanding, and all other establishments are judged Good.
- Of our five residential homes for children and young people including our National Secure Children's Home, four continue to be judged as Good or Outstanding, but one, Phoenix House, was judged to be Requires Improvement at its inspection in September.

- Northumberland received a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) on the subject of Child Exploitation in June, 2019. Encouragingly, Northumberland did not receive any areas for priority action.
- In relation to school inspections that took place in this period, the overall impact is that Ofsted has judged 89% of primary schools as Good or Outstanding up to the end of September 2019, which is just above the national average (88%), and a 3% increase on the March 2019 figure. The proportion in the secondary school sector is lower, 63% compared with 76% nationally.
- External monitoring of the SEND WSOA (Special Education Needs and Disabilities Written Statement of Action) continues to take place every quarter. The DFE and NHS England are satisfied with the progress being made.
- The vast majority of early years provision in Northumberland continues to be judged by Ofsted as Good or better (98%), higher than the national average of 96%.

## 5. Background

The report focuses on external inspection activity in Adults and Children's Services between April 2019 and September 2019. The Care Quality Commission (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. All inspected services remain compliant in Adults social care. All Short term support services (STSS) are judged Outstanding, and all other establishments are judged Good.

Table 1

Provider	Judgement	Provider	Judgement
Chibburn Court	Good	STSS - Central/SE	Outstanding
Sea Lodge	Good	STSS - Alnwick	Outstanding
Tynedale Hse	Good (with Caring Outstanding)	STSS - Berwick	Outstanding
Shared Lives	Good	STSS - West	Outstanding
Hatfield Chase	Good (with Caring 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 five types of inspections in Children's services: the Council's residential homes for children; the JTAI; schools; SEND and early years.

### **Children's residential homes**

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. By the 30th September, the inspection of Phoenix House earlier in the month meant that one of the Council's residential homes was judged to be Requires Improvement to be Good - the rest remaining Outstanding or Good. All were inspected in the last 18 months and judgements for Barndale and Thorndale remain Outstanding across the board, Coanwood is judged as Good with Outstanding leadership, and Kylvie House secure unit is judged as Good.

Whilst it is disappointing that not all of our homes are now judged to be Good or Outstanding, the inspection at Phoenix House took place at a time when the home was caring for some extremely vulnerable young people who were presenting with very challenging behaviours. There is a detailed and robust improvement plan in place monitored via the Senior Manager for Looked after Children.

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 shared with the Performance team. Significant support, challenge and development work has already been undertaken by the responsible senior manager with the leadership and staff team at Phoenix. Where appropriate, there is internal challenge to assess if the areas for improvement are sufficiently addressed by the action plans. There is a clear focus on striving to provide the best care that we possibly can for our young people and for this to be reflected by improving the current judgement back to good or outstanding at the next inspection.

### **Safeguarding**

Northumberland received a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) on the subject of Child Exploitation in June, 2019. JTAs are multi-agency in focus and are designed to test out the partnership working in relation to a particular theme or topic. They involve Ofsted, CQC, HMIC and HMIP and the inspection scrutinised the work of the Council and its partners in the Police, health services and Probation.

The process follows 3 key elements: Inspection of the multi-agency front door arrangements; Deep Dive looking at specific case files where multi-agency partners are involved; Overview of the strategic leadership and management across the partnership. There is not a judgement attached to the inspection but rather a letter with a list of strengths and areas for development. Where practice is found to be concerning, there can be a requirement for 'Priority Areas for Action' which means immediate action needs to be taken. In all cases an action plan has to be submitted to Ofsted following such an inspection although there is currently no monitoring of such plans.

The inspection found no Priority Areas for action within Northumberland and

there were no cases where children were found to be at immediate risk of harm. More detail on the strengths and areas for improvement can be found in the Executive Director's report to FACS (scrutiny committee). Click [here](#).

### **School inspections**

In relation to school inspections that took place in this period, the overall impact is that Ofsted has judged 89% of primary schools as Good or Outstanding up to the end of September 2019, which is just above the national average (88%), and a 3% increase on the March 2019 figure. The proportion in the secondary school sector is lower, 63% compared with 76% nationally.

As Northumberland has some very large and some very small schools, it is also important to measure how many pupils are in Good or Outstanding provision. 86% of pupils were in primary schools judged as Good or Outstanding at their most recent Ofsted inspection by 30th September 2019. In real terms, this works out as 17,603 pupils out of a cohort of 20,466. This compares to a national average of 87%. There have been 16 published primary school inspection reports between 01/04/19 – 30/09/19. Of these, 1 was judged to be Outstanding, 11 to be Good, 4 to be Requires Improvement and 0 to be Inadequate. Ofsted do monitoring visits for primary schools that are judged to be Requires Improvement or inadequate but there have been none between 01/04/19 – 30/09/19. All new academies now keep their previous inspection results. Overall, the key point is that the judgements for recently-inspected primary schools have improved and Northumberland's figure is now much closer to the national average.

It is the prime responsibility of the governing bodies and head teachers of those schools to improve. The Council commissions School Improvement Partners (SIPS) to 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.

With regards to the proportion of children attending a secondary school judged Good or Outstanding, the figure of 66.5% is better than the regional average (62%), but is below the national average of 80%. In real terms, the Northumberland figure works out as 15,153 pupils in secondary schools judged to be Good or Outstanding, out of a cohort of 22,786. There have been 3 published secondary and middle school inspection reports between 01/04/19 – 30/09/19. Of these, 0 were judged to be Outstanding, 2 to be Good, 1 to be Requires Improvement and 0 to be Inadequate. Ofsted do monitoring visits for secondary schools that are judged to be Requires Improvement or inadequate, of which there was 1 between 01/04/19 – 30/09/19, and it was judged to be taking effective action.

As well as the actions outlined for primary schools, Members should note the task of turning round this pattern of under-achievement will take at least three years based upon Ofsted inspection schedules. The academy trusts that have incorporated NCC Grade 4 (i.e. Inadequate-rated) schools continue to put in place strategies to review performance of pupils.

There are seven Northumberland schools that are currently graded as Good by Ofsted who are at risk of not maintaining that grade at their next inspection. This is due to a range of individual factors including the quality of some of their key outcomes and for some schools, the capacity of leadership. All are making improvements which we hope will be recognised by Ofsted at their visit. All 7 schools are receiving additional support from the LA central teams and are part of the LA priority group.

Ten Northumberland maintained schools currently 'Require Improvement', of those none have received monitoring visits. Of the 10 awaiting monitoring visits all are expected to be judged as 'Taking effective actions'.

There are seven Academies that 'Require improvement', of those two have received a monitoring visit and were deemed by Ofsted not to be 'Taking effective action', whilst two were deemed to be 'Taking effective action'. There are seven inadequate schools which are already Academies.

Academies are not in the control of the Local Authority and therefore the LA cannot intervene to drive forward improvement. There are currently 48 academies in Northumberland and this figure is set to grow.

There are currently 137 'Good or Outstanding' schools in Northumberland.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

Following the joint inspection in October 2018, external monitoring of Northumberland's SEND WSOA continues to take place every quarter. The DFE and NHS England are satisfied with the progress being made. The latest monitoring meeting covering Quarter 2 (up to 30 9 19) showed progress had been made on all three areas, although more quantifiable evidence of impact is required over the next three quarters. Particularly of note are the improvements in educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND and the reduction in permanent and fixed term exclusions for this group.

The SEND Strategic Partnership Board meets monthly and drives forward the improvements identified in the WSOA.

A copy of the full WSOA can be found on the Local Offer web page and here:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/Northumberland-Written-Statement-Of-Action-Plan-12-03-19.pdf>

### **Early Years Inspections**

Services such as nurseries and childminders are inspected by Ofsted. 98% of Northumberland's providers are graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted which is above the national average. 75% of children were 'school ready' in 2019 (above the national average). 486 Ofsted registered settings deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage to 0-5 year olds and 339 deliver funded education of which 227 are PVI's (private voluntary and independent) settings and childminders and 112 are schools.

## 6. Implications

<b>Policy</b>	Raising standards in social care and education are Council priorities.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	None
<b>Legal</b>	None
<b>Procurement</b>	None
<b>Human Resources</b>	Regulatory inspections of residential homes assess compliance with HR policies.
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Audit Committee reviewing a schedule of incoming inspection reports mitigates the risk of the council not taking appropriate action in respect of such issues.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	None
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Ensuring that external inspections are properly followed up will provide assurance to customers that service weaknesses are being addressed.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Wards</b>	All

## 7. Background papers:

Inspection reports by the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted; NCC Overview and Scrutiny reports

## 8. Report sign off

Monitoring Officer / Legal	Liam Henry
Service Director Finance & Interim Section 151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Executive Director of Adults Social Care and Children's Services	Cath Mcevoy-Carr
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Wayne Daley / Veronica Jones

## 9. Author and Contact Details

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