



Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE: AUDIT

DATE: 29 JULY 2020

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 October 2019 to 31st March 2020) 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.
- 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, and one is judged to be Requires Improvement.

- Northumberland received an Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) and received an improved rating, judged to be Good across the board.
- Ofsted has judged 91% of primary schools as Good or Outstanding up to the end of March 2020, which is above the national average (88%), and a 1% increase on the September 2019 figure. The proportion in the secondary school sector is lower, 66% 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 October 2019 and March 2020. 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. NHCFT (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 pending the result of one inspection, and all other establishments are judged Good, with the exception of Tynedale House, which was inspected during the period and is now judged to be Outstanding.

Table 1

Provider	Judgement	Provider	Judgement
Chibburn Court	Good	STSS - Central/SE	Outstanding
Sea Lodge	Good	STSS - Alnwick	Outstanding
Tynedale House	Outstanding	STSS - Berwick	Inspected Feb 2020, report delayed due to COVID-19
Shared Lives	Good	STSS - West	Outstanding
Hatfield Chase	Good		

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 six types of inspections in Children's services: the Council's residential homes for children; the ILAC; 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. Across the 5 residential settings, including the secure unit, all homes continue to be judged as Good or Outstanding, apart from Phoenix House.

Between October 2019 and March 2020, Coanwood and Kyloe House secure unit were inspected. Coanwood remains good overall, although it is no longer Outstanding for leadership and management. Kyloe House's education provision is also Good, previously having been judged to be Requires Improvement.

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 been undertaken by the responsible senior manager with the leadership and staff team at Phoenix. 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 its first ILACS in January 2020. The outcome was very positive with the Council being judged Good across all four areas of focus. This is an improvement on the previous SIF inspection in 2016. The outcome of the inspection has been reported to the Family and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (accessible [here](#)) and the full report is available [here](#).

An action plan in response to the four areas for improvement has been prepared and was submitted to Ofsted prior to the Annual Conversation in June.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

Northumberland received a JTAI on the subject of Child Exploitation in June, 2019. There were no priority areas for action and the action plan has been approved by Ofsted. As the inspection was of the safeguarding children partnership, the Northumberland Safeguarding Children Committee is the body that scrutinises progress with an action plan. It has received three updates to date and the Council's FACS committee received an update at its July meeting (report [here](#)). Progress to date is satisfactory.

School inspections

The overall figure for the percentage of primary schools judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding was 91% up to the end of March 2020, which is above the national average (88%), and a 2% increase on the September 2019 figure. This is a significant improvement. There have been 17 published primary school inspection reports between 1.09.19 – 31.03.20. 15 of these were judged to be Good while 2 were judged to be Requires Improvement, a trajectory that has put Northumberland ahead of the national average. Ofsted do monitoring visits for primary schools that are judged to be Requires Improvement or Inadequate, but there have been none so far in the 2019/20 school year. All new academies now keep their previous inspection result.

The overall figure for the percentage of secondary schools judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding was 66% up to the end of March 2020, which is below the national average (76%). Northumberland is still some way from closing that gap and this is still an area for improvement, but it is a 3% improvement on the September 2019 figure. There have been four inspections since September 1st 2019. Bellingham Middle School improved from RI to Good. The Blyth Academy and Astley High School retained their existing ratings of RI and Good, respectively. Duke's Secondary School moved from Requires Improvement to Serious Weaknesses as a result of a section 8 monitoring visit. There are 5 secondary schools judged by Ofsted to be Inadequate:

- Berwick Academy
- Haydon Bridge High School
- Ashington Academy
- Bedlington Academy
- Duke's Secondary School

All new academies will now keep their previous inspection result.

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 3 years based upon Ofsted inspection schedules. The multi 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 currently 4 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. 10 Northumberland maintained schools currently 'Require Improvement', of those 1 has received a monitoring visit, and was judged to not be 'Taking effective action'. Of the 9 awaiting monitoring visits all bar two are expected to be 'Taking effective actions'. There are 8 Academies that 'Require improvement', of those 2 have received a monitoring visit and were deemed by Ofsted to not be 'Taking effective action', whilst 2 were deemed to be 'Taking effective action'.

There are 6 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. Please note that as we improve overall and increase our capacity for support we have lowered our thresholds for Priority School status. As a result the target for this indicator has increased to reflect our increased ability to offer support to schools where previously they wouldn't have met the threshold of concern.

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, 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.

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 were satisfied with the progress being made when the February monitoring meeting took place. 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. Further progress needs to be made in the area of Joint Commissioning.

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](#).

The overall figure for the percentage of special schools judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding was 67% up to the end of March 2020, which is below the national average (91%), and a 22% decrease on the September 2019 figure. That relates to 2 schools being judged as Requires Improvement in the period (Barndale House and Atkinson House). However, when we measure the percentage of pupils who are in Good or Outstanding special schools, the figure is far better, 94%, and above the national average (see Table 2 overleaf).

TABLE 2: HOW NORTHUMBERLAND SCHOOLS COMPARE WITH THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

GOOD AND OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS - LATEST OFFICIAL FIGURES						
	PRIMARY SCHOOLS		SECONDARY SCHOOLS		SPECIAL SCHOOLS	
	N' LAND	NATIONAL AVERAGE	N' LAND	NATIONAL AVERAGE	N' LAND	NATIONAL AVERAGE
% SCHOOLS JUDGED GOOD OR OUTSTANDING	90.9	88.0	65.6	76.0	66.7	91.0
% PUPILS IN SCHOOLS JUDGED GOOD OR OUTSTANDING	86.4	88.0	66.6	80.0	94.2	93.0

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 of 96%. 75% of children were 'school ready' in 2019 (above the national average). 377 registered settings deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage to 0-5 year via funded education. Of these 269 are PVIs (private voluntary and independent) settings and childminders and 108 are schools.

The Early Years Team supports sufficiency and quality across the childcare sector. The team provides training and support for inspection preparation and checklist for providers prior to initial Ofsted registration. Following inspection the team directly intervenes at any setting not judged to be Good and support them for rapid reinspection. Should any setting be deemed Inadequate and not capable of rapid improvement funding will be withheld and parents supported in finding other settings.

6. Implications

Policy	Raising standards in social care and education are Council priorities.
Finance and value for money	None
Legal	The ILACS inspection made positive comments about the legal planning work with the local judiciary.
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"/>	N/A. No groups could be disadvantaged as a result of this report.
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.
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:

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

8. Report sign off

Monitoring Officer / Legal	Liam Henry
Executive Director Finance & Section 151 Officer	Chris Hand
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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