



# Northumberland

## County Council

### **Families and Children Overview and Scrutiny**

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

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#### **Northumberland Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Action Plan**

Report of Executive Director of Children's Services, Cath McEvoy

Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cllr Wayne Daley

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#### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to update members on the development, submission and progress of the ILAC action plan following the inspection of Northumberland children's services undertaken by Ofsted between 20 and 31 January 2020.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that members:

- Note the submission and content of the action plan.
- Note the progress made since the inspection.
- Offer challenge and scrutiny to the plan as necessary.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the Living priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan.

#### **Key issues**

1. The ILACS inspection of Northumberland children's services in January 2020 judged the services to be Good in all areas inspected. This evidenced clear progress since the previous Ofsted inspection in 2016 which judged services to require improvement
2. The ILACS framework requires local authorities who have been inspected to submit an action plan to Ofsted evidencing how they will address areas for improvement identified in the inspection. This was required and submitted in June 2020
3. The areas for improvement identified through the inspection were:
  - The quality of written plans for all children.
  - The quality of analysis in some assessments of impact on children.
  - The quality of the recording of management oversight in supervision records.
  - Quality and sensitivity in the way later life letters are written for all children.

4. The improvement plan submitted to Ofsted and attached below details the actions and progress that have been made in relation to the identified areas for improvement at the time of submission. This includes noting the impact of Covid-19 where relevant.
5. There has been no response from Ofsted to date following the submission of the plan, but this will form part of the annual conversation with Ofsted currently scheduled for 31 July 2020.
6. The action plan progress will be monitored on a monthly basis by senior managers in children's social care as part of monitoring the overall continuous improvement plan (CIP).
7. Further to the areas formally identified for improvement in the Ofsted report as above, other elements of practice improvement given through verbal feedback during the inspection or noted in the report but not formally highlighted as above have been incorporated into the continuous improvement plan to ensure we are maximising all learning to improve the quality of our services.

## **Background**

1. Northumberland children's services had previously been inspected under the single inspection framework (SIF) in 2016 with the overall judgement that services required improvement to be good.
2. Because of the judgement of requiring improvement from the SIF inspection, the inspection under the ILACS framework was undertaken by HM inspectors over a two-week period on site, with a week prior to this undertaken off site.
3. Northumberland had also received previously a focused visit under the ILACS framework in 2018 which concentrated on the front door, the progress from which was considered in this inspection.

## **Implications**

The effectiveness of the progress of the identified improvement areas will be considered by Ofsted in future contact with Northumberland under the ILACS framework.

<b>Policy</b>	The ILAC Inspection Framework is statutory and is part of government requirements for the regulation and scrutiny of children's services.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The inspection report identified the importance of resources invested as part of improving services.
<b>Legal</b>	As above, inspection framework is a statutory requirement.
<b>Procurement</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Recruiting and retaining experienced social workers is critical to effective safeguarding practice.
<b>Property</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The inspection focuses on services to the most vulnerable children in Northumberland.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	The experiences of children are important to the inspection findings.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Wards</b>	All.

## **Background papers**

[Link to Ofsted report](#)

Appendix 1 – ILAC Action Plan

## **Report sign off**

	initials
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	CH
Relevant Executive Director	CMc-C
Chief Executive	DL

Portfolio Holder(s)

WD

**Author and Contact Details**

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**Appendix 1: ILACS Action Plan**