



Northumberland

County Council

COMMITTEE: AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATE: 27TH JULY 2022

Review Of External Inspection Reports – Adult & Children’s Services

Report of Audrey Kingham and Graham Reiter, Joint Interim Directors of Children’s Services and Neil Bradley, Director of Adult Social Care

Cabinet Members: Councillors Wendy Pattison and Guy Renner-Thompson

1. Purpose of Report

To inform members of the activity pertaining to Adults Social Care and Children’s Services regarding external inspections and associated actions. This covers the period from 1st January 2022 to 30th June 2022.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended:

1. To acknowledge the findings.
2. To assess the effectiveness of the scrutiny arrangements.

3. Link to Corporate Plan

This report relates to the Living, Learning and Tackling Inequalities elements of the Corporate Plan.

4. Key issues

1. 84.9% of all Northumberland-based Adults Social Care providers were rated as Good or Outstanding at the end of June 2022, a decline on the position in the last report (January 2022). The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is developing its monitoring approach.
2. Inspections of children’s residential homes have continued and there have been two inspections during the period. Publication of one report is awaited, the other has been released and saw a home previously judged

to be Requires Improvement move to Good.

3. Inspections of schools recommenced in the summer term of 2021 and the findings have been positive overall, leading to an increase in the proportion judged Good or Outstanding in both the primary and secondary sectors (92% and 77%, respectively).
4. Inspections of early years providers continue, and the vast majority are judged to be Good or Outstanding (97%), similar to the national average.
5. The local authority along with health partners participated in a pilot of the new special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) inspection framework in March. The feedback was positive.

5. Background

The report focuses on inspection activity undertaken by the CQC and Ofsted between January and June 2022.

5.1 Adult Social Care CQC inspection status

84.9% of all Northumberland-based Adults Social Care providers were rated as Good or Outstanding at the end of June 2022, compared to 87.3% at the end of December 2021.

The table below describes the new registration and published inspection activity that has taken place between January and June 2022. It provides the detail of what settings / services have been inspected so that members can see where the changes have taken place. Where ratings have deteriorated from Good to Requires Improvement, the local authority is working with the management of the settings to implement the actions required.

There are a number of reasons for the reduction in quality ratings and officers consider the current difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff are having an impact on services. Other reasons for the deterioration in rating include administration of medication, care planning and infection control. In working with providers to improve services, council officers support in compiling and executing improvement action plans and are able to work with other partners such as the NHS who offer specialist support on infection control and the administration of medication.

CQC-registered locations in Northumberland - newly registered or with an inspection published Jan-Jun 2022

Rating Status	Location Name	Location Primary Inspection Category	Location Latest Overall Rating (July 2022)	Location Overall Rating (January 2022)
Changed	Miracle Care Centre NLHC	Community based adult social care services	Good	
Changed	Ashington Grange	Residential social care	Good	Requires improvement
Changed	Helping Hands - East Northumberland	Community based adult social care services	Good	Requires improvement
Changed	South Quay Care Home	Residential social care	Good	Requires improvement
Changed	Beachville West End	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Good
Changed	Haydon View Residential Home	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Good
Changed	Hartford Court	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Good
Changed	Woodhorn Park	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Good
Changed	Ponteland Manor Care Home	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Good
Changed	Crofton Court	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Good
Changed	Red Brick House	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Good
Reregistered	Beresford Lodge Residential Care Home	Residential social care	Not yet rated	Good
Newly published	Positive Support For You CIC	Community based adult social care services	Good	
Newly published	Beech Tree House	Residential social care	Good	
Newly published	Prioritising People's Lives - Alnwick	Community based adult social care services	Good	
Newly published	Home Instead Tyne Valley	Community based adult social care services	Good	
Newly registered	Best Options Agency	Community based adult social care services	Not yet rated	
Newly registered	Brightside Supported Living Services	Community based adult social care services	Not yet rated	
Newly registered	Lifeways Community Care (North of the Tyne)	Community based adult social care services	Not yet rated	
Newly registered	Sphere Specialist Healthcare	Community based adult social care services	Not yet rated	
Newly registered	The Willows Home Care North East	Unspecified	Not yet rated	
Deregistered	Overstone Retirement Home Limited	Residential social care		Good
Unchanged	Careline Berwick	Community based adult social care services	Good	Good
Unchanged	La Cura House	Residential social care	Good	Good
Unchanged	Thomas Knight Care Home	Residential social care	Good	Good
Unchanged	South Bebside Care Home	Residential social care	Good	Good
Unchanged	The Grange Nursing Home	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Unchanged	Tweedmouth House	Residential social care	Requires improvement	Requires improvement

Source: CQC Active Locations register dated 01 July 2022/ 05 January 2022
(available at <https://www.cqc.org.uk/about-us/transparency/using-cqc-data#directory>)

The Wansbeck Supported Living Service (Hatfield Chase) have received an inspection by CQC on 15th June 2022 and the draft report is still awaited.

As part of the CQC's approach for inspecting services that provide supported living for people with a learning disability and autistic people, they will be asking some additional questions to obtain a more complete picture of the safety and quality of supported living services for people. This will be done at the same time as the inspection, but the findings will not be used to inform the inspection report or ratings (Hatfield Chase have consented to be part of this process). The findings of these questions will form a CQC independent voice product which aims to encourage improvement through the creation, publication and dissemination of information and insight about the quality of health and social care.

During their inspections, CQC will seek to improve how they inspect services using their existing published methodology. They will be exploring how they can gather more up to date information from stakeholders and other regulators prior to and at the time of inspection. This will include inspectors contacting relevant stakeholders and other regulators for their feedback with the suggestion that if required that other regulators conduct their own assessments around the time of the inspection to ensure an up to date and current holistic view of the service is understood. These assessments from other regulators are voluntary for them to undertake. They will also use appropriate specialist teams, advisors, and experts by experience to undertake the inspection.

During their assessments and inspections of providers, CQC regularly look to see if staff are working with people appropriately, and if not, they consider what training and support has been provided to them to ensure their understanding. From 1 July 2022, all health and social care providers registered with CQC must ensure that their staff receive training in how to interact appropriately with people with a learning disability and autistic people, at a level appropriate to their role. This new legal requirement is introduced by the Health and Care Act 2022. The government is required to consult on and publish a Code of Practice for this and they anticipate that the publication of the Code of Practice may take at least 12 months. CQC will provide statutory guidance while the Code of Practice is being developed and they have now updated their statutory guidance for Regulation 18 which is available on their website to reflect this requirement.

From the 1 July, CQC will also look at whether providers have assessed the competencies of their staff following the training. In line with current inspection procedures, they will not be looking at what the training itself has involved.

5.2 Children's Services

This report features several types of Ofsted activity in Children's services: notably the Council's residential homes for children; schools; early years provision and the pilot inspection of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). February's FACS meeting received a report providing an overview of all the inspections and external scrutiny that Children's Services is subject to. The report is available [here](#).

It is anticipated that the next activity under the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services framework (ILACS) will be in the form of a focused visit which will look at a particular aspect of children's social work. Five days' notice is provided in advance of a two-day visit. The Youth Justice Service is also expecting its inspection this year, for which Her Majesty's inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) provides five weeks' notice.

5.2.1 Children's residential homes

Inspections of children's residential homes have continued and there have been two inspections during the period 1st January – 30th June 2022. They involved Phoenix House and Coanwood in June. Publication of the Coanwood report is awaited, whilst that for Phoenix House has been released and saw it move from Requires Improvement to Good. All other local authority residential provision for children is currently judged by Ofsted to be either Outstanding or Good. Should the publication of the Coanwood report take place prior to the committee meeting date, elected members will be informed of Ofsted's judgement at the meeting itself. There is a centrally held plan that monitors actions arising from inspections.

5.2.2 Schools

Ofsted resumed graded school inspections in the summer term of 2021. In 2022, 8 schools were inspected in the spring term and 9 inspected in the summer term thus far.

Primary/First schools:

- Longhorsley Primary School continues to be Good
- Morpeth Road Academy moved from Good to Outstanding
- Beaufront First School moved from Outstanding to Good
- Hexham First School remains a Good school

The overall figure for the percentage of first/primary schools judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding was 92% at the end of June 2022, which is above the national average of 88%. This equates to 112 / 122 schools.

Secondary/High schools:

- Newminster Middle School moved from Requires Improvement to Good
- NCEA Duke's Secondary School was deemed to be Taking Effective Action
- St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy was deemed to be Taking Effective Action
- Ashington Academy was deemed to be Good
- Cramlington Learning Village continues to be a Good school

We await the publication of reports for 8 other schools.

The overall figure for the percentage of middle/secondary/high schools judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding improved from 70% at the end of December 2021 to 77% at the end of June 2022, which is just below the national average of 78%. The figure of 77% equates to 23 / 30 schools.

The overall figure for the percentage of special schools judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding was 78% at the end of June 2022. The figure of 78% equates to 7 / 9 schools (including the Pupil Referral Unit). Cleaswell Hill school was inspected in June 2022, and the report is awaiting publication.

Academies are not in the control of the Local Authority and therefore the LA cannot intervene easily to drive forward improvement. However, we offer the same level of support to academies as maintained schools should they wish to accept it.

A report on the impact of the local authority School Improvement team recently went to the Family and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FACS) and it demonstrated the improvements that have been made in supporting school performance since the focused visit in 2013. The presentation that accompanied that report can be found [here](#).

The Council commissions School Improvement Partners (SIPs) to monitor and challenge 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.

Reports for Northumberland schools who have been inspected since September 2021 are available [here](#).

5.2.3 Early Years

21 Ofsted inspections of childcare settings in Northumberland were carried out between 1st January and 30th June 2022. Of these, eleven were inspections of childminding settings, ten of which received a Good grading and one was judged as met. Ten private, voluntary or independent (PVI) group settings were inspected, five gaining Good, three compliant, one met and one Inadequate. All settings receiving a less than Good outcome are visited by the Early Years Team to address issues. An Inadequate judgement means the setting is in breach of their funded hours contract and there will be no more funded children admitted until the grade has improved. Currently 97% of early years provision is graded as being Good or Outstanding, and this is similar to the latest all-England figure of 98% (Ofsted, September 2021).

5.2.4 SEND Pilot Inspection

The local authority along with health partners participated in a pilot of the new special educational needs and disabilities inspection framework in March 2022. The feedback was positive and was reported to FACS recently.

The conclusion reached from having participated in the pilot was that:

“Agreeing to be part of the pilot phase of the SEND Inspection framework has provided external scrutiny of the partnership and strategic direction of delivering support to children, young people and their families with SEND in Northumberland. This has been invaluable learning and provided a positive sense check one year on from the SEND Revisit. The recent Government papers positively align with our strategic direction, confirming that the steps already taken by the SEND Partnership are finely tuned with the national direction of travel.

The report can be found [here](#).

6. Implications

Policy	Raising standards in social care and education are Council priorities.
Finance and value for money	None
Legal	<p>Inspections are carried out under the legislative framework set out in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For educational provisions section 5 of the Education Act 2005, section 125 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and Childcare Act 2006. • For Adult Social Care under the Care Quality Commission regulatory framework. • For Children’s Social Care under the Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) regulatory framework.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	Regulatory inspections assess compliance with HR policies.
Property	None
<p>Equalities</p> <p>(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>N/A x</p>	<p>N/A.</p> <p>No groups could be disadvantaged as a result of this report.</p>
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 provides assurance that service weaknesses are being addressed.
Carbon reduction	More meetings are taking place virtually and hence the need to travel is less.
Health and well being	Inspections take health and wellbeing into account when making judgements about their findings.
Wards	All

7. Background Papers

None

8. Report Sign Off

Monitoring Officer / Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director Finance & Section 151 Officer	Jan Willis
Director of Adult Social Care	Neil Bradley
Joint Directors of Children's Services	Graham Reiter/Audrey Kingham
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell (Acting Deputy Chief Executive)
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Wendy Pattison/Cllr Guy Renner-Thompson

9. Author and Contact Details

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