



Northumberland

County Council

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Children's Social Care: Annual Self-Assessment

Report of Graham Reiter, Joint Interim Director of Children's Services

Cabinet Member: Guy Renner-Thompson

Purpose of Report

The report is to share the content and findings of the children's social care self-assessment. The self-assessment supports an evaluation of the progress and current practice in children's social care and identifies future actions to support the continuous improvement that is required as we strive to achieve our vision of being a service where meeting the needs of children, young people and families is the focus so that they get the best out of life.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Members note the content of the report
2. Identify areas for scrutiny and clarification.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Living and Learning priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2021-2024.

Key Issues

1. The report is required by Ofsted and will form the basis of the annual conversation with them.
2. The report does evidence continuing improvements in the quality of practice, despite key ongoing challenges of workforce retention and increasing demand and highlights areas for further improvement and priorities for the continuous improvement plan for 2022/2023.

3. There are significant changes likely for children's social care in following years with the recent publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, a briefing on which will be provided separately for members.

Background

Every year Ofsted arrange a conversation with all Local Authorities called an Annual Engagement meeting. At this meeting a self-assessment document is presented and forms the basis for that meeting, along with the outcomes of any inspections and any recent intelligence that Ofsted may have gained about the Authority. There is no date set at this point although we are expecting a focused visit from Ofsted at any time.

Further to this, as part of regional improvement work, there is a Director's Challenge in which three regional authorities provide challenge and scrutiny to each other's self-assessment which will take place in October.

Implications

Policy	
Finance and value for money	Children's Services do need to meet their statutory requirements and there is rigorous oversight of expenditure.
Legal	The provision of Children's social care is underpinned by legislation and regulation. This self-assessment is part of the oversight of CSC services by Ofsted the regulatory body.
Procurement	
Human Resources	Responses to the workforce recruitment and retention challenges are supported by HR.
Property	One element of future planning includes the building of new children's homes both to meet demand locally and to reduce expenditure on external placements.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	CSC work with, support, and safeguard the most vulnerable children in Northumberland.
Risk Assessment	Self-assessment is inherently a risk assessment and would flag areas of risk for the council and links to the overall corporate risk register.
Crime & Disorder	
Customer Consideration	The leadership pledge and the practice framework being embedded within CSC has effective engagement with children and families with whom we work at the centre of what we do.
Carbon reduction	
Health and Wellbeing	
Wards	

Background Papers

Annual Self-Assessment



CSC Self Assessment
2021-22.docx

Report Sign Off

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Graham Reiter
Interim Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

Author and Contact Details

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