



Northumberland County Council

Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 02 November 2023

Children's Social Care Annual Self-Assessment

Report of Councillor(s) Guy Renner-Thompson, Cabinet Member for Inspiring Young People

Responsible Officer(s): Audrey Kingham, Executive Director for Children, Young People & Education

1. **Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

This report links to the Corporate plan priority of Tackling Inequalities: Children and Young People have the Best Start in Life and Grow Up Well: Keeping our children safe through early support, assessment and delivering our statutory functions, including being an effective Corporate Parent for those we care for and supporting our care leavers.

2. **Purpose of report**

The report is to share the content and findings of the children's social care annual 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.

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1 Members identify areas for scrutiny, challenge and clarification.
- 3.2 Members recognise areas of good practice in safeguarding and supporting children young people and their families.

4. **Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable**

27 July 2023

5. Background

- 5.1 The annual self-assessment is recommended and used by Ofsted as part of the Inspection of Local Authority Childrens Services (ILACS) framework. The self assessment is used as the basis for discussion and challenge at the annual engagement meeting between Ofsted and the local authority, the last one with Northumberland taking place in March 2023. The self assessment is also a key document required by Ofsted at the point of inspection and in Northumberland we are due our full ILACS inspection at any time this year.

6. Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations

- 6.1 It is important that elected members understand the range, complexity and importance of the work across children's services and that they provide effective scrutiny, challenge and oversight of that work to ensure that it is as effective as possible in making sure that children and young people are safeguarded, protected and supported .

7. Implications

Policy	CSC practice is underpinned by a range of policies which are based in legislation, regulation and national practice guidance
Finance and value for money	Children's Services do need to meet their statutory requirements in the provision of children's services. There has been an increase in demand and expenditure and there is rigorous oversight of that 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	Commissioning of services in particular external placements are rigorously managed and overseen by senior managers.
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.
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	No - not required at this point 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 and disorder	The Youth Justice service is one element of social care provision and has been subject to inspection this year by HMIP which is referenced in the self-assessment.
Customer considerations	The leadership pledge and the practice framework bedded within CSC has effective engagement with children and families with whom we work at the centre of what we do.
Carbon reduction	None have been identified
Health and wellbeing	None have been identified
Wards	(All Wards);

8. Background papers

Children's Services Annual Self-Assessment

9. Links to other key reports already published

"Not Applicable"

10. Author and Contact Details

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