
**ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND
LOOKED AFTER SERVICES**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of 'Safeguarding Services and Provision for Looked After Children. The inspection identified key strengths and areas for improvement immediately, within three months and within six months.

Summary

2. The purpose of the inspection is to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in Darlington towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded, and to determine the quality of services for looked after children and care leavers.
3. Learning and experience from this process will help shape our future priorities over the forthcoming months, in the improvement of outcomes for children in Darlington.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members note the contents of this report.
 - (b) Members approve the action plan.
 - (c) Members use the areas identified for consideration to help inform their short and medium term work programme.

Murray Rose
Director of People Services

Background Papers

Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services Ofsted 4 January 2012

Author: Lisa Summers **Extension:** 2469

S17 Crime and Disorder	The report notes the low number of looked after children and young people who offend due to the intensive and well tailored multi agency responses.
Health and Well Being	The Ofsted report provides commentary to the health of looked after children as well as the contribution of health within safeguarding services.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues for carbon impact arising from this report
Diversity	No specific issues arising from this report
Wards Affected	All wards in the Borough will be affected
Groups Affected	All Children and young people and their parents and carers
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report is consistent with the Safer Darlington theme
Efficiency	There are no efficiencies identified in this report

MAIN REPORT

Introduction and Background

5. The inspection assessed services provided individually and jointly by Darlington Borough Council; County Durham and Darlington NHS (Primary Care Trust); County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust; Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Foundation Trust; Durham Constabulary; and, any voluntary or private sector providing working with children and young people in the Borough.

The Approach

6. The inspection focuses upon safeguarding outcomes for children and young people and services for looked after children and care leavers. This is then broken under specific subsections which focuses attention on the following themes:

Safeguarding Services

- (i) Overall effectiveness
- (ii) Capacity for improvement
- (iii) Children and young people are safe and feel safe
- (iv) Quality of provision
- (v) The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe

- (vi) Ambition and prioritisation
- (vii) Leadership and management
- (viii) Performance management and quality assurance
- (ix) Partnership working
- (x) Equality and diversity

Services for looked after children

- (i) Overall effectiveness
- (ii) Capacity for improvement
- (iii) How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?
- (iv) Being healthy
- (v) Staying safe
- (vi) Enjoying and achieving
- (vii) Making a positive contribution, including user engagement
- (viii) Economic well-being
- (ix) Quality of provision
- (x) Ambition and prioritisation
- (xi) Leadership and management
- (xii) Performance management and quality assurance
- (xiii) Partnership working
- (xiv) Equality and diversity

7. The inspection process was undertaken over a four week period, with information, internal case file audits, and young people's consultations being completed within the two weeks

prior to the inspection team's arrival. The inspection team then commenced their on-site work the week beginning 14 of November, for a further two week period. The inspection team comprised of four of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one inspector from the Care Quality Commission.

8. The evidence the team gathered included key documents, policies and performance information, questionnaires and information from discussions with children, young people and parents receiving services, focus groups and individual interviews with senior officers, Elected Members, and frontline professionals from both Darlington Borough Council and key partners. The inspection team also evaluated the internal case file audit, completed prior to Ofsted's arrival, and a review of an additional fifty case files. This was to assess the quality of reporting, recording and decision making. The outcomes of the most recent unannounced inspection of local authority contact, referral and assessment services was also included as part of the evidence.
9. The inspection team provided daily feedback of their observations, and identified additional documentation they required as evidence. At the end of the fortnight, a feedback meeting detailing their findings was undertaken.

Outcome of the Inspection

10. Overall, the inspectors judged service provision to be adequate. Out of the eighteen outcomes judgements made, nine were graded as good and nine were graded as adequate.

Safeguarding services

Overall effectiveness	Adequate
Capacity for improvement	Adequate

Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people

Children and young people are safe and feel safe	Good
Quality of provision	Adequate
The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe	Adequate
Ambition and prioritisation	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate
Performance management and quality assurance	Adequate
Partnership working	Good
Equality and diversity	Good

Services for looked after children

Overall effectiveness	Adequate
Capacity for improvement	Adequate

How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?

Being healthy	Good
Staying safe	Adequate

Enjoying and achieving	Good
Making a positive contribution, including user engagement	Good
Economic well-being	Good
Quality of provision	Adequate
Ambition and prioritisation	Adequate
Leadership and management	Adequate
Performance management and quality assurance	Adequate
Equality and diversity	Good

11. The report identified the following as areas performing strongly:

- (i) ‘children and young people being and feeling safe’
- (ii) ‘partnership working was seen to be strength’
- (iii) ‘outcomes for children and young people are good.
- (iv) Young people generally feel safe in Darlington’
- (v) ‘safeguarding outcomes in services and settings inspected by Ofsted are good, and good education provision promotes the attainment and well being of pupils from vulnerable groups’.
- (vi) ‘safeguarding children and young people is a high priority in Darlington...During a period of financial constraint and significant reduction in budgets, services to the most vulnerable children, young people and families have been protected’
- (vii) ‘safeguarding performance indicators have improved and most are above the national average’

12. The areas for improvement identified by Ofsted for action immediately, within 3 months and 6 months, together with other issues identified throughout the body of the report are attached at **Appendix 1**. Action plans have been produced for each.

Conclusion

- 13. The inspection identified key areas of good partnership working and especially good outcomes for the children and young people in Darlington.
- 14. The next area of priority will be the implementation of the action plan to further strengthen safeguarding services and provision for children and young people and their families.

APPENDIX 1

Details Theme/Timescale	Actions Required	Responsible Agency	Date for completion
IMMEDIATE	The Council should ensure that core group meetings are held consistently and within the minimum frequency in the policy. The Council should ensure that minutes of meetings are sent to all core group members, whether or not they attended	DBC	
IMMEDIATE	The County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust should ensure arrangements are in place to monitor and quality assures safeguarding children practice within its organisation.	CDDFT	
IMMEDIATE	Darlington Memorial Hospital accident and emergency services (A&E) and Switch, the drug and alcohol team, should improve liaison arrangements in order to increase the number of young people referred to Switch following emergency treatment for drug and alcohol misuse.	CDDFT	
Within 3 Months	The council should improve the range and quality of service evaluation to examine the effectiveness and impact on outcomes of all services for children and families	DBC	

Details Theme/Timescale	Actions Required	Responsible Agency	Date for completion
Within 3 Months	The Council should include the audit of supervision records in its file audit framework and consider extending the range of staff who carry out case file audits to include front line practitioners and senior officers	DBC	
Within 3 Months	The Council should review business processes in the duty team in order to improve efficiency and ensure that all contacts received by the team result in a prompt and clear outcome	DBC	
Within 3 Months	The County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust should ensure that health visitors, school nurses and midwives receive one to one safeguarding supervision on a regular basis	CDDFT	
Within 3 Months	The County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust should ensure arrangements for the line management and resourcing of named professionals for safeguarding children comply with the Intercollegiate Guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Young people: roles and competences for health care staff' (2010)	CDDFT	

Details Theme/Timescale	Actions Required	Responsible Agency	Date for completion
Within 3 Months	The County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust should conduct a comprehensive training needs analysis across the organisation and compile a recovery plan to ensure that all staff employed by the trust access appropriate training as identified in the Intercollegiate Guidance.	CDDFT	
Within 3 Months	Midwifery services should monitor compliance with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on providing midwifery care to vulnerable groups of women.	CDDFT	
IMMEDIATE	The Council should ensure statutory visits to looked after children and young people are clearly recorded in case records and are formally reported to reviews.	DBC	
Within 3 Months	The Children's Trust should consider the development of an overarching plan for looked after children which defines all the priorities and desired outcomes	CT	
Within 3 Months	The Council and its partners should work together to ensure that the initial health reviews for children and young people are carried out within statutory timescales when they enter care	DBC	

Details Theme/Timescale	Actions Required	Responsible Agency	Date for completion
Within 3 Months	The PCT should improve the quality of health review assessments and health plans to include details of discussion about sexual health, emotional health and well-being, and substance misuse	PCT	
Within 3 Months	The PCT should nominate a designated doctor for looked after children and young people	PCT	
Within 3 Months	The Council should review access for foster carers to support, advice and assistance in the evenings and at weekends.	DBC	
Within 3 Months	The Council should ensure that children and young people consistently receive a copy of their care plan and that their parents receive a copy	DBC	
Within 3 Months	The Council should review the current arrangements for looked after children's reviews to ensure that professionals can contribute in a way that best meets the needs of the children and young people involved	DBC	
Within 3 Months	The Council should consider the capacity for independent reviewing officers (IROs) to meet all the requirements of the Care Planning, Placement and Care Review (England) Regulations 2010 and take appropriate action	DBC	
Within 6 months	The Council should ensure the quality of care plans and social workers' reports for reviews is consistent and of a high standard	DBC	

Details Theme/Timescale	Actions Required	Responsible Agency	Date for completion
Additional actions identified			
Within 12 Months	Develop and embed the CAF process across all agencies	DBC	
Within 12 Months	Improve and ensure the consistency of quality of case recording and reports	DBC	
Within 12 Months	Ensure multi agency agreement and understanding of thresholds of need and access to Children's social care services.	DBC	
Within 6 Months	Ensure the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are clearly evidenced in all assessments	DBC	
Within 3 Months	Review social worker caseloads and practise to ensure recording and case closure is completed in a timely manner	DBC	
Within 3 Months	Ensure the quality of all assessments including core assessments are of a high standard and include the family history and views of children and young people	DBC	
Within 3 Months	Ensure completed chronologies on all case records	DBC	
Within 3 Months	Improve the recording of management oversight and decision making	DBC	
Within 3 Months	Improve consistency of supervision and its recording	DBC	
Within 3 Months	Improve the consistency of the quality of Child Protection plans and Care Plans	DBC	

Details Theme/Timescale	Actions Required	Responsible Agency	Date for completion
Within 6 Months	Develop service user feedback on Children's social care services	DBC	
Within 6 Months	Extend and embed the case file auditing/quality assurance framework	DBC	
Within 3 Months	The LSCB to develop mechanisms for seeking the views of children and young people	LSCB	
Within 6 Months	Explore the option of a regional protocol covering LAC and education provision following external placement moves.	DBC	
Within 3 Months	Improve the quality of PEP	DBC	
Within 12 Months	Continue to develop and embed the work of the Darlo Care Crew	DBC	
Within 3 Months	Improve consistency of the use of assessment and action record	DBC	
Within 3 Months	The LSCB to consider the safeguarding and needs of looked after children and include this group in the case file audit programme	LSCB	