
JOINT AREA REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Chris McEwan,
Children & Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of Children’s Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present to Members the Joint Area Review of Services for Children and Young People and to approve the draft action plan in response.

Summary

2. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) published its Joint Area Review of Services for Children and Young People in Darlington on 18th November 2008. The report makes a number of recommendations to which the Authority and its partners must respond to in the form of an action plan within 70 working days of publication.

Recommendations

3. Members are asked to:
 - (a) receive a copy of the Joint Area Review; and
 - (b) approve the Action Plan.

Reason

4. In order to comply with statutory requirements.

Murray Rose
Director of Children’s Services

Background Papers

Joint Area Review Darlington Children’s Services Authority Area: Review of Services for Children and Young People

Julian Kenshole : Extension 2071

S17 Crime and Disorder	The report and action plan will have a positive impact on training, education and employment opportunities for young people who have offended
Health and Well Being	The report and action plan will have a positive impact the provision of health services for children and young people with disabilities.
Sustainability	There are no specific sustainability issues contained within this report.
Diversity	The report and action plan will have a positive impact on young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not represent a change to the Council's budget or policy framework
Key Decision	The JAR report and action plan have an affect on all children and young people in the Borough and this is therefore deemed to be a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Implementation of the JAR recommendations will have a positive impact on the Aspiring, Healthy and Prosperous themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy in particular will have positive impact on children and young people with a disability.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) completed a review of services for children and young people in Darlington in April 2008. The review assessed the contribution of local services in ensuring that children and young people:
 - (a) at risk or requiring safeguarding are effectively cared for
 - (b) who are looked after achieve the best possible outcomes
 - (c) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.
6. The review also assessed the impact of the 14–19 Strategy in improving outcomes for young people and, in particular, those from vulnerable groups.
7. A copy of the resulting report was published on 18th November 2008 and is attached at **Appendix A**. The report made the following recommendations:

(a) For immediate action:-

- (i) The local partnership should ensure that an appropriate way is found for the successful dissemination of the findings of this report to children and young people in the area
- (ii) The local partnership should work in partnership with the local health commissioners to tackle gaps in health service provision for children and young people with disabilities.

(b) For action over the next 6 months:-

- (i) Improve the links with Adult Services to ensure that all young people with complex needs moving into adult life have good outcomes which meet their needs.
- (ii) Ensure that there is sufficient good quality education and training for young people who offend.
- (iii) Clarify strategies and implement the actions required to engage more young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in education, employment or training post-16.
- (iv) Reduce the number of young people who are not involved in education, employment or training at age 18.

(c) For action over the longer term:-

- (i) Provide greater opportunities for young people who are looked after and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to influence the shape of services they use.
- (ii) Implement the Children with Disability Strategy and monitor its impact.
- (iii) Implement the 14–19 Strategy fully and monitor its impact.

8. The report also highlights a number of additional issues which although not as significant to require a specific recommendation, nevertheless still require focused action to ensure the continued improvement of services for children and young people in Darlington. These issues will be addressed through the business planning processes of the Children's Services Department and partner organisations.
9. A draft action plan setting out the proposed response to each of the Joint Area Review recommendations is attached at **Appendix B**. Subject to the approval of the Children's Trust and Cabinet, the action plan will be submitted to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

Outcome of Consultation

10. Both the Joint Area Review report and resulting action plan have been considered by the Council's partners through Children's Trust arrangements. Comments, where received, have been incorporated into the action plan.