

Annual Children's Services Assessment 2011

Report of the Executive Director Children's Services

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: Learning City

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT: Delivering Customer Focused Services, Efficient and Effective Council

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the outcomes from the Annual Children's Services Assessment which was published by Ofsted in November 2011, including strengths and areas for improvement.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 charged Ofsted with the responsibility to assess annually the quality of children's services for each local authority. In 2009, Ofsted provided this assessment as one element of its contribution to the joint inspectorate's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). In May 2010, as part of the new Coalition's programme for government, CAA was abolished. However, Ofsted's statutory duty to provide a children's services assessment remains.
- 2.2 The scope of the assessment includes the full range of services, from universal such as education through to specialist services, for example those for looked after children. The assessment may also include the outcomes from the most recent inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need who may be in need of protection.
- 2.3 The assessment also draws from Ofsted's performance profile, which reports on the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people. This data comes from Ofsted inspections and data provided by the local authority. The rating relates to all key areas of children's services, including education and safeguarding.
- 2.4 The reporting of outcomes is in the form of a letter from Ofsted, which is in two parts, firstly setting out the overall children's services assessment, including a short explanatory text explaining the assessment based on the performance profile.

- 2.5 Secondly, the letter includes a wider commentary on the quality of services provided by the local authority and its partners, outcomes achieved by children and young people and prospects for improvement.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 On 8 November 2010, Children's Services received confirmation from Ofsted of the outcome from the annual assessment of children's services (attached at Appendix 1). Using the measures noted above, Sunderland's Children's Services was judged as **Performs Well (3): an organisation that exceeds minimum requirements**.
- 3.2 This performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011.
- 3.3 It should also be noted that whilst the number of local authorities who perform excellently (4) has increased by 8, there has also been an increase in the number of local authorities whose rating has been downgraded (10), with an additional three local authorities performing poorly as shown below:

Assessment Outcome	LA's in 2010	LA's in 2011
Performing excellently (4)	20	28
Performing well (3)	77	71
Performing adequately (2)	37	33
Performing poorly (1)	12	15
* 5 judgements have yet to be finalised.		

- 3.4 Overall, Sunderland's inspection judgements across services, places Sunderland firmly within the Performing Well category.
- 3.5 The report in particular highlights:
- The large majority of nurseries being good or outstanding, with all children's centres providing good support.
 - Over the past four years, Early Years Foundation Stage has improved faster than nationally.
 - The local authority provides good support to the small number of schools in an Ofsted category of concern.
 - The proportion of good local authority schools remain the same as last year.
 - At age 16, young people's GCSEs A*-C including English and maths have risen at a faster pace than the national rate over the past four years.
 - All special schools, 6th forms and independent special schools are good or better.

- Post 16 provision is consistently good in colleges. Of the two specialist colleges for young people with autistic spectrum disorder, one is good and the other outstanding.
- Reduction in NEET figures.
- Young people's involvement in commissioning youth services is well embedded.
- Looked after children provision is mostly good in children's homes has improved from 2010.

4. Key Areas for Further Development

- 4.1 Although the majority of the outcomes within the report were positive, there were a number of key areas for further development, as noted below.
- Half of childminding provision remains satisfactory.
 - Over a third of primary schools are satisfactory.
 - Too much secondary provision is remains satisfactory.
- 4.2 Scrutiny Committee is asked to note that the improvement of these areas remain core outcomes for Children's Services and as such, actions will be put in place to ensure that outcomes for children and young people are continuously improved.
- 4.3 Children's Services have recently identified their three year priorities and actions to address the key areas for further development will be included in any plans associated with these priorities. The three year priorities are:
- New relationship with schools
 - Early Intervention/Review of Early Years/Children's Centres
 - Safeguarding – an improving story which includes ...
Whole family, whole community responsive local services approach

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the outcomes for Ofsted Children's Services Annual Assessment.
- 5.2 Scrutiny Committee are asked to agree to receive a further update on improvement actions at a future meeting.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Annual Children's Services Assessment letter 2011.

7. Background Papers

Ofsted: Children's services assessment for 2010. Arrangements and guidance for local authorities and their partners on Ofsted's annual assessment of children's services.