

Ofsted's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services

Staffordshire 4 February - 8 February 2019

ILACS Framework

These inspections focus on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements:

- to help and protect children
- the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home
- the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption
- the experiences and progress of care leavers
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people and the quality of professional practice

Inspection Pathways- for good authorities

- Local authorities judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection will usually receive a **short** inspection. The short inspection will usually take place about three years after the previous inspection and last for 1 week
- In between inspections, the local authority will usually receive one or two focused visit or a JTAI (Joint Targeted Area Inspection)
- Shared self-valuation
- Annual engagement meeting

Staffordshire children's services inspections

- 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment: **Requires Improvement**
- 2011 (July) Annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment: **Identified Areas for Priority Action**
- 2011 (November) Annual children's services assessment : **Performs Poorly**
- 2012 Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children : **Adequate**
- 2014 Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers : **Good**
- 2017 Pilot Area for ILAC: **Good** (although not officially graded as it was a pilot)
- 2018 (June) Focussed Visit: not graded but **concerns** raised (QA Process, Caseloads, supervision & management oversight)
- 2018 (November) Local Area SEND inspection: **Significant widespread concerns raised**

2019 ILACS Judgements

- The impact of leaders on social work practice within children and families: **Good**
- The experience and progress of children who need help and protection: **Requires Improvement**
- The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers : **Good**
- Overall effectiveness: **Good**

Areas for improvement

- The length of time a very small number of children remain subject to a child protection plan
- The Local Authorities response to children exposed to contextualised risk
- The effectiveness of responses to children who repeatedly go missing from home or care
- The effectiveness of the responses to young people who present as homeless
- The oversight of children who are electively home educated
- The effectiveness of the response to care leavers who the local authority is not in touch with

What next

- Develop and deliver detailed improvement plan which includes both a response to the key areas identified by Ofsted and in the SEND inspection, and areas we have identified for improvement
- Review relevant policies and procedures
- Provide appropriate training & support to deliver changes required
- Engage relevant partners to deliver areas for improvement
- Explore good practice areas elsewhere to inform our learning
- Agree and implement an overarching Staffordshire Practice model to inform our practice which values the strengths in families, and recognises the importance of building effective relationships to

Children and Families Improvement Plan

The Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) completed by Ofsted in Staffordshire February 2019, graded the quality of our Children’s Services as ‘Good’ overall and recognized quality of services delivered to children and families across the authority. The inspection also identified a number of areas that require further improvement and made recommendations to reflect these findings. This improvement plan addresses the findings and recommendations from the inspection and will form the basis of our business plan for 2019-2020 and can be considered in a number of key areas.

Care Leavers and young people presenting as homeless aged 16-17	Embedding the Quality Assurance framework, developing a practice model and a review of the performance data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of pathway planning • Health histories for care leavers • Work around young people not in education, employment and training • Keeping in touch with care leavers 18-21 • Review of young people presenting as homeless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance embedding and this being overseen by the new QA steering Group • Development of a practice model across teams and services • Review of data and how this is presented, considered and responded to including key headlines • Participation linked to Children in Care Council
Contextual Safeguarding	Practice improvements and developments around case related practice issues for children and young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out of workshops • Consider wider vulnerabilities of adolescents thought out the County • Partnership strategy around vulnerable adolescents • Development of vulnerable adolescent panel throughout the County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elective Home Education and triage process • Strategy meeting on open cases and wider agency contributions • Consistency across teams and services linked to assessment and planning • Return home interviews for children and young people missing and key learning around those not engaging