

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 31st March 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Young People

SUBJECT: The outcome of Ofsted's and Care Quality Commission's Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services undertaken between the 7-18th February 2011

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Executive Board of the outcome of the Ofsted & Care Quality Commission Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services, which took place from the 7th February 2011 to the 18th February 2011. The full Ofsted report will be published on the 25th March 2011 and will become Appendix 1 at that time.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board notes that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission found:

- 1) **The overall effectiveness of Safeguarding Services in Halton is good with outstanding capacity to secure further improved outcomes for children and families;**
- 2) **The overall effectiveness of services for Children in Care in Halton is good, with outstanding capacity for further improvement; and**
- 3) **That leadership and management; ambition and prioritisation; along with performance management and partnership working for children and young people is outstanding in Halton.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 An Inspection of Safeguarding (Child Protection) Services, and services for Children in Care, is undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission every three years. This rigorous inspection process focuses on the Council and its partners services; and judges how the whole system works together to protect children in Halton.

3.2 The Inspection involved the following Inspectors:

Lead Inspector
Safeguarding Inspector
Looked After Children Inspector
Education Inspector
Care Quality Commission Inspector
Quality Assurance Manager

3.3 The Inspection consisted of the range of activity detailed below:

- Inspection of 75 Individual Case Files
- Looked at 45 Children
- Involved 19 Parents and Carers
- Undertook 40 Focus Groups involving 400 people
- Visited 5 individual Teams/Offices
- Undertook 20 Individual Interviews
- Involved 10 Meetings with Inspectors

3.4 The overall grading for each area of the Inspection is detailed in the table below:

Safeguarding Services	
Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Outstanding
Safeguarding Outcomes for children and young people	
Children and young people are safe and feel safe	Good
Quality of provision	Good
The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe	Good
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Performance management and quality assurance	Outstanding
Partnership working	Outstanding
Equality and diversity	Good
Services for looked after children	
Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Outstanding
How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?	
Being healthy	Good
Staying safe	Outstanding
Enjoying and achieving	Good
Making a positive contribution, including user engagement	Good
Economic Wellbeing	Good
Quality provision	Good
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Performance management and quality assurance	Outstanding

Equality and diversity	Good

4.0 **SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS:**

4.1 In summary the main findings were:

a)

- Prompt action to protect children
- Good Early Intervention Services (IWIST) and implementation of the Common Assessment Framework.
- “Levels of Need” for children well understood and applied across the partnership
- Robust and thorough safe recruitment processes, with exemplary personnel files
- Good risk assessment and prioritisation of Police referrals
- Clear processes for Children in Need Cases

b)

- Good advocacy support for children
- Youth Offending Service highly rated
- The right children are in the Care of the Council
- Children in Care, and Care Leavers were confident in the Council and partner agencies
- Effective transition arrangements into Adult Services
- Safeguarding arrangements for Children in Care are outstanding

c)

- Health partnerships well established strategically and operationally
- Good access to CAMHS for Learning Disabilities
- Good follow up support for Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health purposes
- Child Development Centre providing good support for parents
- Good rate of health assessments for Children in Care

d)

- Vast majority of Schools rated good or outstanding for Safeguarding
- A committed “Virtual School Head” for Children in Care
- Good partnership working with Schools
- Good attendance and low exclusions for Children in Care
- Achievement closely tracked for Children in Care
- Good use of the Personal Education Planning process for Children in Care

e)

- Clear vision and priorities for children – clearly stated in the Children’s Plan
- Highly effective Children’s Trust and Safeguarding Children Board – with

well respected Chairs

- Excellent strategic commissioning for children. leading to clear priorities
- Excellent partnership arrangements
- Community and voluntary sector well engaged
- Good intelligence and multi-agency working
- There is evidence of a culture of critical evaluation
- Effective representation on Children's Trust
- Young people well engaged and their views were heard
- Strong contracting and monitoring arrangements for all Commissioned Services

f)

- Councillors Corporate Parenting responsibilities were exercised well
- Well regarded training and induction for Members

g)

- Visible leadership from the Council with its staff.
- Outstanding Leadership and Management
- Ambition and prioritisation for Children's Services in Halton are outstanding
- Quality Assurance Systems are outstanding
- Partnership work is outstanding, and built into the organisational culture

4.2 **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- The prompt distribution of Child Protection Conference Minutes
- The supervision of Social Care Practice giving greater challenge and direction, that is reflected accurately in case records
- Ensuring consistently good assessment processes
- Ensuring that young people who have been in Care receive the record of their health history
- Taking steps to ensure that a greater proportion of Children in Care know about the Children in Care Council.
- Ensuring that correct consent is provided for young people receiving immunisations and vaccinations in School.
- Ensuring that an annual health report for Children in Care goes to the relevant Health and Partnership Boards.

5.0 **CONCLUSION:**

The overall judgement places Halton Council and its partners as one of the most consistently high performing areas in England. This is the result of exceptionally high levels of partnership working within the Borough.

The role of Councillors in the protection children and meeting the needs of Children in Care was positively endorsed by the Inspectors.

All areas for development are being addressed.

6.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Not applicable

7.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Not applicable

8.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

8.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The positive outcome of the Ofsted/CQC inspection; and feedback that children and young people generally feel safe in the Borough, is a positive endorsement of the work of all statutory and voluntary sector partners in Halton.

8.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Not applicable

8.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Not applicable

8.4 **A Safer Halton**

Not applicable

8.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

Not applicable.

9.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

9.1 The outcome of the Inspection informs Ofsted's Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services. The judgement from this Inspection enhances the overall performance judgement of the service.

10.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

10.1 Equality & Diversity work was positively endorsed in the Inspection.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.1 N/A

12.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

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