



Appendix 2

Kirklees Children's Service's Journey and Next Steps

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Service Director



Kirklees inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS)

- 3-week inspection took place in July 2024 and was the first in Kirklees since 2019 where we were judged to be “requires improvements”.
- The report highlights a wide range of strengths, along with areas for development which the council was already taking steps to address.
- Ofsted described the leadership team as “established and confident, with committed staff and strong corporate and political support which has driven improvement.”
- “There is a range of effective, bespoke services that are meeting local need and making a tangible difference to children’s experiences.”

What grades did inspectors give Kirklees?

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Good
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Good

- The inspection ended with a judgement of '**Good**', confirming the excellent progress made for children and young people who are either in care or in need of help and protection.

Full report can be read here: [Kirklees Council Ofsted report 2024](#)

What we have done well

- Social workers carefully consider children's experiences and history. They see children quickly and listen carefully to their views.
- There is a strong emphasis on helping children to remain safely within their family network, where possible. This is the ethos and aspiration of leaders and is shared throughout the workforce.
- Children at risk of exploitation benefit from a strong multi-agency response. This helps to reduce the risk to children and disrupt the activities of exploiters.
- Disabled children receive a range of effective services and comprehensive packages of support.
- There is a range of effective, bespoke services that are meeting local need and making a tangible difference to children's experiences.
- The virtual school ensures that there is a clear focus on the academic and developmental needs of children.

What we have done well

- Social workers know their children and families well. They undertake sensitive direct work to help them understand their world.
- Children in care live in stable foster placements that meet their needs to a good standard.
- Young people who are care leavers spoke with genuine warmth and affection about the support they receive. They benefit from enduring and consistent relationships with PAs.
- There is a strong offer to newly qualified social workers.
- Staff morale is high, staff feel valued at every level and they like working in Kirklees.
- The culture created by leaders has ensured there is a workforce of skilled practitioners, who are highly committed to children in Kirklees. Many practitioners have chosen to remain working for Kirklees for long durations.

What needs to improve?

- The availability and choice of homes for children in care and care leavers.
- The quality of written plans, records and meeting minutes for the minority of children in care and care leavers where these documents are weak.
- The effectiveness of practice with every child who is experiencing harm from neglect and / or domestic abuse.



“I am writing to personally congratulate you on the outcome of your recent ILACS inspection, which saw Kirklees move out of the requires improvement rating to an overall effectiveness of good.

This is a significant achievement and one which I wanted to acknowledge today. This outcome is testament to the hard work and tenacity of the leadership team past and present, managers and frontline staff, the wider council and your safeguarding partners.

It was particularly pleasing to read ‘An established and confident leadership team, with committed staff, and strong corporate and political support have driven improvements in the quality and impact of support to children in need of help and protection and children in care’

It was an absolute pleasure to read your report, and I know you will be already concentrating on the next stages of your improvement journey.

Please pass on my congratulations to all Kirklees colleagues who have contributed to this achievement, as well as extending my thanks to all the staff, children, foster carers and wider stakeholders who participated in the inspection process.”

Yvette Stanley – Ofsted National Director Regulation and Social Care

What we will do to improve our services to Care Leavers

What Ofsted said:

“Care leavers do not receive a consistently good service. While there are strengths within the service, there remains variability in the quality of pathway plans, the local offer is not accessible enough to care leavers, and there is not enough suitable accommodation for care leavers.”

To deliver this we are asking all elected members and senior officers in the council to engage with and promote our Kirklees Parenting Strategy.

Our Care Leaver Forum have co-authored, and are co-delivering, our Kirklees Parenting Training to support this

What we will do to improve our services to Care Leavers

What Ofsted said:

“Some care leavers are living in unsuitable temporary housing arrangements due to insufficient accommodation being available in Kirklees. A small but significant number of care leavers are living in bed and breakfast accommodation. While these care leavers are risk assessed by housing partners, and regular management monitoring of the accommodation takes place, for these care leavers, this has a negative impact on their sense of stability. It also places them in a vulnerable position, living alongside unknown or homeless people from the wider population. Leaders are progressing clear plans to address this shortfall, with an aim to eradicate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, but it is too soon to see the full impact.”

Suitable accommodation continues to be a pressure within our authority like others though we are working to better establish our recognition of our primary responsibility to our care leavers as a priority. We are also working to establish a broader collaboration with social housing providers.