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Introduction

This official statistics release reports on the outcomes of local authority children's services inspections that took place up to 31 March 2012 under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Children Act 2004 and which have subsequently been published.

Ofsted undertakes a number of activities in relation to assessing local authority children's services. These currently include three-yearly inspections of safeguarding and of services for looked after children and an annual assessment of local authority children's services. The inspections of safeguarding and looked after children will be replaced by two new inspections of child protection and looked after children when the current cycle is complete. As at the time of publishing this report, the new inspections of child protection arrangements have commenced but none has been published.

This report includes information on all inspections of safeguarding and looked after children that took place up to 31 March 2012 and that had been published as at 18 May 2012. Outcomes for Children's Services Assessments are not included in this release as this is an annual inspection and findings were published in December. Inspections under previous frameworks have also been excluded but these can be viewed in earlier publications.

Some inspections that took place in this period may not have been published at the time of this release so data are, therefore, provisional.

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Key findings

Safeguarding and looked after children inspections since June 2009

- Between 1 June 2009 and 31 March 2012, there were 125 inspections of safeguarding and 121 inspections of services for looked after children. The total number of local authorities inspected was smaller, at 119, because six local authorities received re-inspections of safeguarding and/or looked after children. (Tables 1 and 2)

- Of the 125 inspections of safeguarding, 3% were outstanding for *Overall effectiveness* and 35% were good. Almost half of all inspections (46%) found *Overall effectiveness* to be adequate and 16% were inadequate. (Chart 1)

- Of the 121 inspections of services for looked after children, 53% were good for *Overall effectiveness* but none were outstanding. A further 45% were adequate and 2% were inadequate. (Chart 1)

- Four local authority inspections found *Overall effectiveness* of safeguarding to be outstanding and 20 found it to be inadequate. This latter figure accounts for 18 local authorities, as two of them had been re-inspected and were found to be inadequate for a second time. There were no local authorities found to be outstanding for *Overall effectiveness* of services for looked after children and three were found to be inadequate. (Tables 1 and 2)

- Of the 20 inspections of local authorities that found *Overall effectiveness* of safeguarding to be inadequate, two also found *Overall effectiveness* of services for looked after children to be inadequate. One of these was re-inspected and found to be adequate for services for looked after children. (Table 2)

Safeguarding inspections in the last quarter

- There were 26 inspections of safeguarding between 1 January 2012 and 31 March 2012 that have subsequently been published. Of these, two were found to be outstanding for *Overall effectiveness* while sixteen were good, seven were adequate and one was inadequate. The two outstanding judgements doubled the total number of outstanding judgements over the whole period from two to four. (Tables 1 and 3)

- The two authorities found to be outstanding for *Overall effectiveness* were also outstanding for *Capacity to improve*, *Leadership and management*, *Ambition and prioritisation* and *Partnership working*. They each had at least one other area found to be outstanding. Ten of the other inspected authorities also had at least one outstanding judgement. (Tables 3 and 4)

- Of the 26 inspections in the last quarter, eight were outstanding for *Partnership working* and seven were outstanding for *Ambition and prioritisation*. Nineteen of the local

authorities were found to be good for *Children and young people are safe and feel safe*, and one was outstanding. One local authority was inadequate for this sub-judgement. (Tables 3 and 4)

- One local authority was found to be inadequate for *Overall effectiveness*. This local authority was also inadequate for *Children and young people are safe and feel safe*, *Quality of provision, Leadership and management* and *Performance management and quality assurance.* A second local authority was also inadequate for *Quality of provision*. A further local authority was inadequate for the *Contribution of health agencies.* (Tables 3 and 4)

Services for looked after children inspections in the last quarter

- Between 1 January and 31 March 2012, there were 26 inspections of services for looked after children. Of these, nineteen authorities were found to be good for *Overall effectiveness* and seven were adequate. No local authorities were found to be either outstanding or inadequate. (Tables 5 and 6)

- Although no local authorities were outstanding for *Overall effectiveness*, half were rated as being outstanding for at least one sub-judgement. The most common sub-judgements found to be outstanding were *Capacity to improve* and *Making a positive contribution*, with seven authorities each. (Tables 5 and 6)

- There were two sub-judgements where authorities were found to be inadequate in the last quarter. Five authorities were found to be inadequate for *Being healthy* and one was inadequate for *Achieving economic well-being*. (Table 5)

Methodology

1. There have been a number of revisions to the various frameworks over the period and these are reflected in the relevant table footnotes. For a more detailed explanation, please see the official statistics published on 29 September 2011: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/official-statistics-local-authority-childrens-services-inspections-and-outcomes

2. Full inspections of safeguarding and of looked after children are run on a three-year cycle, so that by the end of a three year period, all 152 local authorities should have been inspected once. The first inspection took place in June 2009 and, as at 31 March 2012, 119 local authorities had been inspected. The last inspections under this framework will take place in July 2012.

3. A new framework of Inspections of the arrangements to protect children began in June 2012 but no reports had been published at the time of this release.

4. For more information on how Ofsted regulates and inspects children's social care, please go to the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Care-and-local-services/Children-s-social-care

Additional information

All the tables and charts shown in this release, along with additional analysis at regional and local authority level, are available in Excel format on the Ofsted website in the same location as this document. Underlying data are also available in Excel and comma separated values (.csv) formats.

The selected tables and charts included below are numbered according to the accompanying excel workbook.

Chart 1: Overall judgements for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections taking place between 1 June 2009 and 31 March 2012 (percentages)[1]

1. As at 31 March 2012 a total of 119 local authorities had been inspected. There had been 121 inspections of safeguarding and looked after children's services completed, including two re-inspections, and an additional four re-inspections of safeguarding services only.

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Table 1: Overall effectiveness and Capacity to improve grades[1] for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections carried out between 1 June 2009 and 31 March 2012[2,3]

	Safeguarding		Services for Looked After Children	
	Overall effectiveness	**Capacity to improve**	**Overall effectiveness**	**Capacity to improve**
Outstanding	4	14	0	15
Good	44	55	64	64
Adequate	57	44	54	41
Inadequate	20	12	3	1
Total inspections	125	125	121	121

Source: Ofsted inspections

1. Local authorities were given the following grades for the judgements shown: 1 Outstanding, 2 Good, 3 Adequate and 4 Inadequate.

2. Announced inspections of safeguarding and services for looked after children run on a three-year cycle. The first inspections took place in June 2009 and, as at 31 March 2012, there had been 121 inspections of safeguarding and looked after children's services completed, including two re-inspections. There were an additional four re-inspections of safeguarding services only. Over the whole period a total of 119 local authorities have been inspected.

3. The framework for the safeguarding and the looked after children inspections was reviewed during the three-year inspection cycle and a revised framework, incorporating minor changes, was introduced in November 2010. The first inspections took place under the revised framework from week beginning 27 November 2010.

Glossary

Children's Services Assessment

The Children's Services Assessment was introduced as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) in 2009 and all local authorities received a rating in December of that year. In 2010 the CAA was abolished, but Ofsted retains the legal duty to produce an annual children's services assessment.

Inspections of the arrangements to protect children

Inspections of the arrangements to protect children were introduced in June 2012 and replaced the framework of safeguarding and looked after children inspections (see below). These inspections take place on a three-year cycle and are unannounced. In 2013 there will be further changes to this framework when Ofsted will work with other inspectorates on a multi-agency inspection.

Safeguarding and looked after children inspections

The full inspections of safeguarding and looked after children are run on a three-year cycle, so that by the end of a three year period all 152 local authorities should have been inspected once. The first inspection took place in June 2009 and as at 31 March 2012, 119 local authorities had been inspected.

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