



# Children's services rated officially Good!



**Children's services have been rated good overall and outstanding in one area, by Ofsted, following a recent inspection.**

The Ofsted report, praising services, follows a two-week inspection, of all children's services, including safeguarding, children in care, care leavers, fostering and adoption. All services were found to be good overall, however inspectors rated the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers 'outstanding'.

## **Families are at the heart of our services**

The report praises:

- progress made to build a child focused service, providing effective help and protection and care to children and families across all levels of need, vulnerability, and risk
- strong political support, challenge, leadership, and accountability at every level
- good social work with professional, curious, and caring social workers
- detailed assessments ensure the right help is provided at the right time to ensure needs are met.

Councillor Jon Clarke, cabinet member for children and young people, said: "We are delighted with our latest Ofsted report – it is such a great read with so much positive feedback.

"In 2015, Ofsted rated children's services in Darlington as inadequate, and in 2018 as requires improvement, so for

all services to improve to good overall, and outstanding in one area, is a phenomenal achievement - bearing in mind we have had a pandemic - which made delivering services extremely challenging.

"We have an amazing team, and this latest report recognises the hard work and change of culture undertaken to ensure our most vulnerable children and families are always at the heart of all our work.

"We have such a great network of agencies who want children to experience the best of life in Darlington. It is critical to us that the children and families we support are given the opportunity to have their say on the services provided, and I am so pleased this was recognised.

"It is heart-warming for children leaving care to tell inspectors, due to being in care, they have been provided with many opportunities and skills they will carry with them their entire life.

"I meet regularly with staff and young people who use our services, and time after time, I am blown away by the respect, trust and great working relationships that are formed.

"Staff have undoubtedly climbed a mountain to achieve such fantastic results, they are amazing! However, we recognise there is always more to do, are ambitious for the future and committed to continue to deliver the best services for all our children and young people to ensure they have the best experiences and aspire to their dreams and plans for their future."

**To read the full report, visit [www.darlington.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/ofsted)**