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Introduction

This official statistics release reports on the outcomes of children’s services inspections that took place up to 30 June 2011 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 (LA) children’s services. These include annual unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements, three-yearly inspections of safeguarding and services for looked after children and an annual assessment of local authority children’s services.

This report includes information on all inspections up to 30th June 2011 that have subsequently been published. In future, Ofsted will update these data quarterly.

Some inspections that took place in this period may not have been published at the time of this release so data are, therefore, provisional. The next release will be published on 15th December 2011.

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Key findings

Safeguarding and looked after children inspections

Safeguarding and looked after children (S&LAC) inspections were introduced in June 2009 and take place on a three-year cycle. They include two separate inspections of safeguarding and of services for looked after children and give a number of judgements for each local authority. Up to 30 June 2011, 71 local authorities had been inspected (although there were 73 inspections in total as two authorities received a re-inspection).¹ The S&LAC inspection framework was revised on 1 November 2010 and the last inspections to take place using the original framework were in the week beginning 27 November 2010. A total of 44 inspections were conducted using the original framework and, as at 30 June 2011, 29 had been conducted using the revised framework.

- The most common judgement for *Overall effectiveness* of both safeguarding and services for looked after children was adequate; of the 73 inspections that had taken place up to 30 June 2011, 33 were adequate for safeguarding and 39 were adequate for services for looked after children. (Table 1)
- Only one local authority was outstanding for *Overall effectiveness* of safeguarding and 18 were found to be inadequate. There were no local authorities found to be outstanding for *Overall effectiveness* of services for looked after children and two were found to be inadequate. (Table 1)
- Two local authorities received judgements of inadequate for *Overall effectiveness* of both safeguarding and services for looked after children, one of which also received inadequate judgements for *Capacity to improve* for both safeguarding and services for looked after children. This LA was re-inspected in February 2011 and received another inadequate judgement for *Overall effectiveness* of safeguarding. It was found to be adequate for *Capacity to improve* for safeguarding and both *Overall effectiveness* and *Capacity to improve* for services for looked after children. (Table 2)

Safeguarding services inspections

- Of the 29 inspections taking place under the revised framework, between November 2010 and 30 June 2011, a total of 14 were adequate for *Overall effectiveness* of safeguarding and 12 were good. The remaining three LAs were judged as being inadequate (one of which was in a re-inspection, already discussed above). (Table 3)
- Although none of these more recent inspections of safeguarding found *Overall effectiveness* to be outstanding, there were three LAs judged as having an outstanding *Capacity to improve*. In addition, some of the sub-judgements found outstanding features of the LAs including five judged to have outstanding *Ambition and prioritisation*, four each with outstanding *Leadership and management* and *Partnership working*, and three with outstanding *Contribution of health agencies*. (Table 3)

¹ Up to November 2011, local authorities are considered for re-inspection if the outcome of their safeguarding and looked after children inspection impacted on the overall outcome of the Children's Services Assessment published in December 2010. The outcome of any re-inspection will be considered in the Children's Services Assessment for 2011.

- In the last quarter, from 1 April to 30 June 2011, there were 12 S&LAC inspections which have subsequently been published. The majority of these inspections found *Overall effectiveness* of safeguarding to be adequate (eight) with three found to be good and one inadequate. Adequate was also the most common judgement given for a number of the sub-judgements, but for a number of the sub-judgements the majority of LAs were good. These sub-judgements were *Capacity to improve*; *Children and young people are safe and feel safe* and *Equality and diversity*. (Table 3)

Services for looked after children inspections

- Of the 29 inspections taking place under the revised framework, the most common judgement for *Overall effectiveness* of services for looked after children was good (16), but this was very similar to the number judged as being adequate (13). None were either outstanding or inadequate for *Overall effectiveness*. (Table 5)
- *Overall effectiveness* and *Quality of provision* were two areas where no local authorities were found to be outstanding for services for looked after children. (Table 5)
- In outcomes for looked after children, 'Good' was the most likely outcome for all five areas derived from the Every Child Matters agenda, which still form part of the inspection framework. The only inadequate judgements for looked after children, however, were found for the sub-judgements of *Being healthy* and *Economic well-being*, where there were four and three inadequate LAs respectively. (Table 5)
- There were some outcomes for looked after children that were judged as outstanding. Five local authorities were judged as being outstanding at helping the children in their care *Make a positive contribution*, four at helping children *Enjoy and achieve* and three at helping the children *Be healthy*. (Table 5)
- In the last quarter, 1 April to 30 June 2011, the most common judgement for *Overall effectiveness* of services for looked after children was adequate. Seven LAs received this judgement and the remaining five were found to be good. (Table 5)
- Between 1 April and 30 June 2011, judgements of the inspections of services for looked after children that were found to be inadequate were *Being healthy* (three LAs) and *Achieving economic well-being* (one LA). Six of the twelve judgements were found to be outstanding for two LAs. These were *Capacity to improve*; *Being healthy*; *Staying safe*; *Making a positive contribution*; *Leadership and management* and *Ambition and prioritisation*. One LA was found to be outstanding for *Achieving economic well-being*. (Table 5)

Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements

Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements were introduced in June 2009. These inspections do not grade the effectiveness of the services, but instead identify where the authority is meeting the requirements of statutory guidance and identify areas of particular strength, areas for development and any areas for priority action. Unannounced inspections are universal and are run on an annual cycle.

The current definition of what constitutes a priority action was introduced on 1 April 2010. Under the current definition, priority actions are only given where inspectors find evidence of 'serious failings which place children at risk of inadequate protection and of significant harm'. Because these criteria were introduced during the inspection cycle there are no data on priority actions for the first year of the inspection cycle.

- The first year inspection cycle was completed by August 2010, with all 152 local authorities having received an inspection. (Tables 7 and 8)
- The second, and final, cycle of inspections began in September 2010. As at 30th June, 122 local authorities had had their second year inspections and 30 were awaiting a second inspection. Of those inspections that took place in the second year, three were found to have one or more areas for priority action. (Tables 7 and 8)

Children's Services Assessment

The current Children's Services Assessment was introduced in 2009 as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and is an assessment of the local authority's children's services including safeguarding, looked after children and educational services. The assessment can be limited by the findings from social care inspections. For example, for a local authority receiving an inadequate judgement for *Overall effectiveness* of either safeguarding or services for looked after children, the annual children's services assessment is likely to be 'Performs poorly'.

- In 2009, 10 local authorities' children's services were judged as performing excellently in their children's services' assessment. A further 93 authorities were assessed as 'Performs well', 40 were 'Performs adequately' and nine were 'Performs poorly'. (Table 9)
- Following the discontinuation of the CAA in spring 2010, Ofsted's statutory duty to make an annual assessment remained and all local authorities received an assessment of their children's services in December 2010. In this year, the number of councils performing excellently had doubled to 20. A further 78 were assessed as 'Performs well', 39 as 'Performs adequately' (around the same as the previous year), and the number assessed as 'Performs poorly' had increased to 15. (Table 9)
- The reason for the large increase in the number of local authorities performing poorly in 2010 is largely due to the fact that more safeguarding inspections had taken place. A weakness in safeguarding was the key factor in all fifteen of the LAs that received this judgement in the 2010 CSA. (Table 10)
- Seven local authorities were assessed as performing excellently in their Children's Services Assessments for both years. (Table 10)
- Five local authorities were found to be performing poorly in both years. In all cases the 2009 CSA had been influenced by safeguarding. For all these LAs, the 2009 assessment continued to impact on the 2010 assessment because they had not received another inspection of safeguarding during the year. (Table 10)

Methodology

1. Full inspections of safeguarding and of looked after children (S&LAC) 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 30 June 2011, 73 local authorities had been inspected.
2. The annual unannounced inspection of children's services' contacts, referrals and assessment arrangements was introduced in June 2009 with the first inspection report being published on 17 July 2009. In April 2010, the criteria for meeting a 'Priority action' were revised to only include 'serious failings which place children at risk of inadequate protection and of significant harm'. Data for priority actions are not, therefore, included for inspections that took place in the first year.
3. The Children's Services Assessment was introduced as part of the CAA in 2009 and all local authorities received a rating in December of that year. In 2010 the CAA was discontinued, but Ofsted's statutory duty to produce an annual Children's Services Assessment remained. The children's services assessment can be limited by the findings from social care inspections. For example, for a local authority receiving an inadequate judgement for either a Safeguarding or Services for looked after children inspection, the annual Children's Services Assessment is likely to be 'Performs poorly'.
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 given for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections taking place between 1 June 2009 and 30 June 2011 (by number)

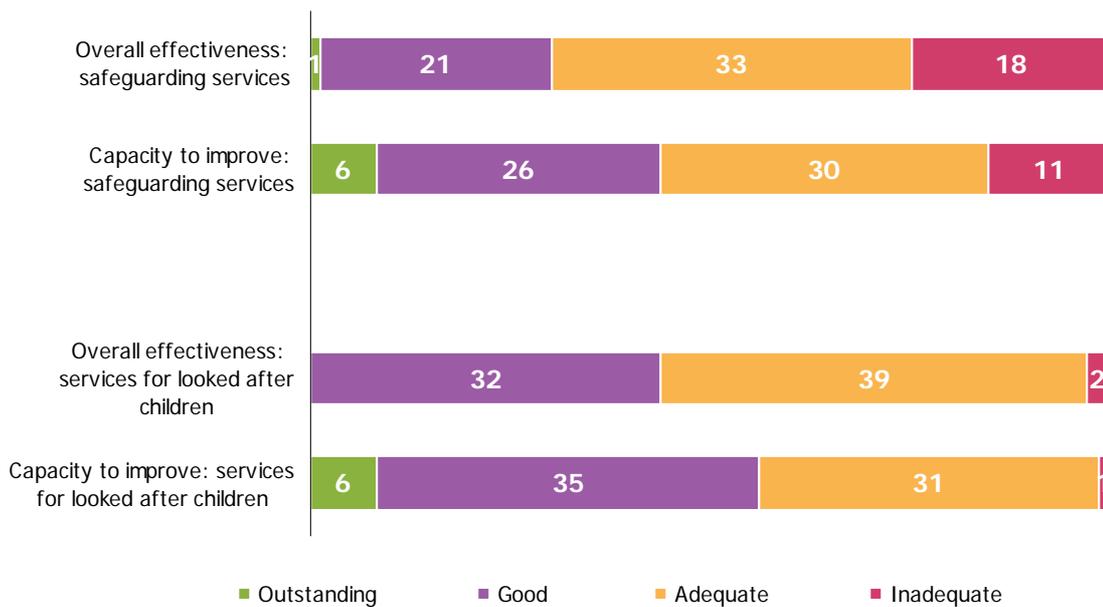
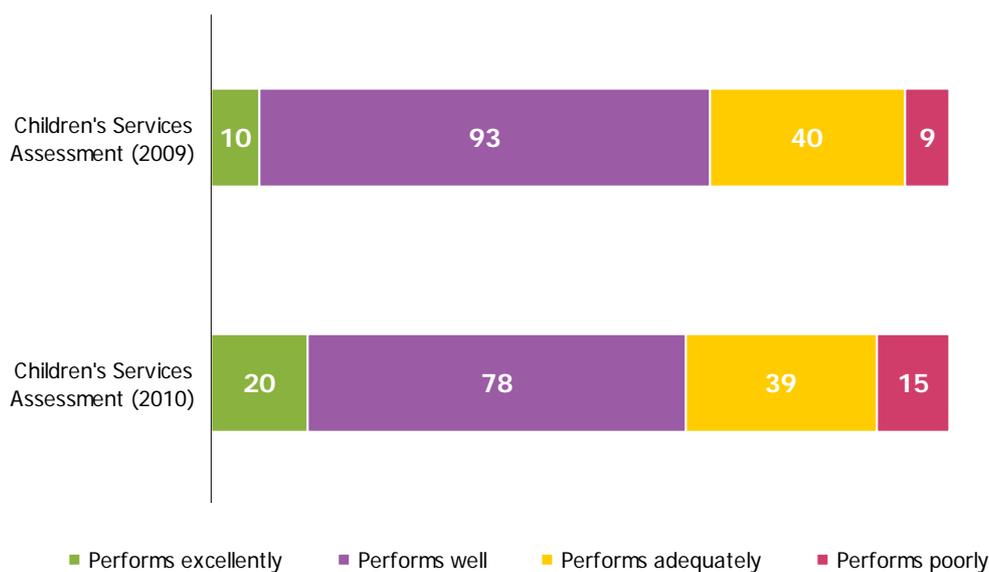


Chart 2: Children's Services Assessments for 2009 and 2010 (by number)¹



1. The 2009 rating formed part of the wider Comprehensive Area Assessment, lead by the Audit Commission. The CAA was discontinued in spring 2010. The 2010 assessment is a stand-alone Ofsted assessment of LA children's services.

Table 1: Overall effectiveness and Capacity to improve grades¹ for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections carried out between 1 June 2009 and 30 June 2011^{2,3}

	Safeguarding Services		Services for Looked After Children	
	Overall effectiveness	Capacity to improve	Overall effectiveness	Capacity to improve
Outstanding	1	6	0	6
Good	21	26	32	35
Adequate	33	30	39	31
Inadequate	18	11	2	1
Total inspections	73	73	73	73

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 30th June 2011 there had been 73 inspections completed, including two re-inspections.

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.

Table 7: Unannounced inspections carried out between 1 June 2009 and 30 June 2011¹

	Year 1 (2009-2010)	Year 2 (2010-2011)
Number of inspections ²	152	122
Number of local authorities with priority actions ³	n/a	3

n/a = not applicable

Source: Ofsted inspections

1. Includes inspections carried out between 1 June 2009 and 30 June 2011 that have subsequently been published.

2. These data include the entire first cycle of inspections that took place between June 2009 and August 2010 and the inspections that have taken place in the, as yet incomplete, second cycle from September 2010 to June 2011.

3. The current definition of what constitutes a priority action was introduced on 1 April 2010 and data on priority actions are, therefore, not included for the first year of the inspection cycle.

Table 9: Children's Services Assessments for 2009 and 2010¹

Outcome	Children's Services Assessment (2009)	Children's Services Assessment (2010)
Performs excellently	10	20
Performs well	93	78
Performs adequately	40	39
Performs poorly	9	15

Source: Ofsted inspections

1. The 2009 rating formed part of the wider Comprehensive Area Assessment, lead by the Audit Commission. The CAA was discontinued in spring 2010. The 2010 assessment is a stand-alone Ofsted assessment of LA children's services.

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 discontinued, but Ofsted continues to produce an annual children's services assessment.

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 30 June 2011, 71 local authorities had been inspected.

Unannounced Inspections (UICRA)

Unannounced inspections of local authority contact, referral and assessment arrangements were introduced in June 2009 and had covered all local areas by August 2010. They are now in their second cycle. Contact, referral and assessment services are the front door of child protection services. Inspections focus on the local authority as the lead agency for child protection. They assess how well practice helps to manage the risk of harm to children and young people and minimises the incidence of abuse and neglect. Inspectors spend the majority of their time looking at direct practice, including scrutinising individual case files with front-line workers.

The unannounced inspection of children's services' contacts, referrals and assessments was introduced in June 2009 with the first inspection report being published on 17 July 2009. All 152 local authorities were inspected in the first year of the cycle and as at 30 June 2011, 122 had been completed in year two of the cycle.

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