

# Official Statistics Release

Policy area:	Local authority children's services inspections and outcomes
Theme:	Education, Children's Services and skills
Published on:	15 December 2011
Coverage:	England
Period covered:	01 July 2011 – 30 September 2011
Status:	<b>PROVISIONAL</b>
Issued by:	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) 125 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE
Responsible director:	John Goldup
Statistician:	Adam King
Public enquiries:	<a href="mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a>
Press enquiries:	<a href="mailto:pressenquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">pressenquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a>
Link to official statistics release web page:	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/official-statistics-local-authority-childrens-services-inspections-and-outcomes">www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/official-statistics-local-authority-childrens-services-inspections-and-outcomes</a>
Publication medium:	Ofsted website
Publication frequency:	Quarterly
Next publication date:	29 March 2012

## Introduction

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

This report includes information on all inspections that took place up to 30 September 2011 and that had subsequently been published as at 8 November 2011.

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 29 March 2012.

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Key findings .....	3
Methodology .....	6
Additional information .....	6
Chart 1: Overall judgements for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections taking place between 1 June 2009 and 30 September 2011 (by number).....	7
Chart 2: Children's Services Assessments for 2009 to 2011 (by number) <sup>1</sup> .....	7
Table 1: Overall effectiveness and Capacity to improve grades <sup>1</sup> for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections carried out between 1 June 2009 and 30 September 2011 <sup>2,3</sup> .....	8
Table 9: Children's Services Assessments for 2009 to 2011 <sup>1</sup> .....	8
Glossary .....	9

## Key findings

Inspections of local authority children's services undertaken between September 2010 and August 2011 are reviewed in detail in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2010/11, available on the Ofsted website:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/annualreport1011>. Much of the data included here was therefore covered in Ofsted's 2010/11 Annual Report year, but one month of the latest quarter's data will fall into the 2011/12 annual report year.

### Safeguarding and looked after children inspections since June 2009

- Between 1 June 2009 and 30 September 2011, there had been 85 inspections of safeguarding and 81 inspections of services for looked after children. The total number of local authorities inspected was smaller, at 79, because six local authorities received re-inspections of safeguarding and/or looked after children<sup>1</sup>. (Tables 1 and 2)
- One local authority inspection found *Overall effectiveness* of safeguarding to be outstanding and 19 found it to be inadequate. This latter figure accounts for 17 local authorities, as two of them had been re-inspected and were found to be inadequate twice. 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 19 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. (Table 2)

### Safeguarding inspections in the last quarter

- There were 12 inspections of safeguarding between 1 July 2011 and 30 September 2011 that have subsequently been published, including four re-inspections. Of these, none were found to be outstanding for *Overall effectiveness* while three were good, eight were adequate and one was inadequate. The inadequate judgement was found for a local authority that was re-inspected. (Tables 2 and 3)
- In the last quarter, two local authorities were judged to be outstanding for both *Leadership and management* and *Ambition and prioritisation*. In addition, one of these was also outstanding for *Capacity to improve, Performance management and quality assurance* and *Partnership working*. (Tables 3 and 4)
- There were only two sub-judgements for which no local authority was found to be inadequate. These were the *Contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe* and *Equality and diversity*. It should be noted, in relation to the former, that four of the re-inspections of safeguarding that have taken place since 1 July 2011 were not

<sup>1</sup>Local authorities judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness for safeguarding and / or looked after children can be considered for re-inspection any time after 12 months from the publication of the first inspection report

conducted jointly with the Care Quality Commission and were, therefore not judged on the *Contribution of health agencies*. (Tables 3 and 4)

Services for looked after children inspections in the last quarter

- Between 1 July and 30 September 2011, there were eight inspections of services for looked after children. Of these, three authorities were found to be good for *Overall effectiveness*, four were adequate and one was inadequate. No local authorities were judged as outstanding. Three local authorities were rated as being outstanding for at least one sub-judgement. (Tables 5 and 6)
- Two local authorities were rated as being inadequate for at least one sub-judgement of services for looked after children. One local authority was inadequate for four areas: *Overall effectiveness*; *Staying safe*; *Being healthy*; and *Leadership and management*. One local authority was inadequate for *Achieving economic well-being*. (Table 6)
- In terms of outcomes for looked after children, *Enjoy and achieve* and *Making a positive contribution* were the only two outcomes that had outstanding judgements. These were also the only outcomes not to have any inadequate judgements. (Table 5)

#### Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements

- The second, and final, cycle of inspections began in September 2010. As at 30 September 2011, 135 local authorities had had their second year inspections which had subsequently been published. A number of inspections took place in the last week of September which have not yet been published and 17 local authorities were awaiting a second inspection. (Tables 7 and 8)
- Of those inspections that took place since September 2010, three were found to have one or more areas for priority action. (Table 7)

#### Children's Services Assessment

- In 2011, 28 local authorities' children's services were judged as performing excellently in their Children's Services' Assessment. This number had increased from 10 in 2009 and 20 in 2010. (Table 9)
- There was also an increase in the number of local authorities judged as performing poorly in their Children's Services Assessment, from 9 in 2009 to 15 in 2011. There had been no change between 2010 and 2011. (Table 9)
- The number of local authority children's services performing well had decreased in each year, from 93 in 2009, 78 in 2010, to 76 in 2011. The number performing adequately had also decreased from 40 in 2009, to 33 in 2011. (Table 9)
- Seven local authorities were assessed as performing excellently in their Children's Services Assessments for every year since 2009. A further 18 local authorities that were performing

well in 2009 were performing excellently in 2011; two local authorities that were performing adequately in 2009 were performing excellently in the latest assessment. (Table 10)

- Two local authorities were found to be performing poorly in all three years' assessments. In both cases the Children's Services Assessment had been influenced by safeguarding. The 2010 assessment continued to impact on the 2011 assessment because these two local authorities had not received another inspection of safeguarding during the year. (Table 10)
- Assessment outcomes for 25 local authorities had improved between 2010 and 2011. Ten had improved from performing well to performing excellently, eleven had improved from performing adequately to performing well and four had improved from performing poorly to performing adequately. (Table 10)
- Assessment outcomes for eight local authorities had declined between 2010 and 2011. Two had declined from performing excellently to performing well, two had declined from performing well to performing adequately, three had declined from performing well to performing poorly and one had declined from performing adequately to performing poorly. (Table 10)

## Methodology

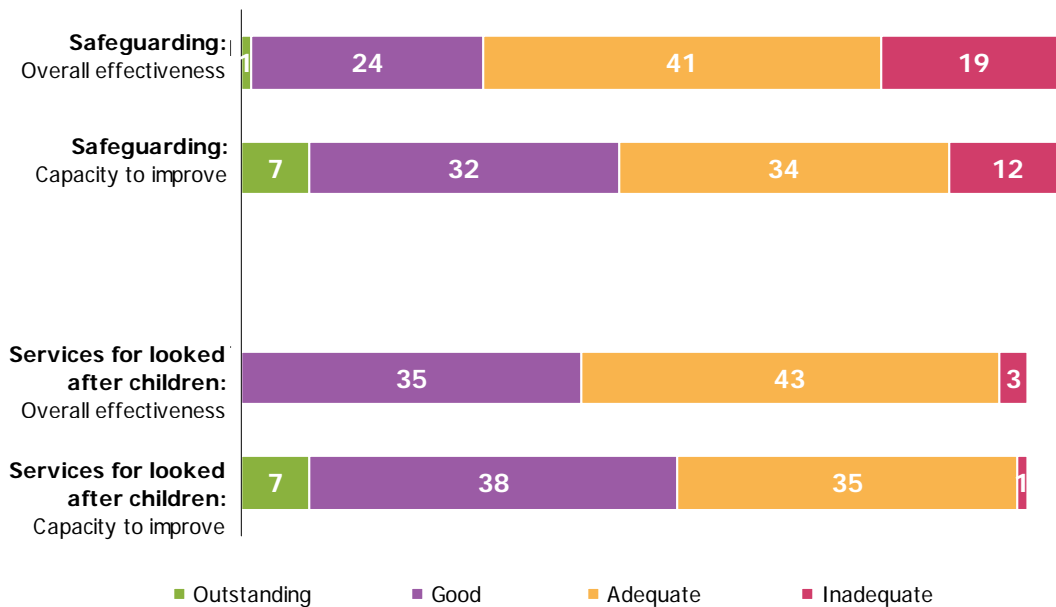
1. There have been a number of revisions to the various frameworks over the period and these are reflected in the relevant table footnotes. For a more detailed explanation, please see the official statistics published on 29 September 2011:  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/official-statistics-local-authority-childrens-services-inspections-and-outcomes](http://www.ofsted.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 30 September 2011, 79 local authorities had been inspected.
3. The unannounced inspection of contact, referral 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.
4. 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 assessment is informed by the findings from social care inspections. In addition, 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'.
5. 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Care-and-local-services/Children-s-social-care)

## Additional information

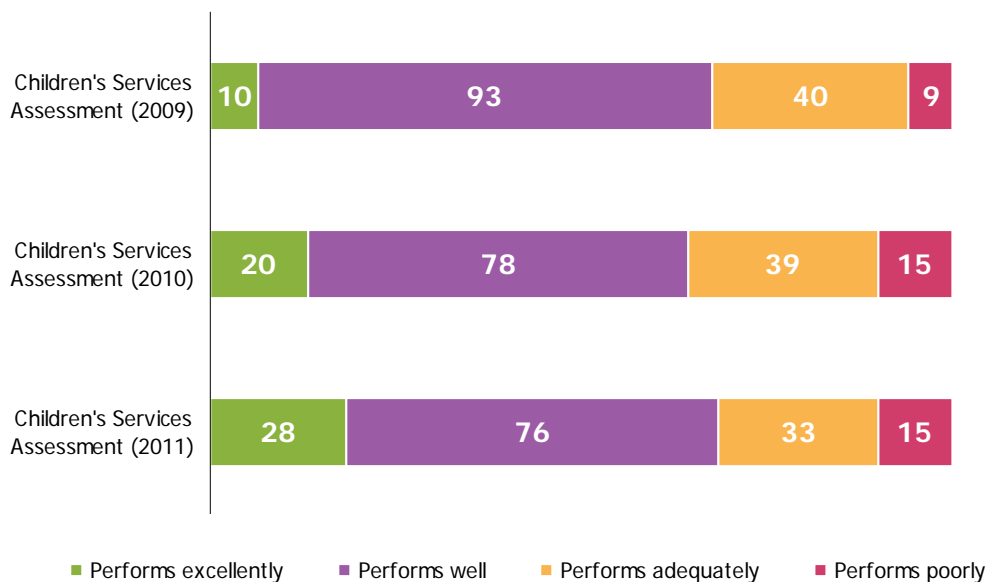
All the tables and charts shown in this release, along with additional analysis at regional and local authority level, are available in Excel format on the Ofsted website in the same location as this document. Underlying data are also available in Excel and comma separated values (.csv) formats.

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 30 September 2011 (by number)**



**Chart 2: Children's Services Assessments for 2009 to 2011 (by number)<sup>1</sup>**



1. The 2009 rating formed part of the wider Comprehensive Area Assessment, lead by the Audit Commission. The CAA was discontinued in spring 2010, but Ofsted's statutory duty remained. The 2010 and 2011 assessments were stand-alone Ofsted assessments of LA children's services.

**Table 1: Overall effectiveness and Capacity to improve grades<sup>1</sup> for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections carried out between 1 June 2009 and 30 September 2011<sup>2,3</sup>**

	Safeguarding Services		Services for Looked After Children	
	Overall effectiveness	Capacity to improve	Overall effectiveness	Capacity to improve
Outstanding	1	7	0	7
Good	24	32	35	38
Adequate	41	34	43	35
Inadequate	19	12	3	1
Total inspections	85	85	81	81

*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 30 September 2011 there had been 81 inspections completed, including two re-inspections. There were an additional four re-inspections of safeguarding services only. Over the whole period a total of 79 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.

**Table 9: Children's Services Assessments for 2009 to 2011<sup>1</sup>**

Outcome	Children's Services Assessment (2009)	Children's Services Assessment (2010)	Children's Services Assessment (2011)
Performs excellently	10	20	28
Performs well	93	78	76
Performs adequately	40	39	33
Performs poorly	9	15	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 and 2011 assessments were stand-alone Ofsted assessments 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 abolished, but Ofsted retains the legal duty 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 September 2011, 79 local authorities had been inspected.

### **Unannounced Inspections**

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 September 2011, 135 had been completed in year two of the cycle.

© Crown copyright

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).