



# Joint area review

Report for children and young people  
Staffordshire

## Report for children and young people about the services they receive in Staffordshire

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and doing well at school and as they grow up
- Making a positive contribution to society
- Being successful in whatever they choose to do when they are adults

## Why should I read this?

The law says that inspectors must look at and then report on how well local services serve children and young people in an area. This is called a "review". Inspectors visited your area recently. You might like to read this, or the full report, to find out what they had to say.

## What did the inspectors do?

Twelve inspectors visited Staffordshire in September and October 2005 so they could see what life is like for children and young people in the area. They:

- ❖ listened to a number of children and young people they met at youth centres, community centres, children's centres and schools, especially in the Cannock and Burton areas;
- ❖ talked with adults working with children and young people (like social workers, teachers, youth workers, nurses, doctors, police officers and counsellors);
- ❖ spoke to a few parents, as well as other people caring for children;
- ❖ met with the local Youth Forums, and spoke to groups working with children and young people;
- ❖ heard from the council and other agencies what it thinks about the services it provides for children;
- ❖ read quite a few reports; and
- ❖ visited services used by children, to see things for themselves.

The inspectors also looked at how well particular children are doing (like those with a learning difficulty, or disability or in council care).

## How well are children and young people doing in Staffordshire?

The inspectors found that:

- ❖ overall children and young people receive adequate services compared to children in other parts of the country;
- ❖ the majority of children and young people are healthy;
- ❖ educational standards achieved by most children and young people are good;
- ❖ young people behave responsibly and some make a good contribution to their schools and the area in which they live;
- ❖ young people are generally well prepared for working life; and
- ❖ the way services are provided to protect children and young people from abuse and neglect are not good enough and need to be improved.

Inspectors also found that:

- ❖ children and young people looked after by the council generally do not do as well as others in the county;
- ❖ some young people leaving care sometimes have difficulty finding suitable homes, and training;
- ❖ a small number of children and young people with mental health problems do not get the help they need quickly enough;
- ❖ too many children with very serious disabilities or difficulties are educated away from their homes; and
- ❖ some children and young people with disabilities find that it is sometimes hard to get the services they need in some areas.

## What were the main things children and young people told inspectors about your area?

- ❖ Some good community services had been changed too quickly. They said they knew this was often to do with the ways services were funded but this did not always help.
- ❖ Sometimes there were not enough things to do in local areas and too often groups of young people were seen as a nuisance because they were bored. Occasionally they were moved on by the police.
- ❖ Children's centres were good and that there should be more of these within the county. Too often they had to tell too many people about their lives. They would like adults to work together more so that this does not happen.

## What things did the inspectors say are good for children and young people in my area?

- ❖ The services for young children and their families.
- ❖ Education services help children and young people to enjoy their education and leisure activities.
- ❖ Local services contribute well to keeping children and young people healthy.
- ❖ Health education especially for sexual health, substance misuse, healthy eating and physical activity.
- ❖ Local services are well run and some adults are working hard to find ways to involve children and young people more,
- ❖ The support for those who face particular difficulties, such as being a young mum or those with difficulties with drugs and alcohol. Good contact with council officials and corporate parents so they can help plan good services.

## What do inspectors think were not good enough and should change to make things better for children and young people?

- ❖ More should be done to protect the most vulnerable children.
- ❖ More social workers need to be appointed.
- ❖ More affordable housing needs to be found for young people, especially those leaving care or secure accommodation.
- ❖ Services for those with mental health problems need to be improved.
- ❖ Children looked after by the council and those excluded from school should have better educational opportunities to help them achieve more.
- ❖ Local provision for children and young people with serious learning difficulties and disabilities needs to be increased. These children and their families should be more involved in making decisions about their future.
- ❖ All staff should have more training to make sure they are able to help children and young people from minority ethnic groups more effectively.
- ❖ The council needs to develop a way of ensuring the views of children and young people from across the county are used in decision making and find ways of telling them about the decisions which have been made.