



Joint area review

Report for children and young people
Calderdale

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

- 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 Calderdale during 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 clubs and schools, focusing particularly on those living in North Halifax;
- ❖ talked to adults working with children and young people (such as social workers, teachers, youth workers, nurses, doctors, police officers and counsellors);
- ❖ spoke to parents, as well as other people caring for children;
- ❖ met young people involved in the local Disabled Young People's Forum, the Youth Parliament and those being looked after by the council;
- ❖ spoke to those in charge of the council and other agencies such as health agencies and the voluntary sector to find out what they think of the quality of service they provide;
- ❖ read quite a few reports;
- ❖ checked out how well money was being spent; and
- ❖ visited those services used by children, to see things for themselves.

The inspectors also looked at how well particular children are doing, such as those with a learning difficulty and/or disability or those being cared for by the council, either in a foster home or a residential home.

How well are children and young people doing in Calderdale?

The inspectors found that:

- ❖ the majority of children and young people are healthy;
- ❖ children get to see their GP when they need to;
- ❖ children don't have to wait long to see a specialist if they are mentally unwell;
- ❖ children on the child protection register and those at risk of being sexually exploited or who live with violent parents are helped to be safe;
- ❖ children do well before starting school;
- ❖ educational standards achieved by most children and young people are good;
- ❖ children in the council's care get good support to help their education and more of them are going to colleges and universities;
- ❖ the majority of children with a disability are educated and included in ordinary schools;
- ❖ young people behave responsibly and some make a good contribution to their schools and the area in which they live; and
- ❖ young people are given a lot of help to stop them getting into trouble with the police.

Inspectors also found that:

- ❖ a lot of young children have tooth decay;
- ❖ the health of children who are cared for outside of the area is not as good as those who live in the area;
- ❖ too many young people aged 16-18 are getting pregnant;
- ❖ some children from Pakistani/Kashmiri backgrounds do not do as well in their education as others, but the extra help they are receiving is beginning to improve their chances;

- ❖ it is very difficult for young people to get back into mainstream schools once they are excluded;
- ❖ not all children cared for by the council have their own social worker to look after them;
- ❖ children are not seen quickly enough by social workers when other people are worried about them;
- ❖ it is not so easy for some young people to use leisure services because of the cost and the distance from their homes;
- ❖ some young people do not get the right support to get a job, help them continue in education or get the right training after age 16. If they are very disabled they have fewer choices;
- ❖ the council is spending too much of its money on sending children with learning difficulties away from their home and community to be educated; and
- ❖ children and young people are asked their views about services but they do not always hear about or see what difference it makes.

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

Children and young people say they are always asked for their views but as yet they do not see that they have any real influence in the way things are being done. Some changes are taking a long time to happen. Although a lot is being done to stop bullying, children are still worried about it in school and in their local area.

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

- ❖ 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 smoking in pregnancy, substance misuse, healthy eating and physical activity, is good.
- ❖ The way services identify children and young people who might get in trouble with the police is good.
- ❖ Children are being helped to be protected from sexual abuse.
- ❖ Those who face difficult situations such as being a young mother or those misusing drugs and alcohol are supported well.

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

- ❖ Children and their families should get help a lot earlier to stop things going wrong.
- ❖ Children being cared for by the council should have their own qualified social worker to help sort things out for them.
- ❖ When young people leave school they should have better opportunities to get the right job or training.
- ❖ There should be more education and care services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they do not have to live a long way from the area.
- ❖ The council needs to put into action more quickly some of the things young people have told them about that would make services better.