



Joint area review

Report for children and young people
Stoke-on-Trent

Report for children and young people about the services they receive in Stoke-on-Trent

- 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 your 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?

Ten inspectors visited Stoke-on-Trent in October 2005 so that they could get an understanding of what life is like for children and young people in your area. They:

- ❖ talked with children and young people they met both individually and in groups;
- ❖ talked with different adults working with children and young people (like teachers, social workers, youth workers, nurses, doctors, police officers and councillors);
- ❖ spoke to parents and other people caring for children;
- ❖ heard from the council and other agencies about the services they provide for children; and
- ❖ read a lot of reports, and visited Blurton to see what life was like for children and young people there.

The inspectors also looked at how well particular children are doing, like those who are in council care or those who have a learning difficulty or disability. They know that often these groups of children and young people don't get good services and needed to check up on this locally.

How well are children and young people doing in Stoke-on-Trent?

The inspectors found that:

- ❖ the number of children and young people involved in road traffic accidents with serious injuries is around average for England and no one under 15 years has died in road accidents in the past two years;
- ❖ secondary school pupils' achievement at GCSE is improving, particularly this year, and, the attainment of Pakistani children has improved significantly;
- ❖ the attainment of most children and young people looked after by the council is generally satisfactory and so is their attendance at school;
- ❖ children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory educational progress;
- ❖ most children and young people attend school regularly, behave responsibly and make a positive contribution to their school and community;
- ❖ good opportunities are available for young people to take part in decision making through schools and youth forums; and
- ❖ inspectors found a wide range of sport and social activities that children and young people could access.

Inspectors also found that:

- ❖ children and young people are generally less healthy than others in England;
- ❖ there are high rates of emergency admissions to the hospital for children and young people with stomach and chest problems;
- ❖ there are higher levels of teenage pregnancy in Stoke-on-Trent than in other areas of England;
- ❖ there are high levels of recorded violent crime, much of which involves young people;

- ❖ children in primary schools generally achieve less well than in England as a whole;
- ❖ achievement of young people after leaving school at colleges and in work based learning is below the national average, but improving; and
- ❖ only 18 percent of young mothers over 16 years of age are in education, training or employment.

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

- ❖ Children and young people told us that they feel safe in school and that the work of adults in school usually stops bullying.
- ❖ They are worried about gangs, bullies, violence and vandalism particularly in the evenings and at night. They are also worried that the steps taken to deal with these problems in their communities are not working.
- ❖ Some young people looked after in children's homes do not feel safe from bullying and some children and young people in foster homes feel discriminated against and not listened to.
- ❖ The majority of young people confirm that they enjoy school and are encouraged to attend.
- ❖ Most young people are positive about finding things to do in their local area.
- ❖ Young people found the advice and guidance provided by the Connexions service helpful.

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

- ❖ Overall the inspectors found that services for children and young people in Stoke-on-Trent are adequate.
- ❖ Local services are trying hard to work together to improve children and young people's health.

- ❖ Generally educational services in pre-school, primary and secondary schools are satisfactory and often good.
- ❖ Children and young people are rarely excluded permanently from school.
- ❖ Children and young people are supported well by the council and other agencies to develop emotionally and to improve their social skills.
- ❖ Youth services in Stoke-on-Trent are good.
- ❖ There are a good range of vocational options for young people aged 14 to 16.

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

- ❖ Children and young people who have serious emotional and mental health problems find it difficult to get specialist help and there are no plans to create a proper service for them yet.
- ❖ There are serious problems in the council's social care service for children and young people. Those who may be at risk are not properly protected.
- ❖ Too many children and young people go into the care of the council and some have no social worker. Too many of these children and young people are placed outside the city and away from their family and friends.
- ❖ Sometimes children and young people who need to see a social worker have to wait for several months.
- ❖ It is very difficult for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to receive the council's social care services. There are not enough care services to enable short breaks for them and their families.
- ❖ Although the council's leaving care team provides a satisfactory service, some young people leaving care are placed in unsuitable accommodation.

- ❖ The educational attainment of children in primary schools and those children and young people in council care needs further improvement.
- ❖ Not enough children in the care of the council have the opportunity to contribute to regular reviews of their care.
- ❖ Further work is required by the council and other agencies to ensure that the views of children and young people are collected routinely and used to influence how services are developed.
- ❖ Too many young people when leaving school are not completing their first choice of further education.
- ❖ The number of homeless young people is rising and more needs to be done to develop a proper range of accommodation for them.