

ILACS Short Inspection Outcome

Update to Improving Lives Select Commission
– February 2026

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Background

- The ILACS Inspection was announced in October half term
- Been anticipated since May 2025
- Judgement inspection three years after we achieved Good in 2022
- Care Leavers a new judgement

Judgement Criteria

- Children who need help and protection
- Children in care
- Care leavers
- Impact of leaders

Leading to an Overall Effectiveness judgement

And the outcome was.....

- Children who need help and protection
- Children in care
- Care leavers
- Impact of leaders
- Overall Effectiveness

Outstanding

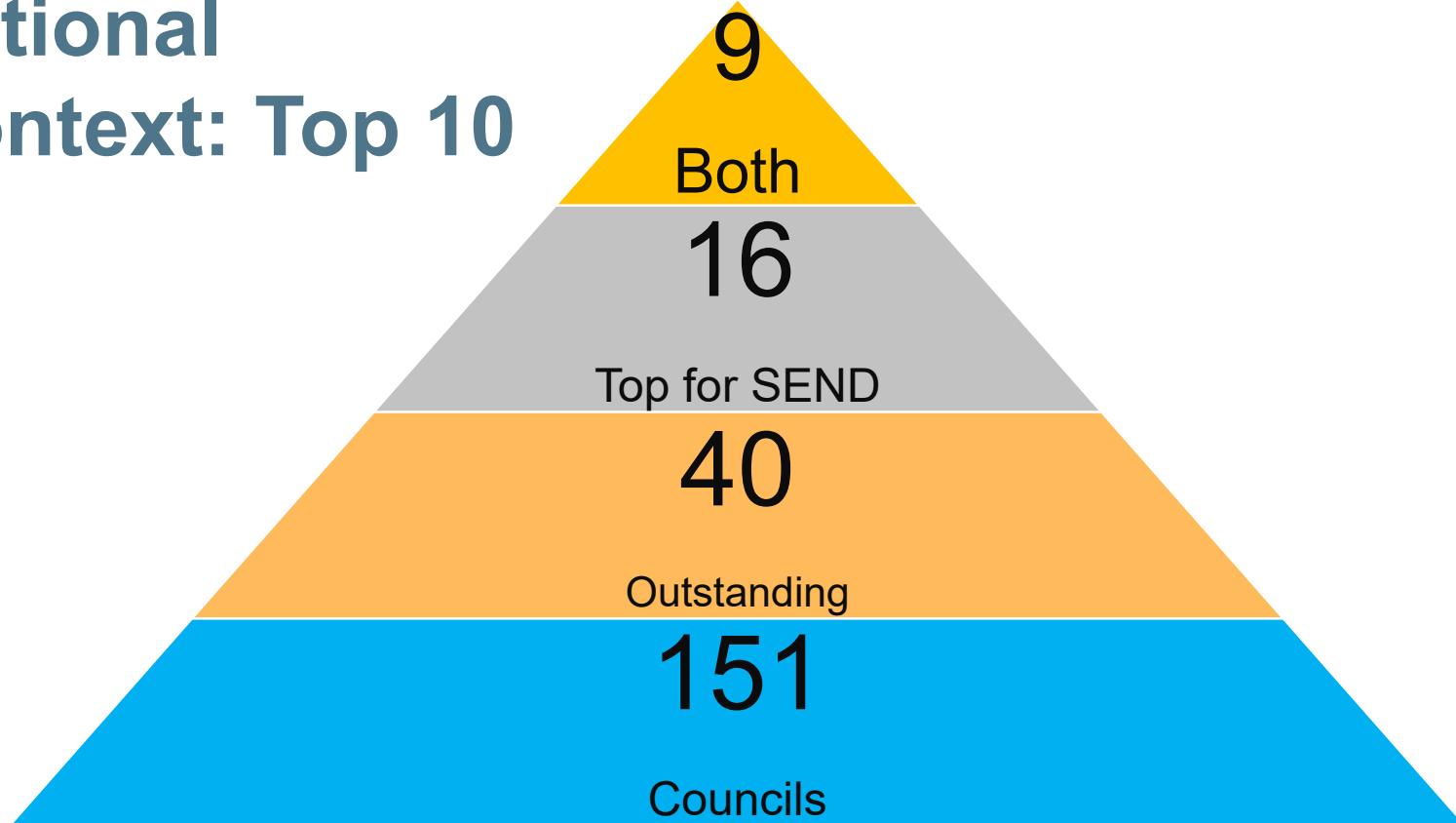
Outstanding

Good

Outstanding

Outstanding

National Context: Top 10



Rotherham: One of Only 9 Authorities to Achieve Both

Overall Assessment

Progress is evident across all areas of social work practice.

Children in need of help and protection, and those in care, now benefit from an outstanding service delivered by a stable, highly skilled workforce. Practitioners know their children well, advocate fiercely for them, and build relationships that promote safety and belonging. Further investment in the early help and family help model is enabling more children to remain safely within their family networks with timely, targeted support that is making a measurable difference to their lives.

Decisive action has been taken to strengthen pathway planning, embed relational support, and promote opportunities for safe independence when care leavers are ready.

The voice of children is now a defining strength of the service.

Detail of the Judgement: Help and Protection

Children in need of help and protection, and those in care, now benefit from an outstanding service delivered by a stable, highly skilled workforce.

- Family Hubs support families in their community
- Comprehensive early help with high quality assessments
- Strengths based; connecting families
- MASH – timely, proportionate, child-focused
- Pre-birth assessments are of excellent quality
- Child voice and unique needs; plans developed alongside families
- CP enquiries thorough and multi-agency
- CP plans good and the CP process effective and involves families well

Detail of the Judgement: Help and Protection

- OOHs responsive and well resourced
- Comprehensive support for vulnerable children in education
- Highly effective service for missing and children at risk of exploitation
- Effective preventative work to keep children at home
- PLO used robustly when needed
- LADO strengthened
- Response to U18 homelessness strong
- Private fostering: child centred
- Significantly strengthened offer for young carers

Detail of the Judgement: Experiences and Progress of Children in Care

Children move into care only when it is no longer safe for them to remain at home, and this decision is made with very careful consideration of their individual needs, safety and long-term well-being.

- Strong engagement with the child, friends and family
- Placement decisions are made carefully
- Transformation of the sufficiency strategy – availability of local homes
- Appropriate identification of kinship carers and good support
- Court applications are timely and successful
- Excellent oversight of unregistered placements
- Homes are suitable and meet children's needs well
- Fostering service strengthened – assessments of high quality and foster care

Detail of the Judgement: Experiences and Progress of Children in Care

- Strong step down arrangements for children and their families
- Adoption processes are strong with good emphasis on early permanence – strong RAA
- Work with separated migrant children
- Direct work and lifestory work of high quality (IRO letters poignant)
- IRO champions
- Skilled social workers – effective plans
- Family time assessments and work with parents strong
- Virtual School support educational aspiration, support in school and high levels of EET
- Strong In Care Voice; Young Inspectors; Young Journalists

Detail of the Judgement: Care Leavers

PAs have a detailed knowledge of young people's needs and histories and are persistent in making sure that young people receive the right levels of visiting and help that meets their individual needs

- Early allocation creates meaningful and trusting relationships – incredibly positive
- Pathway plans done with young people, but the template used isn't effective
- Journey – highly valued
- Range of housing options
- Advocacy around the wider offer
- Named nurse drop in
- Support from Virtual School
- Vulnerable CL supported with persistence and empathy
- Look Ahead group

Detail of the Judgement: Impact of Leaders

There has been sustained and visible council wide commitment to placing children at the heart of strategic decision-making in Rotherham

- Quality of political leadership
- Senior management across the Council
- Sustained investment and ambitious planning
- Strength of Corporate Parenting Partnership Board
- Strength of partners and Safeguarding Exec
- Effective QA framework – data and audit
- Culture of learning and celebration of good practice
- High quality supervision
- Staff morale and confidence

Impact on Staff

A **confident, proud** and **inspired** workforce

...staff feel informed, empowered and actively connected to the council's vision for children's services. Workers told inspectors that they feel valued and are proud to work for Rotherham. They described a vibrant learning culture and working conditions that place great value on reflection, professional growth and staff influence. This results in workers feeling valued and inspired to do the very best for children, young people and their families.

Actions that are needed

- The quality of pathway plans for care leavers.

(Outcome 4, national framework)

- The quality of health history information provided to care leavers.

(Outcome 4, national framework)



Final Words

