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Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care

Last Wednesday morning the inspection report for Suffolk County Council's social care services for children was published, following a visit from Ofsted at the end of May. The report found that social care services for children, which include fostering and adoption, safeguarding, child protection, youth justice and corporate parenting (children in care), 'require improvement to be good.' My group are concerned by this as children's services were rated as 'Outstanding' the last time they were inspected in 2019, and the remarks on leadership – that leaders do not have 'sufficient grip' on all the services provided – are especially worrying. A new director for children's services started in July 2024, and more information will be available on the plans for improvement in September when the inspection report is tabled at Cabinet. Here is a summary of the findings of the report:

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families – Requires improvement to be good

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection – Requires improvement to be good

The experiences and progress of children in care – Good

The experiences and progress of care leavers – Requires improvement to be good

Overall effectiveness – Requires improvement to be good

This inspection is separate from the recent inspection into services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

You can read the full Ofsted inspection report here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80565>

Back to School Transitions

Is your child starting primary or secondary school this September?

Moving up and changing school is a big change for children and a new stage of growing independence. To help parents and carers support children with this transitions, Suffolk County Council have a selection of Solihull Approach online courses which are free from anyone with a Suffolk postcode. You can access these using the link www.inourplace.co.uk/moving-up and register for an account using the access code WOLSEY. The Solihull Approach is a parenting support model which was developed by health visitors, child psychologists and psychotherapists in the 1990s and aims to understand child behaviour as part of their development.

Electric Vehicles

Over 60 new community venues across Suffolk will have new electric vehicle (EV) charge points, as Suffolk County Council's 'Plug In Suffolk' project continues to grow.

Fast charging facilities will be installed at 63 new sites, including community centres, village halls, scout huts and other community hubs, and 25 existing charge points from an early iteration of Plug In Suffolk will be adopted under a new contract.

The county council has successfully bid for £7.3 million from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, which supports local authorities to plan and deliver EV charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking.

£1.4 million of the LEVI funding will go towards the community charging infrastructure, with a further £5.9 million allocated for on-street charging, which will be developed later this year.

In addition, a trial of electric community vehicles is set to launch next summer in Suffolk, with the council's tender process for this beginning this month.

Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs will be placing 16 electric vehicles across eight locations in Suffolk which local residents can book by the minute, hour or day. Planned locations include Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Sudbury, Needham Market, Stowmarket, Lowestoft and Woodbridge.

Launch of Solar Together Suffolk

Residents of Suffolk can come together to invest in renewable energy sources through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. Solar Together Suffolk helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from qualified installers.

Suffolk residents can join the group-buying scheme, which offers solar panels with optional battery storage and EV charge points, as well as retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels and are looking to get more from the renewable energy they generate. The scheme allows homeowners to increase their independence from the National Grid.

It is free to register at www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk, and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation.

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Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](http://suffolkgli.wordpress.com)

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

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