

Walsall – Inspection of child protection

24 June – 3 July 2013

Summary report for children and young people

The purpose of the inspection is to look at how well the council and other organisations help and protect children and young people to be safe from harm and to be well cared for.

Overall we rated Walsall as **adequate** for how effective child protection services are. All of our grades are explained in the table below:

Outstanding	A service that is significantly better than required at keeping children and young people safe
Good	A service that is better than required at keeping children and young people safe
Adequate	A service that is doing what is required to keep children and young people safe
Inadequate	A service that is not doing what is required to keep children and young people safe

Here is a summary of the things we found at the inspection that were generally **adequate or good** and the things we told the Director:

Social workers, people from education and family support workers all work closely together to help and protect children in a team called the multi-agency screening team (MAST). This helps to make sure that children and young people get the right help at the right time when there are problems or when they need to be kept safe. The council has made plans for health workers to join this team so that it works even better.

The bosses at the council really want children and young people to be safe and happy and they know what they need to do to make things better for them. They listen to what children, young people and their families say about what they think would make things work better.

Social workers work hard to get to know children and young people. They make sure that they see them often and they see them alone so that they can talk about their lives and what they need to help them. Social workers listen to children and young

people and ask them what they would like to happen in their lives.

When people like teachers or health workers are worried about a child or young person, or think that that families need some extra help to make things better, everyone knows how they can tell the MAST about this.

Bosses know about the children and young people who are being worked with by social workers. They make sure that children are safe by looking at what work the social worker is doing and make decisions help to keep children safer. If they think that things need to be done better they help the social worker think about how this can be done.

Everyone working with young people who go missing or who are homeless knows what they need to do to help them. They work hard to help young people understand about the dangers of adults who might harm them and to keep them safe from this. Targeted youth support helps young people who might be getting into trouble and young people told us that this makes a difference for them.

Here is a summary of the things we found at the inspection that **needed improving** and the things we told the Director:

The parents and people who look after children and young people need to be given reports from all the different workers who are helping them. They need to have these before they go to the meetings where plans to keep their children safe are made (these meetings are called case conferences). They can then understand the reports and know what everyone thinks about how safe their children are.

Social workers need to make sure that children and young people know how to come to case conferences that are about how to help make sure they are safe. If children and young people need someone to help them in the meetings or to tell people their views, social workers should arrange this.

Social workers work with lots of families to help keep children safe from harm. They can't always write about what help they are giving and how this is making things better for children and young people because they have too much work to do. Their bosses know about this but they need to make sure that social workers don't have too much work so that children and young people get the help they need when they need it.

Disabled children and young people sometimes have more than one social worker when they need a plan to keep them safe. The social workers need to make sure

that they both write about their work so that the things they write about join together to keep children safe. They need to work closely together so that they listen better to disabled children who use different ways to talk or who need to help to be understood.

When children and young people don't need a plan to keep them safe anymore but still need some help, workers need to make sure that one person is responsible for making sure that this works well.

The bosses at the council need to plan how they can make sure that they have social workers who are permanent and stay with the council so that children and young people don't have lots of different social workers. They also need to plan for who can take over for the bosses in the future if this is needed.

The council need to make sure that they learn from complaints when people tell them things need to work better.

When children, young people and their families need help when problems first happen this is called early help and the council sometimes asks other organisations to help families (called commissioning). They need to make sure that they know that these organisations are making things better for children and young people.

Some children and young people live with people who are not members of their family, this is called private fostering. The council needs to make sure that everyone knows what private fostering is. People need to know who they talk to about children and young people who are living with others to make sure the arrangements made are safe.

The full inspection report was published on **2 August 2013**. The council will now prepare a plan to show how they will improve things. It will also say when they are going to talk to children and young people about what they are going to do and which groups they are going to talk to.

If you would like to look at the full inspection report you can find this at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/walsall>