

Wakefield Council – Inspection of child protection

29 October-7 November 2012

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 Wakefield Council 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:

The leaders who are in charge of the council and the staff who work with children, young people and their families want to make sure that all children and young people who live in the area are safe. They know the needs of the different communities well and which children and families need to be protected from harm. They make sure that key people with specialist skills are employed to keep you safe and sound.

People can contact Social Care Direct (SCD) if they feel there are concerns about a child or family being hurt. When this happens, the staff in SCD and other services meet with the child, young person and their family to find out what their needs are. All this is done quickly because the staff need to make sure that plans to protect children are in place so that further problems don't occur and things can get better.

Inspectors spoke to some parents and asked for their views about the services provided for children and families. Parents told inspectors that staff give them good support which helps them get through their life and helps them to manage without extra help.

When social workers and other staff make decisions and plans about children and their families, children and young people have the chance to share their views as well. Children and young people see their social worker on their own and can talk to them about their wishes and feelings, and what they want to happen. They can also talk to an advocate if they want to, and the advocate will put the child/young person's views forward at meetings on their behalf. The joint planning with children, young people and families means everyone understands why steps are being taken to help make life better.

The council makes sure that all staff in services supporting children, young people and families receive good training so that their skills are up-to-date and they know how to offer good support for them.

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

All investigations which need to have a police officer and a social worker working together should have this, so that criminal and welfare concerns can be considered together and children and young people receive the best possible protection.

Managers need to record why they have made certain decisions on children and young people's files, not just write down what the decision is. This is so that everybody is clear why and how decisions are made and actions are taken.

Social workers need to make sure they write down enough information in children and young people's files about what they have found in each family, including the views of all family members, what might cause harm to children and young people and what might help to protect them.

The council needs to make sure that families experiencing domestic abuse know where to get help.

People who refer children and young people because they are concerned about them should be told what happened about their referral, unless it would breach the child/young person's privacy.

The council needs to ensure that managers give their social workers good supervision and this is written down properly.

The council needs to make sure that children's centres can show that the services they offer benefit families and improve outcomes for children.

The full inspection report was published on 7 December 2012. 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/wakefield>