

## Stockton-on-Tees – Inspection of child protection

**7 – 16 January 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 Stockton 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:

When people working with children have a serious concern about a child, staff in the council's first contact team are good at listening. They give good advice and if it is a big problem, they pass information on quickly to the referral and assessment team. This team also act quickly when a child could be very unsafe.

All the parents we spoke to during the inspection said they understood why they were getting the support from social workers and people like parent support and family intervention programme staff. They said the support they get and the actions they are asked to take is helping them to tackle some of the difficulties and keep their children safe in the home.

A lot of staff in services across Stockton-on-Tees work together well to help families when they are just beginning to have problems and difficulties. This is helping them to cope before the problems become big.

Social workers often work well with children and build good relationships with them. They do some good work with children who have been put on a child protection plan to help them be safe. When important meetings take place, social workers and other staff working with the family and the meetings they are nearly always held on time.

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

The referral and assessment team need to respond more to some cases. This means there is sometimes too long a delay from being told about the concerns and asking someone to deal with it.

Social workers do not always make it clear how well the views of children have been taken into account when they record what they are doing with a family or when they write plans for them.

Social workers do not always make sure they know about children's backgrounds, religious beliefs or culture. When this happens it means they cannot take account of such things when making plans to help them.

Although many staff work well together to help children and families before problems get too difficult, the senior staff in the council have not joined up all their work into a plan with targets to be met. This makes it difficult to check whether the things people are doing are making a big difference.

The full inspection report was published on 15 February 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/stockton-tees>