

## ***Staffordshire – Inspection of child protection***

***5 November to 14 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 Staffordshire 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:

Leaders have tackled weaknesses identified at previous inspections well to ensure that children and young people at risk of harm are identified and provided with services that keep them safe.

The risks to children are considered well when they are most in need and careful planning takes place to ensure that their needs are met. In these instances managers know and understand what decisions their staff are making; these are recorded well.

Most parents and carers value the help, support and protection provided by social workers, family and parents' support workers and from other agencies and told inspectors of the positive progress that they are making as a result of the help they receive.

Under new arrangements where teams of staff from different agencies work closely together there are signs that when families are beginning to experience problems help for them is provided swiftly.

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

Children who do not need immediate protection but whose needs require further assessment are generally seen by social workers. However, the assessments are not always recorded. As a result children and families experience delays in getting the help and support that they need.

The quality of the help and support that families receive when they are beginning to experience problems varies. In the effective work seen by inspectors families made good progress. In the less effective work problems were not picked up quickly enough and in some cases deteriorated.

The current electronic recording systems that are in place are slow and difficult to use. It is hard for staff and managers to find information easily. However, plans are in place to remedy this.

Some social workers work with large numbers of children and families making it difficult for them to fully support them all of the time. Records are not always kept up to date and do not always reflect the views of children and young people. Their views do not consistently inform the development of services.

The full inspection report was published on 14 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/staffordshire>