

Somerset County Council Inspection of child protection

24th June- 3rd 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 Somerset County Council as **inadequate** 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 people in charge of Somerset's children's services want to make life better for children and their families. They know what improvements they need to make and have recently employed some good leaders who have lots of experience in helping councils keep children safe.

The staff who work for Somerset County Council are hard-working and enthusiastic. They want to do a good job and try hard to give children the help they need.

There are lots of services for children and their families who need help in Somerset. Parents who have used them told inspectors they thought they had helped them understand and sort out their problems.

When a child is at risk of immediate harm social workers normally act quickly to protect them. All child protection enquiries are carried out by qualified social workers

who are experienced and know what they need to do to keep children safe.

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

Not all children who need help to be safe get the right help quickly enough.

Social workers and other people who work with them need to make sure they really understand what has happened to children and their families in the past as well as what is happening now so they can make better, safer plans for them.

Managers need to get better at checking the quality of work staff are doing and letting staff know if they are doing a good job or not. When they give social workers advice they need to write down what they decided to do and why.

Social workers need to make that the children they work with can attend meetings about them if they want to. If children don't want to attend these meetings, there are independent people who can speak up for them and social workers need to ask children if they want someone to do this for them.

Managers need to make sure that children who have a child protection plan are visited by the same social worker so children get to know them and feel they can tell them their worries.

The full inspection report was published on **5 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/somerset>