

## Sandwell – Inspection of child protection

**25 February – 6 March 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 Sandwell 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 who run child protection services in Sandwell want to get better at doing it and they have asked a private company to help them get it right.

When people want to keep children safe and they contact social workers for help, their worries are usually dealt with quickly and well.

Parents and children who are getting help told inspectors that they were happy with the help they were getting and that it was working.

The council is really good at writing clear reports that tell them how they are doing overall at protecting children, but they need to make sure that all of the people who run child protection services use the reports in the same way to make the services better.

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

When the police and social workers are finding out whether children are safe they need to get better at working together to make sure they do what they are supposed to do. The council needs to sort this out straight away.

When social workers collect information so they can understand children's needs and make sure they are protected, they need to get better at talking to children and asking them for their views. The council needs to sort this out straight away.

When children are in need of help the council must make sure that there is a good plan for each of them that makes it clear what needs to change and by when. The council needs to sort this out straight away.

Social workers and the people who work with them to protect children need to get better at sharing information with each other to make sure everyone knows what needs to be done and by when. The council needs to sort this out within three months.

The people who run the social work service need to get better at thinking about how to keep children safe and writing it down properly for social workers to follow. The council needs to sort this out within three months.

When social workers collect information so they can understand children's needs, they need to get better at thinking about what would help to keep children safe, what happened in the past that would help them know about this and what children's father's views are. The council needs to sort this out within three months.

When social workers and the people who work with them to protect children make plans to keep children safe, they need to be clearer about what they need to do so that they know when they have done it. The council needs to sort this out within three months.

Social workers need to get better at visiting children who are at risk of harm more often and make sure they see children when they are on their own. The council needs to sort this out within three months.

When the people who run child protection services meet with the people who run the services that work with them to keep children safe, they need to get better at knowing how all the services are working together and making sure that children are

safe. The government tells them how they should do this and they need to make sure they get it right. The council needs to sort this out within three months.

The people who run child protection services and the people who run the services that work with them to keep children safe need to make sure that everybody knows when it is right to contact a social worker and get help for children.

The council and the people who work with them to keep children safe need to think carefully about what they want to offer to families to help them early enough to stop things getting worse. They need to make sure that all the agencies and families help with this thinking and planning so that everyone understands what this early help offer is and how they can play their part. The council needs to sort this out within six months.

When social workers and the people who work with them to protect children meet to talk about children's safety, the people who run the meetings need to get better at making sure that everyone is at the meeting who should be, and that they have sent in written reports that everyone else at the meeting has the chance to see. The council needs to sort this out within six months.

The council needs to make sure that all of the people who run child protection services are checking that they are all doing it properly and in the same way, and that they take action when things are going wrong. The council needs to sort this out within six months.

The full inspection report was published on 9 April 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/sandwell>