

Salford City Council – Inspection of child protection

8 -17 October 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 Salford City 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 council has improved a lot from being inadequate two years ago, more so in the last six months. It is now doing what is needed to keep children and young people safe. Senior managers and key local politicians know a good deal about protecting children and they understand how to improve services further. Their partners agree with them and they have confidence that this will happen. Things that have made a difference have been strong leadership, enough permanent and stable staff, better managers, good training on child protection, good partnerships with other people, such as the police, and the right plans and checks in place.

Partners, such as children's centres and schools, know when to ask for help because children might be at risk. When concerns are raised that children and young people may be at risk of serious harm suitable action is taken to investigate and protect them. Because people involved with children missing from school and from home communicate well, far fewer children are missing from home and many return to school.

Help for children with less serious difficulties is good and professionals work well to make sure that this is the case through the detailed assessments that they complete and the work that they do together. Children's centres also make a difference to the lives of children and families, as do schools. Other services, such as those for children in need and for children in need of protection have improved to adequate with some work that is good, but the service that deals with and investigates concerns about children because they are not cared for well enough by their families still needs to improve further.

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

The help that children might need when they are assessed because they are not cared for well enough by their families is often not thought about thoroughly enough, plans for this help are not as good as they should be and help comes too slowly. The council needs to sort this out straight away.

For children who need help to keep them safe from harm, professionals do not always share everything that they know when they meet together, because this is not recorded as well as it should be. This includes observation of children and their views. This means that new plans sometimes miss important information and the right help is not always given quickly enough by the right people. This is another thing that needs sorting out straight away.

Managers do not always ask social workers difficult enough questions about their work with children and families so that they can think hard about what they do and improve it. As well as this, managers do not always check case files well enough to make sure that professionals are making the best decisions for children and families. Both these things needs improving quickly.

Too many families are in need of more help when something goes wrong after doing well enough to be left to manage on their own. The council needs to think more about reasons for this and what to do about it.

Children and young people do not have a strong enough say in what is going on in their own lives, in how much they are being helped and what further help they need. Their views are also not used to help make services better. Some work is going on but this is at an early stage and not yet pulled together.

The full inspection report was published on 16 November 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/salford>