

Rochdale – Inspection of child protection

12-21 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 Rochdale 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:

Social workers are very committed to helping children and protecting them from harm. They make sure that they visit children who are on child protection plans. They speak to them and see them alone to help them to share their views.

More social workers have been recruited to work in Rochdale to ensure that the same social worker stays with the same children so that they develop a trusting relationship. Managers check that social workers are well trained and they discuss cases to make sure that social workers do a good job.

When babies, young children and families need help, staff coordinate the support in what they call a *'team around the child'* meeting to make sure that families are helped early to solve problems. Professionals, such as teachers and youth workers coordinate targeted services well to protect older young people from harm. They help them settle at college or explain how to stay safe and use money wisely.

Professionals know a lot about the different needs of children and families in the area. Much has been done to raise awareness of the risks that children and young people may encounter, for example about the dangers of social networking or risks of sexual exploitation. All schools have received information and guidance about this to ensure that young people are better protected.

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

Some families are not getting the help they need early enough and, as a result, too many children and young people are referred to social care services when this is not the best option for them and their families.

Some parents are confused about what they need to do to improve the quality of care for their children. They think that plans to help them are not always clear.

Parents and their children are not always sufficiently involved in deciding and agreeing what goes in the plan. They cannot always access advice from an independent supporter to help them present their views. In some cases, parents do not receive the notes of meetings in time to prepare for the meeting with professionals.

The current senior leaders have only recently taken up their post and they have not yet been able to ensure that all organisations are providing the right services for all children and ask children what they think. The people on the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board (RBSCB) have not asked sufficiently challenging questions about the quality of services provided to children to ensure that they are safe.

The full inspection report was published on 21 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/rochdale>