

Report for children and young people about the services they receive in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and doing well at school and as they grow up
- Making a positive contribution to society
- Being successful in whatever they choose to do when they are adults

Why should I read this?

The law says that inspectors must look at and then report on how well local services serve children and young people in an area. This is called a "review". Inspectors visited your area recently. You might like to read this, or the full report which you can find on Ofsted's website, to find out what they had to say.

What did the inspectors do?

Eight inspectors visited Barking and Dagenham in 2007 so that they could get a feel of what life is like for children and young people in the area. They:

- ❖ talked/listened to a number of children and young people in Barking and Dagenham
- ❖ talked with adults working with children and young people (like social workers, teachers, youth workers, nurses, doctors, police officers and councillors)
- ❖ spoke to parents and other people caring for children
- ❖ met with school councils' representatives and members of the Youth Parliament
- ❖ heard from the council and other agencies what it thinks about the services it provides for children
- ❖ read a lot of reports
- ❖ Visited services all over Barking and Dagenham and in the Abbey and Gascoigne areas to see things for themselves.

The inspectors also looked at how well particular children are doing, like those children in council care or those who have a learning difficulty or disability.

How well are children and young people doing in Barking and Dagenham

- ❖ Most children in Barking and Dagenham are as healthy as children living elsewhere in England.
- ❖ A number of young people become parents while they are teenagers. This can affect how well they do later in life in areas such as education and employment.
- ❖ The numbers of young people becoming teenage parents has fallen but they are still higher than many other parts of England.
- ❖ When children start school, they generally do well in their first year and this continues for much of their school life. However, young

people studying for GCSE and A levels do not do as well as children in other parts of the country.

- ❖ Children who are looked after by the council are achieving good results at school and more of them are going on to higher education.

What were the main things children and young people told inspectors about your area?

- ❖ Children like living in Barking and Dagenham and they like the parks and open spaces that there are. But some children say that they are scared to use the parks because they are not always safe, especially in the evenings. Young people also say that the areas around where they live are not safe and this affects their ability to go out.
- ❖ Children and young people value the leisure facilities in Barking and Dagenham, but feel there were not enough of them and they are not always easy to get to.
- ❖ Not all children and young people know about school councils and the youth forum, and they are not clear about how young people could join those meetings.
- ❖ Children who were looked after by the council say they receive good support in achieving what they want from life, and are helped to keep healthy.

What things did the inspectors say are good for children and young people in my area?

- ❖ The council and other agencies respond well when there is a concern that a child or young person might be at risk of abuse.
- ❖ Senior managers in the council and other agencies care about children and young people and are committed to improving opportunities and outcomes for them
- ❖ The council and other agencies are working together to improve the health of children and young people in Barking and Dagenham. There is good information available for children, young people and their parents on keeping healthy.
- ❖ There is good support for young children and their parents through children's centre and early year's provision.
- ❖ Young people who have been involved in offending receive very good support from the youth offending team.
- ❖ The centre for Engineering and Manufacture Excellence provides good opportunities for young people.

What things are not so good for children and young people?

- ❖ There is not enough support for children and young people with additional needs, such as speech therapy or physiotherapy.
- ❖ The council and other agencies do not always make the best use of the information they have about how well children and young people are doing in order to improve services provided for them.
- ❖ There are too many young people who are not employed or in education or training when they leave school.
- ❖ There are not enough opportunities for disabled children and those with special needs to be in employment or training when they leave education.
- ❖ Although the council and other agencies often ask children and young people what they think, this does not happen everywhere and children and young people are not always told what happens as a result of what they have said or the suggestions they have made.