

30 March 2011

Mr Andrew Fraser
Director of Schools and Children's Services
London Borough of Enfield
Civic Centre
Silver Street
Enfield
EN1 3XY

Dear Mr Fraser

Annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within the London Borough of Enfield children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the recent unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within local authority children's services in the London Borough of Enfield Council which was conducted on 1 and 2 March 2011. The inspection was carried out under section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It will contribute to the annual review of the performance of the authority's children's services, for which Ofsted will award a rating later in the year. I would like to thank all of the staff we met for their assistance in undertaking this inspection.

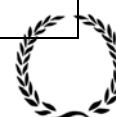
The inspection sampled the quality and effectiveness of contact, referral and assessment arrangements and their impact on minimising any child abuse and neglect. Inspectors considered a range of evidence, including: electronic case records; supervision files and notes; observation of social workers and senior practitioners undertaking referral and assessment duties; and other information provided by staff and managers. Inspectors also spoke to a range of staff including managers, social workers, other practitioners and administrative staff.

The inspection identified areas of strength, areas of practice that met requirements and areas for development.

The areas of development identified at the previous inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in July 2009 have been addressed.

From the evidence gathered, the following features of the service were identified:

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The assessment team attend weekly multi-disciplinary meetings with colleagues from North Middlesex and Chase Farm Hospitals in order to evaluate safeguarding concerns of children and young people. This enables prompt and effective services to be provided to children and their families



<p>using a team around the child approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff morale is good and social workers report easy access to and support from their managers.
<p>The service meets the requirements of statutory guidance in the following areas</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Out-of-hours duty arrangements are clear and appropriately linked to the daytime referral processes. ▪ In most cases children are seen promptly and their views are consistently sought and taken into account in case work assessment and planning. ▪ In most cases recording is up-to-date. This enables staff and managers to track and assess significant events and monitor the progress of cases. ▪ Thematic audits are regularly undertaken by managers and are used to develop specific elements of practice. ▪ The timeliness of assessments completed by the Children with Disability team has improved significantly since the last unannounced inspection. ▪ There is effective partnership working between key agencies and the assessment team. ▪ Robust systems are in place to manage new contacts prior to screening. ▪ Staff receive regular supervision and have access to appropriate training to meet their professional development needs. ▪ Management information in relation to performance indicators is comprehensive and used effectively to monitor performance. ▪ The assessment team are now routinely recording case chronologies on case files. ▪ The capacity of the front line assessment service has improved and staff report that caseloads are manageable. ▪ There is evidence of improved uptake of the common assessment framework amongst partner agencies.
<p>Areas for development</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In some cases the oversight provided by front line managers is not consistently robust or sufficiently reflective about presenting risks to enable effective direction of casework planning and this has the potential to expose children to the risk of harm.

- Unqualified staff are on occasions required to inappropriately undertake initial and core assessments, which should be undertaken by qualified social workers and is not compliant with *'Working Together to Safeguard Children'* 2010.
- In a number of cases examined the quality of risk analysis by workers is variable and in some cases there is insufficient focus upon presenting risk.
- Assessments do not always reflect the individual needs of children and young people in terms of their race, culture, religion, language or gender.

Any areas for development identified above will be specifically considered in any future inspection of services to safeguard children within your area.

Yours sincerely

Richard Nash
Her Majesty's Inspector

Copy: Rob Leak, Chief Executive, London Borough of Enfield Council
Andrew Spencer, Department for Education