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Mr K Crompton  
Chief Executive  
London Borough of Haringey Council  
Civic Centre  
High Road  
Wood Green  
London  
N22 8LE

Dear Mr Crompton

**Annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within the London Borough of Haringey Council 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 Haringey Council which was conducted on 11 and 12 October 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 and areas of practice that met requirements, with some areas for development.

The relevant recommendations identified at the safeguarding and looked after children inspection in January 2011 have mainly been addressed.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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

<b>Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The co-location of staff from the police public protection department, health and education welfare within the First Response Team has resulted in more effective use of intelligence and better co-ordination of adult risk management processes to ensure that children and young people are properly protected.</li> <li>▪ The authority effectively commissions services to address the needs of the community that it serves. As a result, a Romanian worker is employed within the First Response Team to ensure that child protection issues are balanced with the cultural needs of this community. An officer from the United Kingdom Border Agency has also been seconded to the authority on a part-time basis which has resulted in a more rapid resolution to applications for asylum from young people and families.</li> </ul>
<b>The service meets the requirements of statutory guidance in the following areas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contacts and referrals receive a timely response through a designated multi-agency screening team. Decisions are made in line with agreed thresholds and, where these are not met, referrers are appropriately signposted to other agencies or advised to use the common assessment framework.</li> <li>▪ In cases where significant harm is suspected, child protection enquiries are undertaken promptly following strategy discussions with the police. These result in a clear analysis of risk and, where necessary, appropriate action is undertaken to protect the child or young person.</li> <li>▪ The majority of assessments are based well on an extensive range of relevant information. Children and young people are routinely seen as part of the assessment process and their wishes and feelings taken into account. Efforts are made to ensure that parents are also actively engaged in the assessment process. This results in comprehensive assessments, with a good analysis of risks and protective factors.</li> <li>▪ In most cases, the diverse needs of children and young people are considered as part of assessments and plans. Interpreters are available to help social workers communicate effectively with children and young people and their families, where English is not their first language. Children with disabilities are enabled to communicate their needs through a range of non-verbal approaches.</li> <li>▪ The emergency duty team provides an appropriate out of hours service that links well with daytime services. Support is available from the police child abuse investigation team (CAIT) on an on-call basis.</li> </ul>

- Staff receive regular supervision that meets their professional needs. A wide range of training opportunities are available including learning from serious case reviews. Newly qualified social workers are well supported to undertake their roles through enhanced supervision and mentoring enabling them to take on new and more complex tasks.
- High levels of management oversight and scrutiny are clear on all case files. Decisions made in supervision are generally well recorded and show management direction and challenge to ensure that work is properly undertaken.
- A robust system of performance management and case file audit is in place. All managers understand trends in performance and use this information to improve the services provided by the team.

#### **Areas for development**

- Record keeping is not always up to date and, in some cases, not complete. For example, child in need plans are not always undertaken and some meetings and case discussions are not recorded. As a result, it is not always possible to understand the progress of the case and ensure that all agreed actions have taken place.
- In some cases, where there is no immediate risk of harm, assessments are not started in a timely manner which delays the introduction of services to support these children and young people.
- Following the recommendations of the safeguarding and looked after children inspection in January 2011, a protocol was developed to ensure that all assessments are led by suitably qualified social workers. However, this has not been fully implemented and social work assistants are still allocated and undertake initial assessments without a designated social worker to support them.
- The authority has not implemented the national protocol for allocation of responsibility for court reporting in private law cases. As a result, the service is undertaking additional work in preparing court reports for which it no longer has responsibility.
- Protocols and assessment tools that are currently used to assess risks to victims of domestic abuse, do not properly consider the differing needs of young people who are direct victims. Consequently, they do not always receive a service that meets their needs.

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

Yours sincerely

**Karen McKeown**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

Copy: Andrew Spencer, Department for Education