

Surrey County Council – Inspection of child protection

10-19 September 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 Surrey County 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:

Inspectors saw good examples of social workers listening to children to learn how they feel and what they think should happen.

Council bosses have a clear view of how they want to develop services to protect children and to make sure they get the help they need at the right time. They often get reports that tell them how well services are working and they know what the strengths and weaknesses of the services are.

Social workers and family support workers told inspectors that their managers help them to do a good job. They feel well looked after by their managers who also make sure that they are doing the right things.

When a child is at risk of immediate harm social workers respond quickly and effectively to protect them. All child protection enquiries are carried out by qualified

social workers, which is as it should be.

Parents value the help and support they get from targeted services such as the Early Support Service and children's centres outreach workers and some told inspectors how this has really changed their families' lives for the better.

Most professionals who work with children, young people and families attend important meetings about children who might need protection. Inspectors saw some good examples of different professionals, such as social workers, teachers and health visitors working well together to help children who have child protection plans.

Social workers who work during the day join up well with social workers who work in the evenings and at weekends. They communicate well which means that when they need to share information about a child, they can do it quickly.

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

Inspectors found that too many requests for services are made to children's social care teams by staff from other services such as education, health and the police about children and families. Many of these children could get the extra help they need without having a social worker. This means that children's social workers have to spend too much time deciding which children really need their help.

All of the big agencies like health, schools, police and social care must work together to speed up Surrey's plans for children to get the early help they need to improve their lives and prevent them needing social work help.

Not all social workers, including some that are new, have regular opportunities to talk to their managers about the children they are working with and about how well they are doing in their job as a social worker, although this has got quite a lot better since the last inspection.

When social workers collect information so they can understand children's needs and make sure they are protected, they do not always consider it fully and write it down in children's files.

When social workers collect information about the needs of children and their

families, they do not always make sure they understand where some of the things that are important to children like their religious beliefs, background and culture.

Written reports and plans about how children are to be protected from harm are often not clear enough and they can be quite difficult for children, parents and carers to understand.

The full inspection report was published on 19 October 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/surrey>