

## Cheshire West and Chester – Inspection of child protection

**1 October to 10 October 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 Cheshire West and Chester 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:

Services, including children's social care and the police, ensure that children and young people who are most in need of protection are safe. The range of help on offer improves the circumstances of many children and young people. Most children and families who spoke with inspectors confirmed this view.

Managers have a good understanding of what their social workers do; they supervise and guide them well when needed.

Social workers and family support workers visit children regularly to ensure they are safe and build good relationships with them and their parents.

The different needs and circumstances of families are taken into account when help is provided. Social workers complete assessments promptly and there are many examples of actions reducing risks for children so that they can live safely.

Lessons learned from complaints made by children and parents are helping to

improve the way services are provided.

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

Some children who have child protection plans and children in need plans remain on these for too long as the level of support needed has reduced. In some instances social workers are intervening with families where less intensive help is more suitable. Plans for children who are most at risk are sometimes not clear enough, too long and difficult for families and young people to understand. Doctors and mental health service professionals are not always involved well in supporting children on child protection plans.

Not all agencies are working together to provide children and families with the early help and support they need. Some parents who spoke with inspectors felt that there was not enough help for them at an early stage.

Some parents told inspectors that the number of appointments and groups they are expected to attend is hard for them manage. Some specialist help for families is not easily available to them, including for those experiencing violence in the home.

A small number of vulnerable young people are detained in police cells overnight without sufficient consideration of how this impacts on their emotional well-being.

The use of advocates to represent the views of children at meetings is not widespread. Gathering the views of children and families and using these to improve services is not well developed.

The full inspection report was published on 9 November 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/cheshire-west-and-chester>