

Doncaster – Inspection of child protection

8 - 17 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 Doncaster as **inadequate** 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 some good examples of social workers collecting information so they can understand children's needs and make sure they are protected.

Inspectors saw that multi-agency meetings called 'team around the child' meetings can make a real difference for families and make sure that everyone is working together and sharing information.

Ofsted has visited many of the 21 children's centres across Doncaster and they are mostly good or satisfactory. The centres know a lot about the needs of the families in the area which is helping them to provide the right kind of services.

The council are making good progress in developing partnerships with other important agencies for children across Doncaster, although there is still more to be done.

New social workers are given a good start within the council, who make sure they do not get given too much work until they are ready for it.

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

All of the different partnerships that are responsible for making services better for children and young people need to share good quality, full information with each other so they have a clear picture of what needs to be done and know if things are going wrong.

Too many children and young people are not getting the help they need quickly enough. Most social workers have a large number of families to work with which means there are some delays in handing out new work. Those in charge of improving, running and checking that Doncaster's services are working well have not made sure that when there are delays those children that need help quickly are protected.

Inspectors saw too many cases where social work is not making sure that children and young people are safe. Sometimes social workers don't realise soon enough that children and young people are at risk of real harm.

Social workers do not always visit children and young people often enough to make sure they are safe and sometimes they are not seen on their own.

Not all social workers 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.

Children and young people do not always have the chance to make a real contribution to plans about their futures.

When social workers collect information so they can understand children's needs they sometimes give too much attention to what the adults say and can be too confident about how well the adults can look after their children.

There are a lot of social workers who are not employees of the local authority and there has been a lot of time off with sickness. This means that some children and young people have to change social workers and then it is difficult to build up a

good relationship with them.

The full inspection report was published on 16 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/doncaster>