

Royal Borough of Greenwich – Inspection of child protection

3-12 December 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 the Royal Borough of Greenwich as good 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:

When there are concerns about the safety of children and young people the council assesses the situation quickly and carefully so that social workers can help where necessary.

There are many services in the royal borough which work together well to help children and young people of different ages and to help parents care for their families if they are having difficulties. This means that many families are being helped without the need for social workers to become involved.

Managers, councillors and other services which work with the council are very interested in making sure services designed to help children and young people are good and this can be seen in the way all children and young people are doing better at school. Senior managers have worked hard to find ways to improve services and this is improving the way social workers and other professionals work.

The council knows what it does well and where it needs to improve to help children and young people and is good at using people from outside the council to help it do

so. The council also learns from what other councils do well.
The council listens to the views of children, young people and their carers and takes these views seriously to improve their services.
There has been a very successful recruitment of newly qualified social workers with all except one remaining in the council over the past 18 months. We particularly liked the support given to newly qualified and more experienced staff by the team of professional educators. Staff with whom we spoke told us that they valued this support.
The council has recently introduced a risk analysis tool which helps social workers to consider risks and safety factors for children with whom they work. We saw this being used regularly and thought that it really helped social workers to do their job and provide the right support to children and families.
The council has a pre-birth assessment and support service which ensures that babies can be protected appropriately when this is needed. The service also provides support to parents to help them protect their babies and staff together as a family where it is safe for this to happen.
The council had a review of its safeguarding services in September 2012. This review identified a number of areas for the council to work on. The council has in place a comprehensive plan to make sure services are improved and inspectors saw evidence of this happening.

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

Social workers and other professionals listen to the views of children, young people and their carers. However, they need to make sure they ask children, young people and their carers for their views more often and especially when the time comes for professionals to stop working with them or at a particular point during the time they are receiving services. They also need to make suitable arrangements to support children and young people to attend important meetings such as child protection conferences.
The council has a lot of information about how well services are doing but needs to analyse this information more closely to help them understand more the quality of their services and to help to bring about further improvement. Also, they need to include reporting of important visits undertaken by social workers so that they are sure children and young people are being visited when they should be.
Although the way social workers and other professionals work is satisfactory with some good work and a lot of attention given to individual children and young people, inspectors found there is a need to improve working practice further. The council and its partners know this is the case and are doing the right things to bring about

improvement.
The recording of key events and outcomes in chronologies was inconsistent. In some examples, it was not easy to see the key issues because the recording was too long. In others, chronologies were not up to date.
Whilst social workers received regular supervision with their managers, there was little evidence of discussion about the progress being made when a child was on a child protection plan. This is important to ensure that the plan is effective and that everyone involved with the child or young person is doing what is required of them to make sure they are safe.
In some assessments where there was more than one child in a family, the individual needs of the other children were not always clearly identified.

The full inspection report was published on 21 January 2013. 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/greenwich>