

Peterborough – Inspection of child protection

28 January – 6 February 2013

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 Peterborough 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:

The council and organisations working together to help and protect children have improved their work a great deal in the past two years. Children's services carry out checks and start to discuss what help is needed much more quickly than before when they receive information that raises concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or young person.

Organisations, youth services, schools and children's centres across the city give good information, advice and practical help to children and their families before their worries and problems get out of hand. Workers who give help at an early stage quickly find the right type of help to stop problems building up.

Young people attending some really good groups and classes that are designed especially for their needs learn new skills and improve their self-confidence. Some young people improve their school attendance. They begin to make better choices in their lives. This keeps them safer from risky behaviour.

Organisations working with children and young people get together regularly to understand what is going on locally. They offer practical help and share out the work.

The council and partner agencies have been working hard to set up an intensive family support service for children and families who are having difficulties in their lives. This service is called 'Connecting Families'. Whilst this service has only been set up for a few months, it is already showing that families are being helped very well to sort out some very difficult situations.

Peterborough now has more permanent social workers so children and families will not have so many changes in the people working with them. Children and their parents say that it makes a big difference when they get to know one social worker well. They also told us that they have seen an improvement in the support and contact they have with social workers.

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

Although there has been a big improvement in services, the council and other organisations working to help and protect children need to go on checking regularly that these changes are making the difference they need to. This needs to be organised and overseen rigorously by a group with responsibility for this called the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board.

People working with children in Peterborough know what to do when they think any child or young person is at risk of harm or is being abused. Help is usually offered quickly enough but workers do not always think about all the risks for a particular child or take all the information that is known into account. We have given a very full list of the different tasks that the council and other organisations need to do to put things right. Some must be done straight away and others may take more time.

The managers and other organisations do not always check thoroughly enough that things are done as well as they should be. We have asked the Director and the Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that this will improve in the next six months. We asked them to make sure that the proper information is collected for them to monitor and ensure that good quality work is done to help and protect children.

Social workers must make sure that children and their families' views are taken into account when making and checking plans to keep children safe. This should happen straight away. Children must be helped by an adult who will speak for them and make sure services and back-up plans are right for the child. This should happen within three months. In the longer run, the council must make sure that parents and children's ideas help them to design the services that are right for the whole area.

The full inspection report was published on Friday 8 March 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/Peterborough>