

Gateshead - Inspection of child protection

25 February - 6 March 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 Gateshead 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:

Inspectors looked at lots of information, talked to families and to council staff about what is available to help families, children and young people when there are problems. We found that the council is doing good work to make sure children are safe. If you have an assessment, a child in need plan or a child protection plan you are getting regular help and support to keep you safe and help to improve things in your lives.

The people who run the council, the councillors, and those who work in children's services have worked hard make improvements since the last inspection. They know a lot about Gateshead and what risks there might be for children. They want Gateshead to be a safe place for you to live in. They have made good arrangements so that if you need help it is easy to find out where to get it, and they ensure you get what you need quickly.

The people who work in the civic centre, in children's centres, for voluntary organisations, in the health service and schools are good at finding out what you

need to keep safe and do well. They are good at working together as a team to get the right sort of help and support to you quickly and keep it going until things are sorted out.

We spoke to parents, and read what parents had told the council, about what they thought of the help they have received. They told us that council staff had taken time to explain why they are being helped and listened to and respected what they said. Parents told us that the courses and programmes they went to were good, and had helped them understand why things needed to change at home so that their children are safe, are happy and are helped and encouraged do as well as they can.

We saw some very good work by social workers which showed us how hard they are trying to make sure all children they work with can talk about what is happening in their lives. If you have a disability, are only young or don't speak or understand English very well, they have lots of ways to help you. They listen to what you say and take it into account when they make plans, so that the help they organise for you is what you need.

The social workers' bosses are good at helping and guiding the social workers do a good job. They also check regularly that the help and support you get is what you need, so that if things change the help you get changes too.

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

We think that children and young people should be given more support and encouragement to go to the meetings where professional people are discussing them and making decisions about their lives. Also, having someone who isn't their social worker or in their family to support them and speak up for them could help more children attend. These people are often known as advocates and although this support is available in Gateshead not many children use it.

We have asked the council to make sure more children know about the advocacy service so that they can use it if they want to.

We have asked the council to make sure that the reasons why decisions are made are always written down on your case file. This is important especially if workers change or you need help in the future.

Parents and children should have plenty of time to read and talk about any reports about them before their meetings. We have told the Director that her staff need to

get better at doing this every time.

Children and young people are the best people to tell the council what they think about the help they receive. They know what works and what doesn't. We have told the council that they need to get better at using your views and comments when they buy in new services or are looking at changing what is on offer.

The full inspection report was published on 9 April 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/gateshead>