

## Havering – 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 Havering 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:

Social workers, the police, health visitors and youth workers are working more closely together to help and protect children in a team called the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). The council has made plans so that more organisations can work together in local areas so that the right sort of help is available when it is most needed.

People working with children and young people in the community know what to do if they are worried about anything that is going wrong in the life of a child or young person. Social workers act quickly when problems get worse or if children are not safe.

In a lot of cases people work together with other people who can help, like counsellors and speech therapists to put things right before problems become too big for a child or their family. Good help is being given to some families who have a number of different troubles, so that their lives become less complicated. For example, this is helping some young people get back to school when they have been absent for a while.

People like teachers, children's centre workers, social workers and group workers enjoy working with children, young people and their families and build up good relationships. They listen carefully to children because their wishes and feelings are an important part of making plans that will really help. Social workers are making meetings easier to understand so that children are listened to.

Social workers help to make sure that disabled children are safe and receive the help they need to reach their potential.

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

Although the MASH is beginning to improve the way that staff work together we have asked the Director to make some changes immediately. Managers must make sure that staff work together more quickly to understand all about children and young people's lives. They must keep careful track of the work so that no time is wasted and children get the help they need when they need it.

MASH workers must make decisions quickly and make sure the right help is provided at the right time for children and families to stop their situation getting worse. Workers must make clearer plans when a situation changes for a child, particularly when a child or family does not need as much help and may no longer need a child protection plan.

An organisation called Havering Safeguarding Children Board is not working as well as it should do at the moment. We have asked the board to make sure that all the right people take part in meetings to help keep children in Havering safe. We have asked council members, managers and the Board to improve the information available to them so that they can check that the work to help keep children safe from harm is good enough and continues to get better. They must go on checking this regularly.

More organisations like health visitors and drug and alcohol counselling teams need to get involved in working with children and their families before their problems become too big. There should be good coordination of this work to make sure that everyone taking part is well trained and that the help makes things better for children and their families.

Social workers should think more about the different backgrounds of the families they are helping, for example their race, language, religion and culture, so that they can take this information into account when deciding how to help or protect children and young people.

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 this address

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/havering>