

## Cheshire East – Inspection of child protection

11 – 20 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 Cheshire East 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** and the things we told the Director:

When children are at risk of immediate harm, quick action is taken with the help of other services to make sure they are protected.

When children and their families need help at an early stage, the council and other organisations work well together to support them to make life their lives better. Children’s centres, family centres, schools and other local services give good advice and help to parents who are having difficulties in looking after their children.

Early help and support to older children and young people is generally good and so fewer young people are involved in anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhoods or are getting into trouble with the police, and school attendance and behaviour is getting better. If a child or young person goes missing, local services and the police have good systems in place to make sure they return home safely.

Social workers, family service workers and other staff who work with children and their families receive regular and effective training and support so that they can do their job well and ensure children are safe.

Good joint working between the council and lots of different services makes sure that support is available and in many instances this prevents problems from getting worse.

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

The council has done a lot of work to make services better in order to keep children safe but sometimes progress has been too slow and could be faster.

Some cases of children who were at possibly risk of harm were not always considered carefully enough when they were referred to social workers. This meant that sometimes decisions and actions to find out more about their situations were not taken at all or not taken quickly enough.

Some children in need plans that describe how children are to be helped and supported are not clear or checked well enough. Also not all children who have these plans are visited regularly to check that they are well and that they are safe.

All the agencies work well together to make sure that children and young people who have a child protection plan are helped and that they are safe.

Children, young people and their families are not always asked about their views or opinions. This makes it harder for the council to know how to improve services to make sure children are getting the services they need.

The ways in which managers check that work is being done and written down properly varies a lot and need improving.

The council and other agencies need to think carefully about the different communities living in Cheshire East and make sure that children from all these groups are supported by services that understand their needs.

The full inspection report was published on 23 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/cheshire-east>