

London Borough of Sutton – Inspection of child protection

13 May – 22 May 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 Sutton Council 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 has worked very hard to make improvements since the last inspection in April 2012. We saw evidence of improvements in the way that social workers work with children, young people and their families and this is leading to better outcomes for them.

When people working with children and young people have a serious concern about a child, staff in the council's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub are good at listening. They give good advice and if it is a big problem, they pass on information quickly to the next team, the referral and assessment team. This team also acts quickly to protect children, if they think that a child could be unsafe.

There are good systems in place for tracking children who go missing from school, and those children who get educated at home get good support from the council. Some schools have support assistants who have special training to help children who

have emotional problems.

Social workers working with children on child protection plans make sure that there are adequate plans in place so that everyone understands what they have to do to keep children safe. When important meetings take place, social workers and other staff working with the family usually attend the meetings.

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

Social workers working with children who need a 'child in need' plan do not always write the plan in good time. This means it is sometimes difficult to be sure that these children have all the help that they need.

Some children have had lots of different social workers and this is not good because it makes it difficult for children to get to know their social workers well. Also sometimes the things that are written in plans don't happen quickly enough because of the changes of social worker.

Although senior managers have worked really hard to make things better, they could do more to find out what children and young people think. They need to seek the views of children and young people who have been the subject of child in need and child protection plans so that they can work out how to improve the service.

Although social workers and staff working with children and families are good at going to important meetings such as case conferences and child in need meetings, not many children and young people go to these meetings. This means that the views of children and young people may not be fully discussed and considered at these meetings, where important decisions are made.

Some social work assessments are good and clearly show that the social worker has got to know the child or young person. However, a small number of assessments do not show that the social worker has thought about all the things that children and young people may need. The council needs to make sure that all social workers produce really clear and thorough assessments that include the views of children and young people.

The full inspection report was published on 24 June 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/sutton>