

Wokingham Borough Council– Inspection of child protection

12-21 November 2012

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 Wokingham Borough 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 and other organisations have worked together well to improve the way they recognise children and young people who are at risk of harm and now act quickly to protect them.

A lot of services and support is available to help children and their families as soon as they begin to have problems and this helps parents and carers improve the way they look after their children.

Children’s centres help identify families in difficulty early and parents who spoke to inspectors found the staff at these centres friendly and the help very useful. Some parents told inspectors that the help they receive is changing the lives of their families for the better.

When children and families need expert help from social workers, risks to children are assessed quickly and the services required to protect children provided. Professionals who work together to protect children and parents or carers attend meetings regularly to discuss progress.

Most social workers are supported by their managers and they discuss how cases are progressing to help social workers do a good job and make sure they are doing the right things. Managers have useful information to make sure things are done on time.

The Wokingham Safeguarding Children's Board is good at challenging the council and its partners to make sure they are doing the right things to protect children and young people.

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

The council and its partners have not improved services quickly enough over the last two years because of changes in staffing and at times services have not been good enough.

The council is not sure if all young children and families who need early help and who could benefit from services have been identified in different localities.

When assessing the needs of children and families not enough attention is always given to things such as the ethnic background, culture and religion and the views of children and young people are not always recorded in plans. Also, plans do not set out what is expected of parents and carers clearly enough or what could happen if parents or carers fail to do what is expected of them and agreed in plans. Children and young people do not always attend meetings where professionals and parents or carers discuss progress.

Sometimes social workers take action to protect children and young people when the risk of harm is fairly low. This means that some children have child protection plans when they do not need them.

Many changes of managers and social workers and the use of temporary staff has had a big effect on the quality of social work services and the quality of the work of social workers is therefore variable although mostly at least satisfactory.

The council does not provide enough opportunities for families who use services to comment on their experiences to help improve services.

The full inspection report was published on 21 December 2012. 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/wokingham>