**Inspection Newsletter 6**

**March 2015**

**Bath and North East Somerset OFSTED Preparation Web page:**

The Bath and North East Somerset Ofsted Preparation web page is now up and running on the following link:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/ofstedpreparation>

The page contains information regarding our Ofsted preparation in one place but it also contains information for us to use every day such as the What Good Looks Like series of Practice Guidance and Standards and important policies such as the CSE Strategy and Protocol.

I hope that you will find this information helpful and will discuss the information in your team meetings.

**OFSTED Inspections – What about the Social Worker?**

The Ofsted Inspection should not be seen as just a single one off event but as a chance for us to showcase that we work in a Local Authority that is interested in continuous improvement.

Having said that there is no denying that an Inspection will be an intensely busy time as we carry on with the day job alongside showing the Inspectors what a good job we do in our work with children and families.

So what can social workers expect when the Inspectors arrive?

**Week One: Preparation Activity**

When the phone call arrives the LA has one day (Monday) to put together all the data, reports, documents, etc. that will inform the Inspectors of the work of the LA. This information is given to the Inspectors when they arrive the following morning.

This data will include lists of all the children that we are currently working with and those who have been closed in the last 3- 6 months. From these lists the Inspectors will pick:

* 20 children who the Local Authority will be asked to do an in depth audit of the work that has been done with that child; and
* 12 more children who will be case tracked.

We hope to have the names of these children by the end of **Day 2.** (**Day 3** at the latest). As soon as we have those names the social worker and the Manager responsible for those children will be contacted.

* **Please check the case files are up to date.**
* **Is there an up to date assessment and chronology?**
* **Are the visits up to date, in timescales and recorded?**
* **Is there an up to date outcome focused plan?**
* **What is the quality of the supervision notes?**
* **And most importantly are we making a difference?**

We can have all the policies and protocols in the world but the bottom line is making a difference to the lives of the children and young people that we work with.

**Stay calm and remember this is the everyday work you do.**

**Week One: Duty Referrals and Contacts/New Looked After children Inspectors on site Tuesday to Friday)**

During the first week of the Inspection (Tuesday to Friday) the Inspectors will focus on:

* Evaluating the effectiveness of the contact, referral and assessment arrangements.
* Evaluating the experiences of children who have recently become looked after. (They will want the names of the last 10 children we have placed).
* Looking at the information of children who have had missing episodes or are currently missing and/or about whom there are concerns that they may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

**Contact, Referral and Assessment Arrangements:**

The Inspectors will be looking at:

* **The quality and effectiveness of thresholds and decision making.**
* **Are thresholds consistent for all age groups? Are they too high or too low?**
* **What is the quality of referrals? Are thresholds understood by our partner agencies?**
* **Is decision making timely and effective in providing help, support and keeping children safe?**
* **How quickly are children seen?**
* **What is the quality and impact of early help? Do we have good step up/down arrangements in place?**

**Week 2: making arrangements for directly observed practice (no Inspectors on site)**

* By Wednesday of this week we need to give the Inspectors a list of opportunities for them to directly observe practice – for example, child protection conferences, placement panels, foster carers’ support groups, children’s reviews – taking place during weeks 3 and 4 of the Inspection.
* Please let your Administrative colleagues know of any arrangements that you have particularly in respect to the children who have been named for case tracking and audits.
* We will need to get the consent of the children, young people and families that the Inspectors wish to observe or speak to.
* The audits of the 20 named children have to be completed by the Wednesday of this week. The case auditor will let the relevant social workers and Managers know the findings of the audit.

**Week 3 and 4: focus on practice observations; shadowing meetings and visits and looking at case files with appropriate workers (Inspectors all on site)**

The Inspectors will want to talk to social workers about their work and they want to observe visits to the family and observe meetings. They also want to talk to some of the children and their families. They are interested in the child’s experience.

During this time the Inspectors will sample a number of case files which could belong to any of the children we work with.

The Inspectors will ask social workers about:

* **What is the plan and how do we and the family know it is working?**
* **What is your relationship with the child, young person and family?**
* **How often do you see the child and how effective is your interaction?**
* **Do they feel you are making a difference?**
* **Are children and young people feeling supported and safe?**

**Don’t be shy in highlighting good practice.**

The Inspectors will also want to ask you about:

* **The quality and impact of supervision and management oversight**
* **The ways in which you are helped to strengthen families and to minimise risk**
* **Workloads and workload management**
* **The availability, quality and impact of training and development opportunities**
* **The impact of the LSCB on practice through multi-agency training and the dissemination of learning from serious case reviews.**

**Don’t forget to tell the Inspectors about our Improvement Plans.**

**Finally:**

We need to remember we are all in this together and we need to support each other with most importantly biscuits, cake, tea, coffee, etc.

Arrangements will be made for preparation sessions and debriefing sessions.

If you are worried about anything, for example if there has been some drift on a case highlight what we are doing to rectify this. It’s important that we understand both our strengths and the areas we can improve. Most importantly we can show that we have plans in place to improve.

Talk about any concerns or questions you may have with your Managers, in supervision, in Team Meetings or come and have a chat with me.

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| **Sweepstake:**  To everyone who joined the sweep stake to guess the Inspection dates for Bath and North East Somerset– well we were all wrong apart from one person.  Who would like to hazard a new guess when you think it will be?  The winning names will be put into a hat and the winner will win a treat.  Let me know what you think? |

Don’t forget; this is your opportunity to shine and show what a good job you do for children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset.

**Michele Mohamed**

**OFSTED Preparation Lead**