Bath & North East Somerset Council

Inspection Newsletter 3

November 2014

Welcome to the third newsletter about OFSTED Single Inspection of Services for Children in need of help and protection; children looked after and care leavers.

Possible Inspection Dates:

There are 3 possible Inspection dates this side of Christmas: **4th November; 11th November or 18th November.**

Since the summer break the Local Authorities who have been inspected are:

19.09.2014: Rotherham and the Isle of Wight

30/09/2014: Bristol and Rochdale

21/10/2014: Plymouth and Lincoln.

OFSTED Inspections – themes of GOOD Indicators

For those of you who were unable to attend the presentation by HMI Inspector Chris Sands on The Content and Format of the new OFSTED Inspection Framework on 28th October 2014 here is some of the information he presented on emerging themes from the 33 Inspections undertaken before August 2014:

Children in need of early help and protection

Early Help

- A clear and well understood early help strategy is in place with good step up/step down arrangements and procedures
- Evidence of high quality services to the right families in need of early help and support.
- Good co-operation with partners and effective Team around the Child/Family process.

Managing Risk

- Appropriate referrals are made to Children's Social Care as partners understood the thresholds well
- Good recognition of risk in cases, particularly at the front door.
- High quality assessments and plans (includes a history; shared with families and partners, clear actions, outcome focused and with clear timelines.)Skilled workers who have meaningful relationships with children and families so that plans can be progressed and monitored effectively. (Are we using the "grab bags?)

Looked After Children

- Child came into care in a planned way **(children given LAC packs containing all information; parents are given details about their rights and what they can reasonably expect from us.)**
- Where children return home good assessments and effective support means that few return to care subsequently.
- Early decisions about permanence are made with good use of PLO and legal support.
- High quality Court reports based on clear evidence and relevant research.
- A strong Sufficiency Strategy is in place so that provisions of placements are responsive to local need.
- Effective recruitment, training and support for foster carers mean that children have carers who can respond to their needs.
- Where children are placed out of the area, this is to meet their needs with effective communication with the local authority
- Children participate fully in plans for themselves and for the service.
- IRO's have time to get to know the children they work with and ensure that their needs are met
- Educational needs are monitored well and additional support is available to help them reach their potential
- Health care needs are met with early access to mental health support
- Good processes in place to understand why children go missing and help them stay safe.
- Children know their entitlements and are supported in masking complaints if they need to do so.

Adoption and Achieving permanence

- Speedy processing of applications from potential adopters with good training and support
- Timely decision making, matching and placement, including effective work with Courts
- Tenacity in finding the right placement for children, particularly those who are difficult to place.
- High quality and individualised adoption support, including those placed by other Local Authorities.
- Alternative ways of achieving permanence are well understood and used appropriately.
- Clear and effective use of "foster to adopt" arrangements, concurrent and parallel planning.

Care Leavers

- The Local Authority has high aspirations for young people, evident through supporting those at university, further education and high quality apprenticeships within the Local Authority. High quality housing options are available.
- Young people are actively engaged with their pathway plans. These are clear and up to date and relevant to the lives of young people
- Care Leavers are prepared well for independence and can "stay put" with their foster carers if this is the best plan for them.
- Social Workers / Support workers have good and sustained relationships with the young people.

Leadership, Management and Governance

- Leaders and Managers know their services, the strengths and weaknesses of their workforce and the needs of their population they are able to facilitate improvements in frontline practice that enable children and Families to receive the right help at the right time.
- Good quality data and information, targeted auditing, effective partnership working, and an understanding of population changes help leaders and managers to gain this knowledge.
- Highly effective recruitment and retention strategies mean that there is a stable and skilled workforce.
- Managers can support and challenge workers, ensuring that good assessments and plans lead to the provision of the right help at the right time.
- Feedback from those who have received or given help is used to ensure that data and information about services, staff and the population is up to date and continues to inform future planning and improvement.

Message: Don't forget; 'good practice' is for every day, not just Inspection preparation.
Handy Tip: Is everyone using the Procedures Manual? The icon is on your desktop if you are a CareFirst user. Others can access the site here: http://bathnes.proceduresonline.com

Bath and North East Somerset Local Safeguarding Children Board

What does the LSCB do?

The LSCB is an independent body made up of representatives from the range of agencies that work with children and young people. There are also six sub groups of the LSCB. There are lay members who also sit on the board and there are links with Children and Young People's Equalities group, so ensuring the voice of children and young people is heard.
The work of the LSCB includes:

- Taking the lead to ensure that agencies work well together to safeguard children and young people.
- Ensuring that all organisations comply with their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- Co-ordinating and delivering multi-agency safeguarding children training.

- Promoting and publishing multi-agency child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which are available online.
- Commissioning Serious Case Reviews and multi-agency audits so that we learn what we need to improve in terms of the work that we carry out with children, young people and families.
- Overseeing multi agency learning events and conferences so that good practice is shared.
- Playing a key role in ensuring and monitoring that recommendations from inspections and reviews about safeguarding children are carried through.
- Working alongside other committees such as the Children's Trust Board, Local Safeguarding Adults Board and the Health & Wellbeing Board to ensure that work to safeguard children is co-ordinated.
- Encouraging children and families to give their own perspectives on engaging with services, so informing and improving practice.

For further information visit Local Safeguarding Children Board
http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/child-protection/local-safeguarding-children-board

The full PowerPoint presentation has been attached to the email distributing this newsletter. For copies please email Michele Mohamed.

Recommended reading, in preparation for the inspection:

Missing children: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120364 (BANES 'Missing Children' Policy has been attached to the email distributing this newsletter. For copies please email M Mohamed.)

Neglect: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140059

Children and young people living away from home: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140064

There is a full list of the thematic **inspection/survey reports** which colleagues may also find useful as a reference: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/surveys

SIF evaluation framework: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protectio

SIF handbook: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/inspection-handbook-inspections-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked

Sweepstake:
To add a light moment to the Inspection process who would like to hazard a guess as to which month Bath and North East Somerset receives an inspection. 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