

This letter is about OFSTED Inspection of Services for Children in need of help and protection; children looked after and care leavers.

We can expect an Inspection any time from 16th September 2014.

There are 2 main messages regarding the Inspection:

1, One of the key important themes is the journey of the child – are we making a difference to the lives of children and young people ensuring they are safe and improving their lives at every stage of their ‘journey’ within our services?

2) Are we a Local Authority who cares about continuous learning and improvement so we can make a difference to improve the lives of children and young people?

If you work with children in early help, children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers, you could be involved. The Inspectors want to spend time talking to and shadowing social workers about the work you do with children and young people.

Don't worry; they're not trying to catch you out. They want you to do well. This is what you can do to be prepared:

Take on board these top tips for practitioners now:

- Be clear about the nature of your area of service, how it relates to other aspects of children's services and how it is impacting on children and young people.
- Be prepared to provide details of work you are undertaking to improve outcomes for children and young people including how they relate to key performance indicators
- Think of examples of how children and parents have been engaged, tools you have used to support children and parents to participate in assessments and the development and implementation of their plans
- Think of examples of where you have worked effectively with partner agencies in achieving positive outcomes for children
- Try to provide tangible examples, where possible, and be honest about any challenges faced by your area of service and how they are being tackled.
- Be prepared to share how our services are improving and how staff are being supported.
- All cases should be progressed in a timely manner and recording up to date.
- The Inspectors will look to ensure staff are clear in their recordings relating to analysis of risk and protective factors.
- The Inspectors will look for evidence of direct work with children and its impact.
- Records should evidence child specific issues and should evidence clear managerial oversight.

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.

Learning from Serious Case Reviews:

The Inspectors are interested in how we learn from serious case reviews, 2 Serious Case Reviews they have been particularly interested in are:

Suffolk Serious Case Review: Resistant families, child neglect, emotional neglect

January 2014 - Suffolk - [The 'A' Family Report](#)

Death of three children and their mother in April 2013.

Children were aged 3-years, 2-years and 13-months at the time of their deaths and mother was 7 months pregnant. Evidence suggests mother killed the children prior to committing suicide. All three children were subject to child protection plans under the category of neglect.

Issues identified include: adversarial relationship between parents and professionals; infrequent opportunities for children to socialize; and professional uncertainty over mother's mental health. Identifies lessons learned, including: background information about parents' childhoods is essential to understanding their parenting capacity; and the Public Law Outline process requires strong management oversight and an understanding of the separate roles, responsibilities and accountability for decision-making of children's services and legal services.

Rochdale Serious Case Reviews: Child Sexual Exploitation

December 2013 - Rochdale - [Young People 1,2,3,4,5 and 6](#)

Serious and prolonged sexual exploitation of 6 adolescent girls at the hands of a number of men, who subsequently received criminal convictions.

Issues identified include: frequent incidences of young people missing from home; recurrent attendances at A&E; optimistic thinking; unqualified staff; and inadequate supervision.

Contains multi-agency and single agency recommendations covering: placing young people at risk of sexual exploitation with specialist foster carers rather than semi independent living accommodation; and having a twin safeguarding focus when working with teenage parents and their children.

Sexual exploitation, teenage parents, abusive men

December 2013 - Rochdale - [Young Person 7](#)

Serious and prolonged sexual exploitation of a young person who was looked after under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. The young person had severe learning difficulties.

Issues identified include: recurrent attendances at A&E; frequent periods of going missing from care; unqualified staff; and a lack of understanding about the complex relationships that sometimes exist between perpetrators of child sexual exploitation and their victims.

Contains multi-agency and single agency recommendations covering: decision-making in regard to specialist placements for young people with complex needs; reviewing escalation policies; and reviewing procedures to reinforce agencies' responsibilities around 16 and 17 year olds.

Sexual exploitation, looked after children, children with learning difficulties

The LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) will also be inspected:

LSCB Facts: Bath and North East Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board is an inter-agency forum for:

- Coordinating the work done by various agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare; and,
- Ensuring that this work is carried out effectively.

The LSCB's objectives and purpose:

The Children's Act 2004 places a duty on children's services to establish local boards and sets out the agencies that will be "Board partners" on the LSCB.

The Act also places a duty for the authority and Board partners to cooperate with each other.

Further guidance for the LSCB is set out in "[Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working](#)." This defines the LSCB as, "the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations... will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children... and ensuring the effectiveness of what they do."

How other Local Authorities have done in the new Inspection framework Inspections:

GOOD: Derbyshire, Essex, Hartlepool, East Sussex, Hampshire, Staffordshire, Cambridgeshire, North Yorkshire, Oxfordshire

Requires Improvement: Bolton, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Sheffield, Herefordshire, Barking and Dagenham, Swindon, Bournemouth, Liverpool, Haringey, Barnsley, Newham

Inadequate: Coventry, Slough, Birmingham, Knowsley and Buckinghamshire

Please keep an eye out for the next newsletter; these will be coming out every month.

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.

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