

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION BRIEFING NOTE

Inspection Background

A three year inspection programme of all 152 Local Authority Children's services and their partners (including health) have begun. There will be around 50 inspections a year over the next 3 years. Ofsted have the lead on the inspections and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspectors will work with them using Ofsted's overarching framework. The CQC focus will be on health partners within the authority area and the CQC inspection methodology will contribute fully to the overarching judgements for the inspections. The CQC findings will support the assessment and reporting of health performance, and will also feed into the joint commissions' Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA).

Each inspection will be conducted with ten working days' notice and there will be two weeks on site. Led by Ofsted, a team of around 4 inspectors will conduct the inspection, and will include a suitably trained and experienced CQC inspector. The inspections examine the arrangements for safeguarding children, and the outcomes for children and young people who are looked after.

The inspection comprises of two main purposes:

- To evaluate the impact of Local Authority services and their partners in safeguarding children and young people through the scrutiny of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's and the Children's Trust.
- To evaluate the impact of Local Authority services and their partners in achieving better care and better outcomes for LAC and care leavers.

Focus of the Inspection

The focus of the inspection is to examine the work of the Trust through the themes of LAC and Safeguarding. This is done for example by looking at case files, performance information, strategic documents, summaries of Looked After Children (LAC) placements, data relating to Common Assessment Framework (CAF), minutes of meetings, examining human resources files etc. The results of two new annual surveys (one of the social workers and one of third sector partners) will also be taken into consideration. A large part of the inspection will include interviewing a wide range of staff, partners, parents and carers, children and young people and case related professionals. Interviews will be held either in groups or individually.

Evaluation

We will be judged on two elements:

- Safeguarding element – outcomes
 - Are children and young people safe?
- Do children and young people **feel** safe? Looked After Children
 - Five Every Child Matters outcomes

We expect to be judged as “good”.

This affects all of us!

This is not an inspection of Social Care alone but of the Children’s Trust and Children’s Services

ADDITIONAL USEFUL INFORMATION

What is “Safeguarding”?

Safeguarding is about keeping children and young people safe from harm and abuse. This means keeping children and young people safe from accidents, crime and bullying and actively promoting their wellbeing in a healthy, safe and supportive environment.

What is a Safeguarding Children Board

Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards (LSCB) are the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. Its work crosses the boundaries between statutory, voluntary and independent sectors and builds upon the best practice achieved by the Area Child Protection Committee. It is proactive in driving forward the duty of all partner agencies in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The trust work within 6 LSCB’s - Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland. Current members of the LSCB are:

Northumberland - Bruce Dickie, Director for Children & Young People’s and Specialist Services.

Newcastle- Gary O’Hare – Director of Nursing and Operations

North Tyneside- Gary O’Hare – Director of Nursing and Operations

South Tyneside- Tim Docking – Acting Director, Older Peoples Services

Gateshead- Gail Bayes – Acting Director, Forensic Services

Sunderland- Russell Patton – Operational Director for Working Age Adults

What is the Children's Trust?

"The Children's Trust is the sum total of co-operation arrangements and partnerships between all organisations that deliver services for children and young people with a role in improving outcomes for them", i.e. if you work for an organisation who provides services for children and young people, whether statutory or non-statutory, you are part of the Children's Trust.

What is the Children's Trust Board (CTB)?

The CTB is a statutory body that every local authority is required to have which has responsibility for developing, publishing, reviewing, revising and monitoring the Children and Young People's Plan and brings together representatives from across the Children's Trust.

Relationship between LSCB and the Children's Trust Board (CTB)

The CTB, drawing on support and challenge from the LSCB, ensure that the Children and Young People's Plan reflects the strengths and weaknesses of safeguarding arrangements and practices in the area and what more needs to be done by each partner to improve safeguarding and promotion of welfare. Through the LSCB annual report which is presented to the CTB, the LSCB provide a comprehensive analysis of safeguarding in the local area. In addition, the CTB will draw on the advice and evidence in the annual report to inform the development and review of the Children and Young People's Plan.

The CTB receive six monthly reports on the Stay Safe Every Child Matters outcome and are able to challenge any actions required to address issues raised within the report.

A number of officers are members of both the CTB and LSCB which allows continuity of working and information sharing between both Boards.

For more information about the Safeguarding Children Boards visit:

Sunderland

<http://www.sunderlandchildrenstrust.org.uk/profs-safeguardboard-procedures.asp>

Gateshead

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Care%20and%20Health/ChildrenandFamilies/LSCB/home.aspx>

South Tyneside

<http://www.stscb.org.uk/cp-procedures.asp>

Newcastle

<http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/lscb>

North Tyneside

http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/browse.shtml?p_subjectCategory=486

Durham

<http://www.durham-lscb.gov.uk/>

Northumberland

http://pscm.northumberland.gov.uk/portal/page?_pageid=62,50897&_dad=portal92&_schema=PORTAL92&pid=90050

Managing Allegations

Role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO is located within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

The LADO role applies to paid, unpaid, volunteers, casual, agency or anyone self employed and they capture concerns, allegations or offences emanating from outside of work. The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case.

They provide advice and guidance and help determine that the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures. Within the role the LADO helps co-ordinate information sharing with the right people. They will also monitor and track any investigation with the expectation that it is resolved as quickly as possible.

The Trust managing allegations leads are Lisa Crichton-Jones (Deputy Director of Workforce) and Jan Grey, Head of Safeguarding/Named Nurse

Who and What is a Corporate Parent?

Local Councils are the corporate parent and we are all partners in helping Councils to be a good parent, whatever our professional backgrounds, whatever our role, whoever our employer. As elected members, as carers, as workers, as parents, as children and young people, as volunteers, we should work together in a common enterprise to put the parenting of our looked after children at the heart of everything we do. Often having had even their basic needs unmet before becoming looked after, these children and young people daily accomplish the most remarkable things. They are looking to us to accomplish remarkable things too as their corporate parent.

For further information please contact Jan Grey, Head of Safeguarding.