



Title of paper:	Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services	
Report to:	Children's Partnership Board	
Date:	13 th October 2010	
Director(s)/Corporate Director(s):	Satinder Gautam – Director Safeguarding	Wards affected: all
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	Andrew High – Policy & Planning Officer andrew.high@nottinghamcity.gov.uk (915 0953)	
Other officers who have provided input:		
Relevant Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) objectives(s):		
Safeguarding and Early Intervention - Children, young people and families will benefit from early and effective support and protection to empower them to overcome difficulties		X
Strong families - More families will be strong and healthy, providing an enjoyable and safe place for children to grow up		X
Healthy and positive children and young people - Children and young people will be healthier, fitter, more emotionally resilient and better able to make mature decisions		X
Achievement - All children and young people will leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and will be ready for work or further learning		X
Economic well-being - Child poverty will be significantly reduced		
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A significant inspection of how the Children's Partnership, Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board and Children and Family Services work together to keep children and young people safe and deliver improved outcomes for looked after children is expected in 2010-11. o The overall aim of this inspection is to drive improvements in delivering better outcomes for children and young people in Nottingham. o The inspection will evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the Children's Partnership Board and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board. o A maximum of two weeks notice will be given for this inspection. o The inspection involves the use of "limiting judgements"- low grades awarded for certain inspected aspects will limit the grades that can be given for other areas. 		
Recommendations:		
1	That Children's Partnership Board considers this report and how the Board may be challenged by the inspection.	
2	That Children's Partnership Board agree to free appropriate staff and other resources to be involved in inspection activity and to authorise any necessary arrangements to make documents and case files available as required by the inspection.	
3	That Senior Officer Group nominates a lead officer from each agency for the inspection, who will have overall responsibility within that agency for co-ordinating pre-inspection arrangements and for communications before and during the inspection.	

1. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

All local authority areas will have at least one “Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services” in the three-year period following 1 April 2009. These new inspections have a sharper focus on evaluating outcomes for children and young people and the impact that practice and services have on improving outcomes, including through managing risk and minimising the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

Nottingham expects to have an Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in 2010-11, given that Nottingham had a Joint Area Review in 2007. The maximum notice period for the full inspection is usually 10 working days, so it is important to engage relevant parties as quickly as possible. The inspection will include not only the City Council but its key partners, such as the primary care trusts and the police. For example, an inspector from the Care Quality Commission is normally a member of the inspection team.

The inspection will specifically evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the Children’s Partnership Board and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board, including the impact the Boards have on safeguarding and improving outcomes for children and young people. For example, inspectors may explore how priorities and targets are decided and understood and how performance management and quality assurance processes are used to target resources and achieve improved outcomes for children and young people. Any important weaknesses identified by inspectors during the inspection will be reflected in the judgements reached regarding the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Children’s Trust Board.

Elements of the inspection will include:

- Confidential surveys for children in care and care leavers
- Reviewing case files and audit activity
- Evaluating the documentation already held by Ofsted and its partner inspectorates and commissions
- Evidence provided by the local authority and its partners in advance of the fieldwork
- A programme of meetings, discussions and focus groups with users (children, young people, parents and carers), Board members, senior managers, social care staff, health professionals and agencies, police, teachers, other staff and stakeholders (including the voluntary and community sector).

Recommendations:

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- That Children’s Partnership Board agree to free appropriate staff and other resources to be involved in inspection activity and to authorise any necessary arrangements to make documents and case files available as required by the inspection.
- That Senior Officer Group nominates a lead officer for the inspection from each agency, who will have overall responsibility within that agency for co-ordinating pre-inspection arrangements and for communications before and during the inspection.

2. RISKS

These inspections will contribute to Ofsted’s annual reviews of the performance of each local authority’s children’s services functions and will be taken into account in Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector’s statutory annual performance rating for each authority.

Inspectors will apply a number of considerations before arriving at judgements. These include considering the impact of limiting grades – that is, the impact of individual grades awarded in one part of the evaluation schedule on another judgement. For example: judgements in either of the two defined safeguarding outcomes will limit the judgement for overall effectiveness; leadership and management are unlikely to be judged adequate if the grade awarded for equality and diversity is inadequate; for the looked after children element of inspection, overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if any outcome judgement is inadequate

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will inevitably be costs involved in this inspection, notably in the staff time committed to preparation activity, interviews with inspectors and involvement with focus groups. Other costs will be incurred, such as travel costs for children, young people, parents and carers to meet with inspectors.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Children's Services in the County have been given a "Special Measures" notice following a judgement of "inadequate" in their inspection carried out earlier this year.

5. CLIENT GROUP

The inspection will look at safeguarding arrangements and activity for all children and young people - with a focus on children's social care services and how partner agencies relate to these. The inspection's other focus will be on looked after children and care leavers.

6. IMPACT ON EQUALITIES ISSUES

The inspection will take a broad view of how well agencies and professionals work together to identify, safeguard and promote the welfare of potentially vulnerable groups of children and young people that live in their area. These groups might include asylum seeking children, children in secure settings, disabled children and children treated by health services.

7. OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES AFFECTED

The overall aim of this inspection is to help identify where improvements are needed in partnership arrangements and services for safeguarding and looked after children. As such the most relevant Children and Young People's Plan Operational Objectives will be:

- (1) Stronger safeguarding
- (2) Shifting resources to early intervention and prevention
- (6) Improving corporate parenting

The most relevant Year 1 Priority is: Stronger safeguarding - with a key focus on ensuring that there are high standards of safeguarding across all agencies and that the Partnership takes a proactive approach to the elimination of domestic violence

8. CONTACT DETAILS

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