

Children's Partnership Board

Protecting disabled children: thematic inspection

- Evaluate the effectiveness of work to protect disabled children and young people at all stages from early support to the identification of and response to child protection concerns
- Involved 12 local authority areas.
- The local authorities varied in size and geographical context and included metropolitan areas and counties of varying size, with a combination of rural and urban features.
- Resulted in a Inspection report summarising findings across the authorities inspected:
- <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/protecting-disabled-children-thematic-inspection>

Thematic Inspection – Main report findings

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- Most disabled children were recorded to be living with parents or carers who were well motivated to provide good care for them
- A wide range of professionals and staff made timely referrals when they had concerns about disabled children.
- lack of rigour in the management of child in need work increased the likelihood of child protection concerns not being identified early enough.
- When child protection concerns were clear they were investigated promptly and steps were taken to ensure that children at immediate risk were safe. However when concerns were less clear-cut, and particularly when the concerns related to neglect, there were delays in identifying when thresholds for child protection were reached
- When these children did become subject to child protection plans there was a marked improvement in their outcomes.

Thematic Inspection – Main report findings continued

- Many child protection plans were not sufficiently focused on outcomes, making it difficult to hold agencies and parents to account and to measure progress.
- Child protection enquiries were usually carried out by suitably trained, experienced social workers with good experience of working with disabled children. Although Specialist training is not available in all local authorities
- A small number of children supported as children in need had previously been the subject of child protection plans. These cases were managed effectively.
- The extent to which the views, wishes and feelings of disabled children were captured and recorded varied.
- Most LSCBs and local authorities were not in a position to assess the quality of work to protect disabled children. Systems were not well established to evaluate and report on the quality and impact of work.

Nottingham City Positives

Early Intervention and CAF's

- We have a clear understanding of our profile and demand for services. We have matched services to the demand appropriately
- DCT provides good support to assist early help practitioners
- We have a shared understanding of early help
- We are embedding person centred planning
- Asian Link Nurse is valued

Nottingham City Positives

Safeguarding concerns

- Good understanding and appropriate thresholds from CAF to in need to CP.
- Good communication between DCT and safeguarding Teams
- Joint IA's between OT's and SW's has led to clear evidenced impact on service provision and more timely services (unique in country)
- DCT seen as a central support by all staff and agencies

Nottingham City Positives

Laddo

- Good awareness raising in schools of laddo role including disabled children
- Good work between DCT and Laddo

LSCB

- Has an identified lead for disabled children on the board
- Clear actions re serious case review
- Specific safeguarding training in respect of disabled children to be brought back

Nottingham City Positives

Social Care cases and Safeguarding

- Children are safe
- Actions taken to safeguard children are appropriate taken at an appropriate time
- Systematic audit process in place with clear evidence of impact in the services managed by Marie Halford SM
- Good and unique practice of auditing CP medicals
- DCT TM oversight and chairing of CIN reviews good
- Good support in place for DCT CIN case which parent confirmed - actively reducing family stress
- Good and evidenced multi-agency work

Nottingham Positives

Voice of child

- Clear intent to ensure voice of child heard
- Positive use of children's voice to improve service delivery
- Good use of visual clues
- Shared use of signs and symbols
- Children being seen and observations used

Nottingham City Areas for Development

- Having shared outcomes in operational and strategic planning
- The loss of the CAF Co-ordinators has been felt keenly by front line practitioners
- CAF plans need clear actions, timescales and contingency plans
- Audit to be undertaken across all disability cases not just focus on DCT
- Awareness raising of Laddo role in health
- Board has not been considering specific data nor analyzing data in relation to CP re disabled children
- Our principal of integration of all issues in relation to disabled children into mainstream functions runs the risk of missing key and specific safeguarding and service issues for disabled children and needs further thought.

Nottingham City Areas for Development

- Contacts in both duty points lack detail
- Duplication of contacts
- Recording didn't accurately reflect actual practice
- Strats don't record how child's views will be gained
- The Care First CIN and CP plan proforma does not support contingencies and forward planning
- CP reviews do not have time scaled actions and recommendations
- CP plans not detailed enough didn't meet working together guidance.
- Further embedding of shared communication methods with disabled children across education, health and social care
- Improvement of recording of child's views

Nottingham City Overall Strengths and Weaknesses

Main strengths:

- Early support pathway for disabled children
- Multi-agency working
- DCT is a good structure and acts as a focal point for all agencies.
- Use of localised support and services for disabled children which is safer

Overall weaknesses:

- Lack of robust CAF, CIN and CP written plans
- Lack of robust recording.

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