

ANNUAL UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF CONTACT, REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Contact Officers : Merlin Joseph, Deputy Director, Social Care, Health and Housing (01895) 250527
Heather Brown, Interim Service Manager, Children's Resources (01895) 277852

1. INTRODUCTION

In June 2009 Ofsted introduced a new (annual) two day unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements as part of the statutory framework for the inspection of Children's Services.

2. COMMENTARY

2.1 The inspection focussed on the contact, referral and assessment arrangements within the London Borough of Hillingdon's Children and Young People's Social Care Services.

2.2 The two-day unannounced inspection took place on the 18th and 19th January 2011. The inspection was carried out in accordance with requirements of Section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The inspection was carried out by two Ofsted Inspectors (HMI).

2.3 The purpose of the annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements was to assess the effectiveness of front-line practice in managing potential risks to children and young people and minimising the incidence of abuse and neglect.

2.4 The inspection will inform future inspections, in particular the full inspection of safeguarding and looked after children. The inspection will contribute to the annual review of the performance of the authority's Children's Services, for which Ofsted will award a rating later in the year.

3 The report, by way of a letter, was published by Ofsted on 16th February 2011 (attached). The draft report is now in three areas: **Strengths/ Requirements met under statutory guidance** and **Areas for development**. There were no areas identified as being of serious concern for 'priority action'. There were fourteen areas identified in the statutory guidance which is a real strength particularly when analysed against other local authorities.

4 There were three areas for development:

- a) There was positive feedback in relation to the threshold document. However, Inspectors felt this needed to be communicated to partner agencies. An action plan for disseminating the threshold document through seminars is planned for the next few months.

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee – 22 March 2011

Part 1 – Members, Public & Press

- b) The Children with Disabilities Team had recently transferred from another Service area. There is an action plan in place that will ensure consistency in regards to completion of chronologies, this will also be helped by the single point of contact from the 1st April 2011.
- c) Whilst, there were no concerns in regards to the quality of the assessments completed a few initial and core assessments were completed by one member of staff who was not qualified, this was not 'consistent with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010'. There is an action plan in place to reallocate all cases to a qualified worker.

4.1 The feedback at the end of day two was very positive, with comments being made about how impressed the Inspectors had been with the staff they had met and with the high standards of practice they had seen. The language throughout the verbal feedback at the end of day two was - 'outstanding' 'exceptional' and very 'impressive'. Overall the inspection endorses the progress achieved in the delivery of children's social care contact, referral and assessment services and is a credit to the hard work of the staff involved.