

Social Care Inspections

Children's Scrutiny
19th October 2020



Introduction

- Youth Offending Inspection
 - HMI Probation
- Ofsted Focussed Visit
 - Part of Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACs) Framework
- Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)
 - Part of Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACs) Framework
 - Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC), HMI Probation, HMI Constabulary
 - Paused due to COVID

Youth Offending Inspection Background

- Introduction of new standards in May 2018.
- Change in frequency of inspecting individual YOTs; some every two years but at least every four years. Last visit to Bolton was in 2014.
- Presence on site during the fieldwork will be one week (for single inspection) and two weeks (for joint inspection).
- In July 2020 Inspection Guidance was amended, to include the inspections of 'Small YOTs' (smaller YOTs are those with relatively low caseloads - thought to be average caseloads of under 50).
- The 'Small YOTs' will follow the same timescale, but the inspection will only be from Monday to Thursday and with fewer inspectors.
- For small YOTs there is less evidence in advance required. Only 3 pieces of supporting documentation can be submitted (to cover innovation/prevention).
- Notification of inspection will be given 3 weeks prior to fieldwork (Friday morning) – YOT Head of Service will be notified.

Youth Offending Inspection Preparation

- Refresh of the Youth Offending Service Management Board, meetings take place at least quarterly.
- YOT Vision has been developed and plans for wide communication.
- Evidence in advance set is available and is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Data dashboards have been developed and ongoing development work on data to enable further analysis.
- Full refresh of YOT Policies which and meet national standard requirements.
- Self-assessments and audits carried out, with actions in place.

Ofsted Interim Focussed Visit

What happens?

- Notification of a focused visit will be received on a Tuesday
- Director of Children Services will receive the call from the lead inspector
- Telephone conference in the afternoon between lead inspector and DCS
- The day after notification the Local Authority will share child level data, information about audits and performance and management information
- LA will provide further detail as requested on selected child cases
- Coordination and support provided by teams in Children's Services
- Longer process and larger fieldwork team than normal focussed visit
- Letter is published, no inspection grading

Ofsted Focussed Visit

What does it cover?

- A focus on particular service area (Front Door), or young people (Care leavers).
- No 'judgement' but will inform the content and timing of the next ILACs visit.
- A broader scope examining the quality of decision making regarding:-
 - Help and protection
 - LAC and Care Leavers
 - Impact of Leadership
- The context of the local authority will be taken into account including impact of Covid19 but...
- ...Local authority response to Covid19 also likely to be a factor.

Outcome from Previous Inspection

- Bolton judged to be 'Good' in all 4 aspects BUT context of global pandemic and significant budget cuts **will** impact on future inspection outcomes.
- Improved permanence for long-term LAC.
 - Permanence panel reviews all long-term placements and 208 LAC now long-term matched.
- Better use of audits to improve practice.
 - Revised audit tool ensuring 30 case files audited/month with 30% moderated by senior managers and the Practice Improvement Lead presenting a report to Performance Board to 'close the loop'.
- Improved effectiveness at Early Help Stage.
 - Early Help review to reduce demand on social care pathway and reduce re-referrals
- Improved transitional planning for CWD.
 - Transitions Panel established with Adults Services and 2 dedicated Transitions Workers.
 - Permanence Panel instigated process at 14th birthday

Risks

- Investment in staff
- Pressure on caseloads
- Increasing volume and complexity
- Impact of COVID-19
- School attendance, Increasing Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education
- Education outcomes – from Early Years to Post 16 and Education, Employment and Training
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect
- Poverty

Help and Protection

- Referral and Assessment (Front Door)
 - Current contact and referral rates back up to pre-Covid levels (145-165 contacts and 60-70 referrals per week).
 - However, referrals from schools remain relatively low @ 60% of previous rates.
 - Increased complexity the major issue – rise in Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and drug and alcohol issues.
 - 16-20 Strategy Meetings every week.
- Evidenced outcomes for Children in Need and Child Protection Plans
 - Restricted access to households impacting on demand.
 - CP plans increased by 20% primarily due to delays in stepping down.
- Exercise of thresholds
 - Launch of 'Framework for Action'.
 - Expectation of written follow up to referrals from partners.
 - Access to a Liquid Logic referral form and process.
- Step up and step down interface with Early Help
 - Greater partner confidence to endorse children's removal from CP plans
 - Reduced re-referral rates
 - Reduced CiN cases in the social work teams
 - Increased capacity and quality in social work teams

LAC and Care Leavers

- Pre-proceedings process, Public Law Outline (PLO) and Letters Before Proceedings.
 - Inconsistent practice leading to too many emergency admissions
 - Introduction of PLO Tracker reviewed at Performance Board
 - Audit and best exemplar template of LBPs (SMART) to be shared across the service
- How the physical, emotional and mental health of young people is being considered as a factor in care planning.
 - CWD facing increased risk of admission to expensive placements (£4,500 pw) due to reduced short-breaks availability (Avondale)
 - Multi-agency trauma pathway to support children coming out of lockdown
- How family time (contact) is being maintained.
 - Direct family time being supported where risk assessments and health needs of carers allow.
 - Greater use of social media and technology to support contact where this is not possible.
- Placement decisions and matching processes.
 - Revised process to create more informed and child focussed decision making including concurrent education and health needs considerations
 - Monthly Placement Panel to review all Out of Area placements
 - The Home Project to support a return to or closer to Bolton provision for 16-17 year olds

Questions

