

OFSTED INSPECTION FEEDBACK 2019

Working to make children's lives better.

Overview

The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) took place between 15th and 26th July

The inspection team spent most of their time with practitioners and reviewing children's records. The inspection covered all areas of the service working with children in need of help and protection and looked after children and care leavers

The opening statement in the report summarises our position:

Services for children in Southend-on-Sea require improvement to be good, as was the case at the last inspection in 2016. While senior leaders have made significant progress in some areas in improving the quality of practice, despite a challenging local context, there is more work to do. Leaders have concentrated heavily on strengthening the 'front door' multi-agency response to contacts and referrals, planning for children in need and services for vulnerable adolescents, following learning from a joint inspection. These services are now highly effective

The Judgement

Children's Services in Southend-on-Sea “require improvement to be good”

- Children in Need of help and protection
- Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- Leadership

It is a wide grade judgement ranging from close to inadequate to on the cusp of good. We have much that is good and want to improve further for better outcomes for our children.

Significant Improvements

The following services have been described as improved, effective, highly effective, strong or excellent:

Strong cross-party political and corporate support for Children's Services

Responses to contact and referrals (MASH+)

Early help services

CIN planning

Adoption for children and for adoptive parents is an area of excellence

Support for looked after children and care leavers to keep themselves safe

Partnerships are a strength in Southend-on-Sea

The following services have been described as improved, effective, highly effective, strong or excellent:

Leaders have made considerable progress developing a reliable performance management framework

Assessments informed by the views of children

MARAT and response to domestic abuse

Strategy meetings

Safeguarding of children who are missing education or home educated

LADO

The following services have been described as improved, effective, highly effective, strong or excellent:

Quality of evidence presented to the court in care proceedings

Educational outcomes for looked after children

Planning for reunification

Services for vulnerable adolescents

Relationships with care leavers improves outcomes

Performance management systems

Requires improvement

The areas for improvement are the ones we had seen and had advised Ofsted. The inspection report details main areas for improvement.

The report details 4 areas for improvement. This compares with 12 areas for improvement following the inspection in 2016. The areas for improvement are:

- Managers' and leaders' oversight, and evaluation, of the quality of frontline practice, and translating this into timely planning for improvements for children within their timeframe
- The quality of planning for children in need of protection.
- The oversight and challenge from independent chairs of children's child protection conferences and children's care reviews.
- The timeliness and effectiveness of pre-proceedings under the public law outline (PLO) arrangements.

Next Steps:

- Review our strategic improvement plan and make amendments
- Provide Ofsted with our plan based on the four areas for improvement within 60 days from receipt of the letter.
- Share the revised strategic improvement plan with the Children's Services Improvement Board, this working group, the service and safeguarding partners