

Inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services

Framework for inspection and guidance for local authorities and partners

The framework and guidance set out in this document are for the inspections of outcomes and services for safeguarding children and young people and outcomes and services for looked after children and care leavers that are provided either singly or jointly by local authorities and their partners.

The new inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services take effect from 1 April 2009.

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Introduction

1. This paper sets out the framework and guidance for the joint inspection of safeguarding and looked after children within the wider Comprehensive Area Assessment.¹ It should be read alongside the accompanying framework and guidance for the new unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children and young people in need and children and young people who may be in need of protection.²
2. Until December 2008, Ofsted assessed with other inspectorates how well local services work together to improve outcomes for children and young people through the joint area reviews of children's services. From 1 April 2009, these are replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessments and the new programme of inspections of outcomes and services for safeguarding and looked after children services.
3. 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 incidence of child abuse and neglect. The new programme of inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services and outcomes will be carried out by suitably experienced inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. In some cases, inspectors from other inspectorates and commissions such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will assist in carrying out the inspections.
4. 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. They do not preclude other inspections of safeguarding and services for looked after children arising out of joint inspectorate Comprehensive Area Assessments, as set out in the Comprehensive Area Assessment joint inspection framework.
5. Regulatory inspections of local authority children's homes, fostering and adoption and private fostering arrangements will continue separately. Alongside other evidence such as that arising from serious case reviews, findings from these inspections will help determine the scope and timing of inspections of safeguarding and looked after children inspections.

¹ For further information, see: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=63FF7DFA-D1DB-46D0-B72E-39DA12AEF9E1>.

² *Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment*, Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090026.

6. Pilot inspections in March 2009 helped to shape the final framework and guidance for these inspections. The framework and guidance have also been reviewed in light of the recently published report on the protection of children in England.³
7. This framework and guidance are subject to periodic review.

Ofsted inspects

8. Ofsted has published an overarching framework for inspection, which informs all of Ofsted's inspection and regulatory activity, including the new inspections of safeguarding and looked after children.⁴
9. This overarching framework guides the general scope and methods of all inspection, but it does not determine the specialist inspection activity necessary for the inspection of safeguarding and looked after children that is set out in this framework and guidance.

Frequency of inspection

10. 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. Timing of inspections will be influenced by evidence from other inspection and regulation, including the annual unannounced inspection of contact, assessment and referral. Where the inspection judges overall effectiveness of safeguarding or looked after children to be inadequate a further inspection may follow.

Notice given for inspection

11. The maximum notice period for the full inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services is usually 10 working days. In some circumstances, for example where provision has been judged inadequate already or where serious concerns about safeguarding have been raised, a full inspection of safeguarding may be carried out without giving this period of notice.
12. Inspections will not normally be deferred because of staff absence or staff shortages in the local authority.

³ *The protection of children in England: a progress report*, The Lord Laming, March 2009.

⁴ *Ofsted inspects: a framework for all Ofsted inspection and regulation* (080121), Ofsted, 2009; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Ofsted-inspects>.

Inspection teams

13. Suitably experienced inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission will carry out the inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services. In some cases, they may be joined by inspectors from other inspectorates or commissions, in particular Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.
14. Inspection teams will normally consist of at least three Ofsted inspectors and a Care Quality Commission inspector. Inspectors will usually be on site for up to 10 working days.

User and stakeholder views and surveys

15. In this context, users are the children, young people and their families or carers who are supported by, or who make use of, services.
16. Inspectors will take account of the extent to which service providers have sought and acted on the views of children, young people and carers in reviewing and improving services and outcomes generally. They will also consider the views of those users and stakeholders they speak to during on-site evidence gathering.
17. For each inspection, surveys of children in the authority's care and recent care leavers will be carried out through the office of the Children's Rights Director at Ofsted. These will involve children aged eight years and over and will be web-based, with alternative paper completion as required.⁵ Inspectors will also take account of an annual Ofsted survey of the views of social workers and other safeguarding professionals and an annual survey of the third sector. Further details of these surveys will be published separately on Ofsted's website.

Inspecting safeguarding and looked after children together

18. In nearly all instances, the inspections of safeguarding and looked after children outcomes and services will be carried out as a single inspection event. Exceptionally, where provision for either safeguarding and looked after children has been judged inadequate previously or where serious concerns about safeguarding have been raised, a separate inspection of safeguarding or looked after children may be carried out.
19. The annual unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children and young people in need and children and young

⁵ Ofsted is considering the use of a further survey for other children in need, including those who have child protection plans.

people who may be in need of protection support the new programme of inspections of wider safeguarding and looked after children. Any relevant findings or recommendations from one inspection will be followed up in subsequent inspections.

Scope of the inspection

Safeguarding element of the inspection

Definition of safeguarding

20. Ofsted adopts the definition of safeguarding used in the Children Act 2004,⁶ and in the government guidance document *Working together to safeguard children*.⁷ This can be summarised as:
- protecting children and young people from maltreatment
 - preventing impairment of children and young people's health or development
 - ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
 - undertaking that role so as to enable those children and young people to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.
21. Ofsted will review the framework and guidance for these inspections in the light of any review of *Working together to safeguard children*.

Working together to safeguard children

22. Inspections of safeguarding will assess the effectiveness of children's trusts and local children's organisations and assess whether their policies comply with statutory requirements and guidance. In doing this, inspections will take a broad view of the following.
- 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.
 - How well practice is supported and underpinned by effective local policy-making and implementation.

⁶ The Children Act 2004: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040031_en_1.

⁷ *Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, HM Government, 2006; <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060>.

23. To do this, inspectors will evaluate the impact of safeguarding systems and frameworks across local public services on safeguarding and protecting children. This will include:
- outcomes for children and young people
 - how well safeguarding is prioritised
 - whether child welfare concerns are identified and responded to appropriately by the relevant agencies
 - the extent to which public agencies discharge their responsibility to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Looked after children element of the inspection

24. As set out in *Care matters*,⁸ inspection must contribute to improved and sustainable outcomes for looked after children and their families. The looked after children element of the inspection will focus on:
- outcomes achieved
 - impact of services
 - quality of risk management and decision-making in identifying which children need to be taken into care
 - quality of care planning, review and support for children in care and care leavers
 - placement stability
 - safeguarding of looked after children
 - access to, and attendance at, suitable schools
 - support for families and carers
 - the effectiveness of corporate parenting approaches
 - preparation for leaving care and adult life and the subsequent support.

Evaluation schedules for inspection

25. The evaluation schedules are set out in a separate document which outlines the main aspects of the services and outcomes against which inspectors will make judgements.
26. They are accompanied by another publication on the illustrative criteria that assist in grading by indicating the quality of service or outcomes expected for

⁸ *Care matters: time to deliver for children in care* (DCSF-00279-2008), HM Government, 2008; www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications.

each grade. The criteria are not exhaustive but serve to illustrate the level of service or outcome linked to particular grades.

Summary evaluation schedule for the safeguarding element of the inspection

27. The summary evaluation schedule for the safeguarding element of the inspection is set out below.

Section 1: Overall effectiveness

To be based on all available evidence and judgements made during the inspection.

- Capacity to improve
- Recommendations and required actions

Section 2: Meeting the need to safeguard and promote the welfare, development and life chances of children and young people

- Leadership and management
 - Ambition and prioritisation
 - Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development
 - User engagement
 - Partnerships
 - Equality and diversity
 - Value for money
- Quality of provision
 - Service responsiveness, including complaints
 - Assessment and direct work with children and families
 - Case planning, reviews and recording
- Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people
 - Children and young people are safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe
 - Children and young people feel safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people feel safe

Summary evaluation schedule for the looked after children element of the inspection

28. The summary evaluation schedule for the looked after children element of the inspection is set out below.

Section 1: Overall effectiveness

To be based on all available evidence and judgements made during the inspection.

- Capacity to improve
- Recommendations and required actions

Section 2: Meeting the needs of looked after children and young people

- Leadership and management
 - Ambition and prioritisation
 - Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development
 - User engagement
 - Partnerships
 - Equality and diversity
 - Value for money
 - Effectiveness in promoting safeguarding
- Quality of provision
 - Service responsiveness including complaints
 - Assessment and direct work with children and families
 - Case planning, reviews and recording
- Every Child Matters outcomes for looked after children and young people
 - Being healthy
 - Staying safe
 - Enjoying and achieving
 - Making a positive contribution
 - Achieving economic well-being

Grading inspection findings

29. Inspectors will make judgements against the evaluation schedules using a four-point scale.

Outstanding

Good

Adequate

Inadequate

Limiting judgements in the inspection

30. 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, including the overall effectiveness judgement.

31. For the safeguarding element of the inspection, the limiting grades are:
 - overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if either of the two safeguarding outcomes (children and young people are safe and children and young people feel safe)⁹ is judged as inadequate
 - overall effectiveness is unlikely to be good or better if either of the two safeguarding outcomes (children and young people are safe and children and young people feel safe) is not judged as good
 - leadership and management are unlikely to be adequate if the grade awarded for equality and diversity is inadequate.

32. For the looked after children element of inspection, the limiting grades are:
 - overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if any outcome judgement is inadequate
 - overall effectiveness is unlikely to be good or better if either staying safe or enjoying and achieving is not judged as good
 - enjoying and achieving are unlikely to be good if looked after children and young people are not making at least good educational progress overall in relation to their starting points and capability
 - leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if the grade awarded for equality and diversity is inadequate.

Inspection activity

33. Inspectors will undertake activities that focus on evaluating the outcomes for children and young people and the quality and impact of services in helping to improve outcomes.

34. In preparation for inspection, the following documents should be kept up to date by each local authority area. This will allow easy access after the letter announcing the inspection is received:
 - minutes of last six Local Safeguarding Children Board meetings
 - details of Children's Trust Board membership, and minutes of last six meetings

⁹ Children are safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe; children and young people feel safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable to ensure that children and young people feel safe.

- Children and Young People's Plan and the latest review of Children and Young People's Plan, including any updates to the plan
 - lists of existing groups of service users and their parents/carers
 - summaries of the views of service users and other stakeholders, as collected by the council
 - local performance management and quality assurance information, including case-related audit evidence, relating to safeguarding, child protection and looked after children services
 - data relating to the common assessment framework
 - workforce data and current pressures and priorities
 - summaries of any management reviews of safeguarding and looked after children services conducted in last two years
 - management reports of the independent reviewing officers
 - details of placements in council, voluntary or private children's homes, fostering or adoption agencies
 - arrangements for identifying and responding to missing children and young people
 - organisation charts for council and partner agencies.
35. In addition, inspectors will have access to information that Ofsted already holds such as:
- the Ofsted performance profile¹⁰
 - findings from other relevant Ofsted inspection and regulatory activity, including notifications
 - summary of judgements made in serious case review evaluations
 - Ofsted's fostering and adoption datasets (completed by providers)
 - views of service users, social care staff and third sector organisations gathered through new questionnaires
 - summary of substantiated complaints about the council and its partners made to Ofsted that relate to safeguarding and looked after children
 - local area agreements.

¹⁰ *Comprehensive Area Assessment: annual rating of council children's services for 2009*, Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090024.

Set-up meeting

36. A meeting will normally be held between the lead inspector and representative(s) of the council and its partners four days after notification of the inspection. It is for the council and its partners to determine who is present at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to provide further information about the scope of the inspection, agree practical arrangements, including survey arrangements, initial interviews and scrutiny of case files with appropriate workers, and provide other clarification as necessary. It will also provide opportunity for inspectors to discuss any issues or concerns which have arisen from the pre-inspection reading and to discuss how service users and their families can be directly engaged in the inspection. In some instances, at the request of the council and its partners, it may be possible for the set-up meeting to be conducted by telephone.

Inspection activities for the safeguarding element of the inspection

37. In addition to reviewing case files and evaluating the documentation already held by Ofsted and its partner inspectorates and commissions, and the evidence provided by the local authority and its partners in advance of the fieldwork element of the inspection, inspectors will conduct meetings and hold discussions with users, managers, health professionals and agencies, police, other staff and stakeholders. Typically, these may include:
- Chair and members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust Board
 - children, young people, their parents or carers receiving children in need services
 - any existing groups of users
 - lead manager(s) for safeguarding and common assessment framework
 - managers responsible for commissioning, planning and monitoring services
 - Director of Children's Services, Lead Member (and where appropriate support members) and Chief Executive
 - managers of Primary Care Trust and police responsible for reviewing points of referral and the quality of risk assessments, decision-making and multi-agency working
 - managers of the accident and emergency department of the local hospitals
 - strategic group responsible for tackling domestic violence
 - focus group of designated headteachers, teachers and support teachers
 - focus group of independent reviewing officers
 - focus group of social workers involved in safeguarding and protecting children

- focus group of social work team managers for child protection and children in need
 - multi-agency staff focus group for early intervention and prevention
 - health focus group for safeguarding, including general medical practitioners (GPs) and designated health professionals
 - focus group of staff responsible for the education of young people excluded from education or educated other than at school
 - representatives from the community and voluntary sectors
 - manager/staff of the independent advocacy service
38. The inspection will specifically evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Children's Trust Board, including the impact the boards have on improving 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.
39. The outcomes of the most recent unannounced annual inspection of contact, assessment and referral will be taken into account by inspectors when evaluating evidence and arriving at judgements, particularly in relation to spreading any good or better practice identified and in tackling areas for development.
40. Where relevant, inspectors will evaluate the progress made in implementing any recommendations arising from serious case reviews.
41. During the inspection, inspectors will always speak with children and young people and seek views of their parents and carers.

Inspection activities for the looked after children element of the inspection

42. In addition to reviewing case files and evaluating documentation, inspectors will similarly conduct meetings and hold discussions with users, managers, health professionals and agencies, other staff and stakeholders. Typically, these may include:
- representatives of the Corporate Parenting Board
 - meetings with looked after children
 - meetings with care leavers
 - heads of service and lead manager(s) for looked after children, including for educational achievement

- managers responsible for commissioning, planning and monitoring placements
 - Director of Children’s Services, Lead Member (and where appropriate support members) for looked after children and Chief Executive
 - lead officers for attainment and attendance, to include the virtual headteacher
 - lead officers for the physical and mental health of looked after children, including a designated doctor and nurse
 - focus group of designated teachers and support teachers
 - focus group of independent reviewing officers
 - focus group of managers responsible for corporate parenting
 - focus group of parents, for example, where appropriate, parents of children included within the case-tracking sample, parents of children on care orders placed at home, or parents whose children have been accommodated
 - multi-agency staff group for looked after children and care leavers, which will comprise those staff involved in the cases selected for examination
 - hold discussions with focus group of social work team managers
 - meeting with manager/staff of the independent advocacy service
 - representatives from the community and voluntary sectors
 - visit a social care or multi-agency looked after children’s team, to include support for children on the edge of care
 - hold discussions with staff at the care leaving service
 - visit a targeted service for looked after children (this will depend on the particular services available in the area).
43. The inspection will consider outcomes for looked after children and follow up specific issues as required. The inspection will always scrutinise the work of the Children’s Trust Board and in particular the Corporate Parenting Board and its impact on improving the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.
44. Inspectors will always speak with children and young people and seek views of their parents and carers.

Case file identification, analysis and discussion for safeguarding and looked after children

45. At the set-up meeting the lead inspector will explain how inspectors will identify and analyse case records with and alongside key professionals who have oversight of the decision-making process. The main purpose of this activity is to assess how effectively children in need, including those looked after, are safeguarded and cared for.

46. Case file scrutiny and discussion will consider:
- the extent to which the welfare concerns of looked after children and other vulnerable groups are identified, assessed and responded to appropriately, including the effectiveness of referral, assessment, planning, intervention and review processes in practice
 - the extent to which agencies and professionals work together to safeguard and promote the welfare and development of children and young people
 - the quality of practice in relation to children and young people entering and leaving care
 - the quality of support and care received by looked after children, including placement stability
 - the outcomes achieved for looked after children as a result of these services, including health, attendance and progress at school, numbers in full-time education, employment and training and rates of offending
 - the provision and monitoring arrangements for children and young people who have been excluded from school.
47. In most instances, case file analysis will consist of three key elements.
- At least eight cases (four specifically safeguarding and four looked after children) selected by inspectors from the local authority case load before fieldwork begins. The local authority will be expected to carry out an audit of the eight or more selected and share this with inspectors as fieldwork begins (or share the outcomes of recent audits they have undertaken of the eight cases). The key worker, manager or a representative will be invited to assist inspectors in their analysis of the selected cases and the results of the audit during fieldwork.
 - At least a further 12 cases (six specifically safeguarding and six looked after children) will be selected by inspectors at the start of the fieldwork element of the inspection. Where needed, inspectors will consult with the local authority to ensure that they consider a balance of cases. Where available, managers and key workers will be invited to assist inspectors in their analysis of the selected cases.
 - Scrutiny of analysis and evaluation of case files undertaken by the local authority (and partners).
48. Following notification of the date of the inspection, the council will be required to provide the lead inspector with a list of the following cases:
- all children and young people currently subject to a child in need plan
 - all children and young people currently subject to child protection plans

- all looked after children and young people, including those in external placements and care leavers
 - any unallocated cases or cases awaiting transfer to another team.
49. For all children, councils will be asked to supply the following information, as recorded on the integrated children's system:
- child's unique identifier
 - date of initial referral
 - date of birth
 - gender
 - ethnicity
 - legal status
 - details of any disability.
50. For the safeguarding case files, councils will be asked to detail whether the child is:
- subject to child protection plan
 - previously subject to a child protection plan
 - subject to a child in need plan.
51. For looked after children, councils will be asked to clarify the current placement using the categories within the integrated children's system:
- placement with parent(s)
 - placement with relatives/friends
 - foster placement with relatives/friends
 - foster placement
 - placement with adopters
 - residential placement (children's home)
 - specialist residential placement (therapeutic)
 - specialist residential placement (residential school)
 - specialist residential placement (health, including child and adolescent mental health services)
 - secure accommodation
 - supported lodgings
 - other – please specify.

Surveys

52. Following notification of the date of the inspection, the council will be required to ensure that invitations and passwords (provided by Ofsted) to complete the following children’s surveys are given to the relevant children, unless they are likely to be unable to understand and complete a survey either on the web or on paper. The council should also ensure that children are as far as practicable encouraged and enabled to complete and submit their views through these surveys in confidence:
- all looked after children and young people aged eight and over (Care4Me survey)
 - all children and young people aged eight and over who have left the council’s care during the previous 12 months (AfterCare survey).
53. Anonymised findings of children’s surveys will be provided to the council. Findings will also be aggregated (without identifying children or the council) to form a national database of survey findings, which may be published.¹¹

Reporting findings

54. A single report will follow each inspection. It will contain separate sections and grades for safeguarding and looked after children.
55. The report will set out the inspection findings using text and grades, organised under the headings below.

Report contents

About this inspection	Information about the inspection, including evidence base
Service information	Brief contextual information about the services provided in the area
Safeguarding	
Overall effectiveness	Grade
Capacity for improvement	Grade
Areas for improvement	No grade
How good are outcomes for children and young people?	No grade

¹¹ As noted on page 7, Ofsted is considering extending these surveys to include children with a child in need or child protection plan.

Children and young people are safe: effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe	Grade
Children and young people feel safe: effectiveness of services in helping to ensure that children and young people feel safe	Grade
Quality of provision	Grade
Service responsiveness	Grade
Assessment and direct work with children and families	Grade
Case planning, review and recording	Grade
How effective are leadership and management?	Grade
Ambition and prioritisation	Grade
Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development	Grade
User engagement	Grade
Partnerships	Grade
Equality and diversity	Grade
Value for money	Grade
Services for looked after children	
Overall effectiveness	Grade
Capacity for improvement	Grade
Areas for improvement	No grade
How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?	No grade
Being healthy	Grade
Staying safe	Grade
Enjoying and achieving	Grade
Making a positive contribution	Grade
Economic well-being	Grade
Quality of provision	Grade
Service responsiveness	Grade

Assessment and direct work with children	Grade
Case planning, review and recording	Grade
How effective are leadership and management?	Grade
Ambition and prioritisation	Grade
Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development	Grade
User engagement	Grade
Partnerships	Grade
Equality and diversity	Grade
Value for money	Grade

56. The draft report will be sent within five working days after the end of the inspection to the Director of Children’s Services for a factual accuracy check.
57. The Director of Children’s Services or representatives must return the draft report with any comments on factual accuracy within five days (10 working days after the end of the inspection).
58. Following this, the final report setting out the inspection findings will be sent to the Director of Children’s Services within 15 working days of the end of the inspection, copied to the Lead Member for Children’s Services, the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Chief Executive of the local authority.
59. The final report will be published on the Ofsted website within 20 days of the end of the inspection (irrespective of appeals or complaints).

Summary of the inspection timeline

60. The timetable below gives an indicative overview of the inspection process for the full safeguarding and looked after children inspection.

Table 1: timetable overview

Day	Activity
1	Notification of the inspection and accompanying documentation sent by email to Director of Children’s Services, including arrangements for children’s surveys, social worker and community and voluntary sector questionnaires.
2	Lead inspector telephones office of Director of Children’s Services to agree date and time of set-up meeting. Council sends lead inspector copy of core set of documents as set out in paragraph 34.
3	Council sends Ofsted letter to looked after children and children who have left care in the past 12 months, which explains how their views are to be gathered and invites them to complete a children’s survey.
4	Council provides the lead inspector with a list of current cases, including any analysis.
5	Set-up meeting with the lead inspector includes outline of particular areas for enquiry. Inspector informs council of initial case files selected for audit and review (see paragraph 48).
6–10	Council prepares audit of initial case file selection.
11–19	Fieldwork starts and inspectors on site. Additional case files selected by inspectors. Case file audits received by inspectors.
20	Inspectors conclude fieldwork in the morning and provide feedback to council and its partners in the afternoon. Feedback of results of children’s surveys provided to council.
21–25	Drafting and quality assurance of report. Draft report sent to local authority copied to Local Safeguarding Children Board for factual accuracy check on day 25.
26–30	Local authority completes the factual accuracy check and inform lead inspector of any concerns.
35	Final report sent to local authority.
40	Report published on the Ofsted website.

Communication and feedback

61. Inspectors will provide regular opportunities for dialogue and feedback during the inspection. Should any unresolved issues of significant risk of harm to a child be identified during the inspection, inspectors will immediately inform the Director of Children’s Services and confirm this in writing at the earliest opportunity. It is expected that any significant risk will be addressed immediately by those responsible.

62. Oral feedback about draft findings, including strengths and weaknesses in practice, will be given to the Director of Children's Services at the end of the inspection.

Confidentiality

63. Ofsted will take all appropriate steps to ensure that information provided to inspectors remains confidential, as required by statute. However, evidence gathered during inspections may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, although the identity of named individuals will not be disclosed. Where Ofsted considers that any information provided by children indicates the likelihood of harm, the necessary information will be passed to the council's child protection staff for action.

Quality assurance

64. Quality assurance is the action taken to ensure that an inspection is of the quality needed and expected by users, providers and Ofsted itself. As part of this, Ofsted will ensure inspectors are suitably experienced in the areas they are inspecting and ensure quality assurance managers are suitably experienced and skilled to undertake this aspect of work.
65. All inspectors are expected to undertake a quality assurance role during inspections. The lead inspector has overall responsibility for ensuring all evidence gathered is robust, reliable and secure. This approach ensures all judgements reached by the inspection team are fully supported by the available evidence.
66. To ensure national consistency, some inspections will be visited by an inspector from Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission to support the quality assurance processes undertaken by the inspection team. During these visits, the visiting inspector will speak to the lead inspector, inspection team members, managers and other staff, and where possible users and other stakeholders. They will also attend any inspection team meetings taking place during their visit. This inspector will always seek views from the council and/or partners on the conduct of the inspection and sample the way evidence is being gathered and used.
67. Ofsted will ask the council to complete a short evaluation form following each inspection, which will be used to improve the quality of inspections.
68. All inspection reports will be subject to quality assurance procedures.

Conduct during the inspection¹²

69. Inspectors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work, and ensure that everyone they encounter during inspections is treated fairly and with respect. The code of conduct set out in *Ofsted inspects* requires inspectors to:

- evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour
- evaluate provision in line with frameworks, national standards or requirements
- base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
- have no connection with the provider which could undermine their objectivity
- report honestly and clearly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
- endeavour to minimise the stress on those involved in the inspection
- act in the best interests and well-being of service users
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
- respond appropriately to reasonable requests
- take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety issues.

Expectations of providers

70. In order that inspection and regulation are productive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and providers establish and maintain a professional working environment based on courtesy and professional behaviour. Inspectors are expected to uphold the code of conduct but Ofsted also expects providers to:

- be courteous and professional
- apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
- enable inspectors to conduct their visit in an open and honest way

¹² See *Ofsted inspects*, Ofsted, 2009; [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Ofsted-inspects/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Ofsted-inspects/(language)/eng-GB).

- enable inspectors to evaluate the provision objectively against the standards/framework
- provide evidence that will enable the inspector to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
- work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
- ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on their premises
- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspector or the inspection team
- draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of inspectors promptly and in a suitable manner
- respect that inspectors will need to observe practice and talk to staff and users without the presence of a manager or registered person.

Complaints

71. We anticipate that the great majority of our work will be carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise during an inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector immediately so that they can be resolved while the inspection is taking place. Any concerns about the factual accuracy of the findings in the report may be raised with the inspector after the inspection as set out in paragraphs 56 and 57. If it has not been possible to resolve concerns through these means, a formal complaint may be lodged.
72. Normally, a complaint can be made at any stage during an inspection or up to 30 calendar days from the date of publication of any report or letter. Lodging a complaint will not normally delay publication of the report.
73. All complaints will be initially assessed by a designated Ofsted representative and early contact will be made in order to resolve any complaints without delay. Where this is not possible, complaints will be investigated in accordance with Ofsted's published complaints procedure. The complaints procedure, which sets out how providers or users can complain about their inspection and what will happen to their complaint, is available at:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070080.
74. Complaints should be made in writing (including by email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) to:

David Williams
Ofsted National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Further information

75. We hope that you find this document useful in helping you prepare for your inspection. If you have any queries about your inspection, please discuss them with your lead inspector when they contact you.
76. If you have any other general queries about the inspections of safeguarding or looked after children, please contact Sue Leaver on 020 7421 6666 or sue.leaver@ofsted.gov.uk.