

# The unannounced inspection subsequent actions and implications

## **Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board and Children's Trust 23 November 2009**



# Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment



## The inspectors spent one day visiting three sites:

- Mansfield and Ashfield Reception and Assessment
- Gedling and Rushcliffe R & A
- Notts Connect

## Strengths:

- Staff and managers committed to improvement
- A strategic plan is in place to address areas of weakness



# Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment



## Areas for development:

- Arrangements at Notts Connect
- Prioritisation of work
- Thresholds for referral
- High caseloads
- Performance management information
- Auditing of case files
- Supervision



# Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment



## Areas for priority action:

### **ONE - Response to the child protection referrals:**

- Premature closure of referrals
- Adherence to timescales
- Analysis of risk
- Incomplete records
- Experience of staff completing section 47 investigations
- Child protection strategy discussions or assessments

### **TWO - Decision making about referrals**



# Actions taken since inspection



## Operational:

- Audit of cases across reception and assessment teams
- Additional management and staffing capacity in Mansfield and Ashfield
- Twilight shift in Mansfield and Ashfield
- Urgent work to recruit additional staff and deploy additional resource authorised by Cabinet
- Urgent work on policies in respect of workload, quality assurance and performance management
- Use of external consultants
- A review of the Notts Connect pilot



# Actions taken since inspection



## Strategic:

### **Safeguarding and looked after children improvement programme**

- Encompasses safeguarding activity and arrangements for looked after children across children's services, County Council and the Children's Trust
- 18 individual projects
- Reporting to elected members, safeguarding board and children's trust
- Initial period of one year, subject to further consideration



# Inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services



## **Two inspection programmes to replace the JAR:**

- An annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment
- **At least one set of inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services during the three years following April 2009 (around 50 a year)**

The latter can be triggered by the former



## Inspection of safeguarding: Evidence Base

- The Ofsted performance profile
- Outcomes from regulatory and inspection activity including notifications, serious case reviews and complaints
- Document review
- Performance management, quality assurance and workforce data
- Meetings with front line staff, managers, partner agencies and stakeholders
- User views
- Case file scrutiny and discussion
- Surveys of views of users, staff and stakeholders



# Inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services:

## Timeline of Activity

Day 1	Notification by e-mail to DCS
Day 2	Deadline to send documents to Ofsted/ agree set up meeting
Day 3 to 10	Surveys of Looked After Children/ Staff undertaken
Day 4	8 case files identified for audit
Day 5	Inspectors' set up meeting (briefing visit)
Day 6 to 10	LA case files audit
Day 6	Indicative timetable received
Day 8	Lead Inspector on site and identification of HR files
Day 11	Twice weekly Keep In Touch meetings established
Day 11 to 20	Fieldwork – around 80 interviews/ meetings/ site visits
Day 15	Interim feedback received on week 1
Day 20	Provisional feedback received
Day 21 to 25	Report writing and QA process for Ofsted
Day 26 to 31	LA checks report for accuracy
Day 36	Final report to LA
Day 40	Publication on Ofsted Website



## Inspection of safeguarding: Scope

- Impact on outcomes for children
- How well safeguarding is prioritised
- Whether child welfare concerns are identified and responded to by relevant agencies
- The extent to which agencies discharge their responsibility to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children



# Inspections of looked after children services: Scope



- Outcomes achieved
- Impact of services
- Quality of decision making
- Quality of care planning, review and support
- Placement stability
- Safeguarding
- Access to and attendance at schools
- Support for families and carers
- Corporate parenting
- Leaving Care



# Inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services



## Threads emerging from early inspections are:

- Relationship between Children's Trust Board and Safeguarding Board (and partners' ownership)
- Commitment shown by elected members
- Knowing your weaknesses is not enough to avoid an "inadequate" grade



# Inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services



## **Actions taken to respond to Inspection:**

Small project team set up alongside the Safeguarding Improvement Programme to co-ordinate:

- suite of self-assessments
- preparation for interviews/focus groups
- update of our progress since JAR
- auditing of case files
- the production of the documentation
- communication strategy; staff, partners and stakeholders (including surveys required by inspectors).

