



## One minute guide



# Ofsted Inspections

Date: July 2024

Version: 2

From January 2018, Ofsted adopted a new framework for inspecting local authority services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers.

### Ofsted's 'Key Lines of Enquiry' for this year are:

- Placement sufficiency
- Workforce capacity and planning
- Impact and response to regulation
- Safeguarding children not attending school
- Planning around 'Stable homes, built on love' reforms

## What is the Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Inspection System?

Ofsted describes the ILACS approach as a whole system of inspection which aims to apply a proportionate and risk-based approach. The system includes:

- Local authorities share an annual self-evaluation of the quality and impact of social work practice.
- Local authorities have an annual engagement meeting between a regional Ofsted representative where they review the self-assessment together.
- Data and information is shared.
- Focused visits that look at a specific area of service or cohort of children. Link to the last one in Nottinghamshire [26 to 27 April 2022](#).
- Inspections - standard inspections for local authorities judged to require improvement or short inspections for local authorities judged to be good or outstanding. Link to the last one in Nottinghamshire [20 to 24 May 2024](#).

Inspections will usually take place between six months before and six months after the three-year anniversary of the previous inspection which in Nottinghamshire was 2024.

**How are inspections carried out?** The inspections are unannounced and begin when the Lead Inspector makes a phone call to the Director of Children's Services to say that inspectors will be on site the following Monday. Following the call, the local authority shares data on children, information about audits, and performance and management information which inspectors review offsite before actually coming to visit the authority. Usually there will then be four social care inspectors who come onsite over a one-, or two-week period.

## What do the inspectors do?

Almost all inspection evidence is gathered by looking at individual children and young people's experiences, largely through meeting with practitioners and reading electronic records. Inspectors want to fully understand the work practitioners plan and do with children and families and the impact of this.

Where possible, inspectors will talk to children and young people (although these discussions will not always be fact to face). Inspectors will be interested in hearing how children's rights are considered, about their experiences help, protection and care and whether their experiences match with our approach and practice standards. Our Nottinghamshire Approach and Help, Protection and Care - Practice standards describe how we will work with children, young people and families.

When talking to social workers and lead practitioners, inspectors will ask about their experiences such as: the quality and impact of supervision, how they are helped to strengthen families and minimise risk, workload, and availability, quality and impact of training and development.

In addition, inspectors may meet with a group of foster carers - either an established group or a group identified through an open invitation to meet the inspection team.

## What can social workers, lead practitioners and practice supervisors do to prepare?

It is important to see this as an opportunity to celebrate the good work we do in Nottinghamshire. Ensure you celebrate and share positive outcomes for children in your teams, practice talking about what you are proud of in supervisions and use group reflective supervision to share and learn together what is working. An external auditor has been helping to prepare practitioners by offering a 'dry run' of the inspection. It is also advisable to familiarise yourself with the Help, Protection and Care - Practice standards and Our Nottinghamshire Approach.

For more information, the framework, Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS), is available from the Ofsted website.

## Key contact/s

Name: Diana Bentley, Principal Social Worker

Email: [diana.bentley@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:diana.bentley@nottsc.gov.uk)



**Nottinghamshire  
County Council**

**W** [nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://nottinghamshire.gov.uk)

**E** [cfsstrengthsbasedpractice@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:cfsstrengthsbasedpractice@nottsc.gov.uk)



[facebook.com/nottinghamshire](https://facebook.com/nottinghamshire)



[@NottsCC](https://twitter.com/NottsCC)