

# NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: [Click here and type the date]

Issue No: /18

Issued by: [Click here and type your name and number]

Version: 0.1

## **OFSTED INSPECTION**

Wokingham Borough's Children's Social Care Services were subject to Ofsted Inspection under the new "ILACS" framework (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) last month.

The judgement of overall effectiveness is "Requires Improvement to be Good" which the Local Authority considers to be a fair and accurate appraisal of its current position.

Last Summer, Wokingham Children's Social Care experienced a rapid rise in demand for services, which, combined with instability at the leadership level, and a high turnover of Social Care staff, led to a deterioration in the quality of services for children.

This is no longer the case. Steps have been taken by a new senior leadership team to establish stability and improve services. This Ofsted Report confirms Children's Services approach to improvement is on track. Prior to the inspection Children's Services had already developed a Continuous Improvement Plan that is being delivered over the next 2 to 3 years with an aspiration of consolidating good practice and for this to be reflected in the outcome of the next Ofsted inspection."

Ofsted report that senior leaders are doing everything they can to make things better for children and young people. They and their staff are working very hard to try to make sure that children and young people get a good service. When children are in danger, the local authority and its partners work well together to protect them.

**-MORE-**

Notable improvements and areas of good practice acknowledged in the report are:

- “The duty, triage and assessment (DTA) team is more effective than it was at the time of Ofsted’s focussed visit in October 2018.”
- “Two-way communication with the emergency duty team has improved since the focussed visit. This is helping to ensure an effective response to children in need of help and protection outside of normal office hours.”
- “Prompt action is taken to protect children who are at immediate risk of significant harm. Strategy meetings are better managed and recorded now than at the time of the focussed visit.”
- “Children and young people have ready access to high-quality advocacy support.”
- “Children who go missing from home or care are routinely offered good-quality return home interviews.”
- “When children come into care, the local authority’s commitment to helping them achieve permanence is tangible.”
- “Care planning is thoughtful and creative.”
- “Good attention is paid to children’s physical health and emotional wellbeing, irrespective of whether the child or young person is living in Wokingham or out of area.”
- “Social workers are particularly good at not letting go of, and keeping open channels of communication with, parents and families, even when there are no plans for children to return to live with them.”
- “Independent reviewing officers (IROs) are child-centred and conscientious.”
- “Foster carers talk positively about the quality and responsiveness of the support they receive from their supervising social workers.”
- “Since her appointment in November last year, the director of children’s services (DCS) has succeeded in establishing a permanent senior management team in children’s social care.”
- “There are clear signs that the action taken by senior leaders is beginning to have an impact.”
- “The local authority is making progress in developing a comprehensive performance culture.”
- “Poor performance is no longer tolerated in the way it might have been a year ago.”
- “Senior leaders have succeeded in reducing the size of social workers’ caseloads”.
- “Staff, including agency staff, have good access to training.”
- “Newly qualified staff are well supported during their assisted and supported year in employment... they value the support, supervision and training they receive.”

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However, although the report cites the “renewed optimism among managers and staff” and gives many examples of improvement and positive, effective work with children and families, the Local Authority accepts that the quality of work is “still too variable”.

Director of children’s services Carol Cammiss said: “Our relentless focus must be on improving outcomes for all children and young people who need our help. Whilst I am pleased that the progress we have made in the last few months has been acknowledged, and some of the excellent work with children and families has been recognised, we are committed to improving all our services sustainably so that no children miss out on the support they deserve. The inspection process has been a very useful one which has confirmed our own assessment of areas needing improvement. We must now continue to focus on what matters for children and young people.”

Executive member for children’s services Cllr Ullakarin Clark said: “I welcome this inspection report, which validates and strengthens our understanding of service improvement priorities. I am very grateful that we have a team of dedicated staff who work so hard to improve the lives of our children and young people, and look forward to seeing continued improvements in our services.”

View the full [Ofsted ILACs Report for Wokingham](#)

**- ENDS -**

**Further information:**

**1. More from Cllr Clark on 07970 384 419**