

Inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS)

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A system not a programme of inspections

- annual self-evaluation of social work practice
- an annual conversation with each local authority (LA)
- focused visits on a potential area of improvement or strength
- standard or short inspection of each LA, depending on what we know (once in a three year period)
- inadequate LAs continue to receive quarterly monitoring and a re-inspection through the SIF

An inspection system

- ILACS is a system, each feature informs how the other works
- This means more frequent engagement between Ofsted inspectors and LAs (not always as part of an inspection)
- We want to help 'catch LAs before they fall' – we want to help LAs avoid becoming inadequate
- We don't want to wait until inspection to find this has happened
- More frequent contact also helps us to make inspection more efficient and less burdensome

Local authority contact with Ofsted

Inadequate local authority	Requires improvement to be good local authority	Good or outstanding local authority
<p>Quarterly monitoring visits</p> <p>SIF or post-monitoring SIF</p> <p>Annual conversation</p> <p>Shared self-evaluation</p>	<p>Standard inspection (once in a three year period)</p> <p>Up to two focused visits in between inspections</p> <p>Possible JTAI (would replace a focused visit)</p> <p>Annual conversation</p> <p>Shared self-evaluation</p>	<p>Short inspection (once in a three year period)</p> <p>Up to two focused visits in between inspections</p> <p>Possible JTAI (would replace a focused visit)</p> <p>Annual conversation</p> <p>Shared self-evaluation</p>

Activity outside of inspection

Self-evaluation and annual engagement



Benefits

- Supports a more proportionate approach to inspection:
 - help Ofsted to make sure that focused visits look at the things that are most useful, for us and the LA
 - help inspectors create relevant lines of enquiry for inspections
 - help Ofsted decide on the best time for a visit/inspections
- Provides Ofsted with evidence that leaders have a grip on social work practice
- If an LA identifies weaknesses and we can see credible, clear, appropriate plans for action, this will be seen as a strength in leadership, not a weakness.

Self-evaluation

- We have worked with the ADCS, SOLACE and LGA to devise guidance
- No set format, but should be brief and answer three questions:
 - What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice with children and families in your authority?
 - How do you know it?
 - What are your plans to maintain or improve practice?
- Should draw on existing documents and activity
- Should reflect business as usual, not created for inspection

Annual engagement meeting

- Discuss self-evaluation, data and intelligence.
- Honest and open conversation
- Consider any future focused visit and how this might support the LA's improvement plans
- No published 'outcome' – Ofsted will write to the DCS summarising the discussion
- Ideally linked to self-evaluation – this does not have to be the same time each year.
- May be part of another meeting, but should allow sufficient time to discuss children's social care

Focused visits



Focused visit scope

- Will be of a particular area of service or cohort of children
- We will usually have discussed the scope and information request with the LA at their annual engagement
- The criteria and information requested will be a 'sub-set' of what appears in the framework
- We may adjust the criteria or information request to reflect local context and the specific scope
- We will use focused visits to evaluate and highlight good practice and areas of concern

Judgements and report

- No graded judgments
- Narrative letter:
 - Strengths
 - Areas for improvement
- If we identify serious concerns, we will give unequivocal areas for priority action
- Will inform our decision about when to inspect and whether to use a standard or short inspection

Standard and short inspections



Inspector deployment

- Small teams of inspectors working closely together inspect more efficiently:
 - they spend less time reporting their findings to one another
 - all inspectors know and understand findings from across the inspection
 - they can challenge one another more effectively, closing lines of enquiry and arriving at robust judgements quickly

Onsite activity

- Inspectors will spend most of their time looking at case files with social workers
- They will talk to managers if their findings indicate a strength or concern that they need to triangulate further
- They will hold regular keep-in-touch (KIT) meetings with the DCS. However.....
-they may ask the DCS to meet inspectors at the office where they are inspecting that day

Managing expectations

- To make a proportionate programme work, inspectors must target their activity carefully
- They will not be able to speak with everyone. They will focus on key lines of enquiry and where the emerging findings take them
- Onsite activity will not routinely include set-piece meetings with the same list of people that happens on a SIF
- Inspectors will prioritise activities that tell them about the quality of social work practice with children and families

Difference between a standard and a short

- A short inspection is not a standard squeezed into less time
- Short inspections happen where an LA is good or outstanding and we have no reason to believe they have declined
- There is an assumption the LA remains at least good
- Inspectors will look at whether:
 - The quality of practice has improved, been maintained or deteriorated
 - The authority's self-evaluation is accurate and can be relied on

Inspection judgements

Overall judgement		
<p>Key judgement: The impact of leadership on social work practice with children and families</p>	<p>Key judgement: The experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection</p>	<p>Key judgement: The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers</p>
<p>Narrative: How good leaders are at creating an environment where social work can flourish</p>	<p>Narrative Early help Children in need Children on a child protection plan</p>	<p>Narrative How well permanence is achieved (including adoption) Care leavers Making good decisions</p>

- Overall and key judgements made on our four-point scale: outstanding, good requires improvement to be good, inadequate

Next steps



Next:

- Starting to contact LAs about self-evaluation and annual engagement opportunities
- By end of November – publish the framework and guidance
- January – ‘launch’ events for LAs. Details tbc, but probably:
 - Mon 15 January (pm) and Friday 19 January (am) in Leeds
 - Mon 22 January (pm) and Friday 26 January (am) in London
- January – first inspections announced

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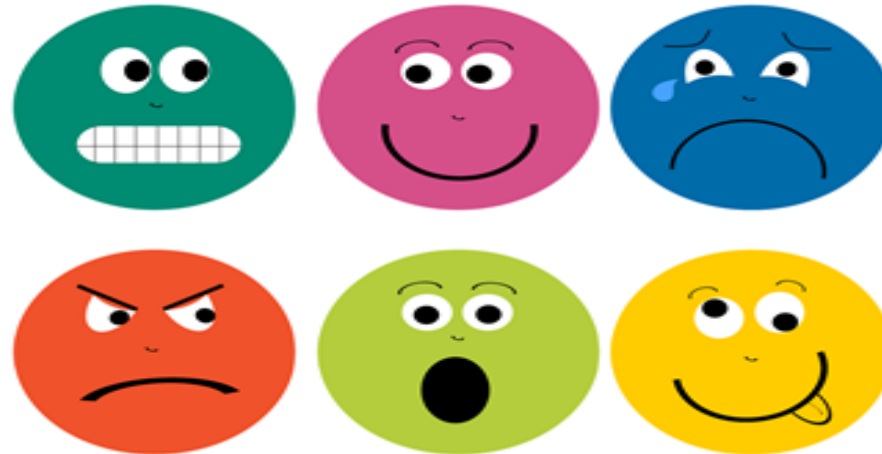
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Ofsted Pilot Inspection 2017

Helen Lincoln
Executive Director, Children and Families (DCS)
August 2017



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Voting for Christmas? We did!



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Areas of Focus.... What we found

They linked to our Self Evaluation !!!

- New OFSTED obsession PERMANENCY the not being in care version ... SGO adoption reunification
- Proportionate child protection work
- CSE and missing children continued spotlight into the system
- Newish areas ... gangs
- Pre-proceedings work
- SEND
- Fostering, adoption services and permanence
- And authority-specific issues from the inspection findings, e.g.:
 - Rate of reunification of children in care with their families
- The four inspectors managed to gain a very thorough overview



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Top Ten Tips

1. LOVELY good sensible case file audit and team effectiveness audit which you are listening to ..good bad and ugly
2. Collect key documents to evidence performance an action to address poor performance over the year .. You can use them – enables a quick response to issues raised in KIT meetings
3. Engage staff – the inspectors will talk to them (one social worker had to go through 19 cases) –
Get them to identify their three best cases (the inspectors will talk about others, but workers can refocus them on these three)
4. Team Folders – Who is in the team, what the team does, performance data, minutes of team meetings etc.
5. The Self-Evaluation & DCS presentation should be honest –
they reflect how well you know your service

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6. Develop a feedback system, so you know what inspectors are looking at and thinking - close issues down during KIT meetings... we had a Whatsapp group
7. Have your data analyst(s) on hand in the inspection office of the day: not all queries can be answered by your MI reports... like last 10 EDS contacts
8. Plan when your senior managers/key staff are available, so you can respond to queries quickly – especially on Thursday pm during the one-week inspection
9. Make sure you have someone to take notes in KIT meetings, and especially at the feedback – our feedback went to 4 pages of bullet-points – so nothing is missed. Decide what you need to upload to HUDDLE.
10. Inspections are hard work, and not just for you, so think about recognise it; and celebrate your (inevitable) success!

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Our Learning and Feedback

- A one week inspection happens very quickly
- There is a clear assumption (one week inspection) that Inspectors will find good practice
- We are not in control of the messages – frontline staff are – so make sure self-evaluation reflects reality; and help them to get the right messages across
- Be prepared to answer queries, efficiently, and close down lines of enquiry, quickly, by using HUDDLE uploads
- There will be some surprises, for us examples included:
 - consistency of pre-proceedings work
 - how much time it took to prepare the Annexe A report on missing children
 - Lack of tenacity on keeping in touch with care leavers
 - Loss of focus on culture for White British children and
 - SGOs are not always considered as a possible permanence option

- They liked how:
 - clearly the voice of children, and fathers came across
 - that plans were strengths-based, child-friendly and focussed on the child's needs (this the fed back was 'unique')
 - we conduct case audits and agreed with our findings: the second auditor, social workers' reflection sheet, and parental feedback, were particularly helpful
 - we use research to inform service delivery: e.g. therapeutic fostering and D-Bit
 - there was cross-party support for Corporate Parenting
 - we appoint CINROs in complex CIN cases – and how this engages partner agencies
 - we have a Children & Families Hub, rather than a MASH, given our size
 - We had spotted issues in our system and were tackling them

What did we get out of it?



- A key role in developing the new arrangements
- An unpublished report
- A proper testing of our OFSTED readiness
- We had been a previous pilot site and got a lot out of it !!!!

Insight and learning into how we operate

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Our Outcomes

Overall effectiveness

Good

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection

Good

The experiences and progress of children looked after and care leavers and achieving permanence

Good

The impact of leaders on practice with children and Families

Outstanding



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Coffee

cannot fix this kind of tired.

We Know Memes

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Essex County Council

Enfield Short Inspection Pilot April 2017

Anne Stoker
Assistant Director
Children's Social Care

www.enfield.gov.uk

Striving for excellence



Monday Phone Call !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! and so it begins.

Full on week with: **Notice Week**

- SEF
- Annex A data requirements
- Audit information
- Reports
- Practical arrangements
- Presumption from inspectors that we are still good

Top Tips

- Have your SEF ready. Be clear and succinct they expect you to know where you are at.
- Annex A – do a trial run.
- Analyse the data from your trial run and use this to inform/update your SEF.

Top tips

- Have a list of all the audits you have completed including basic demographic information, theme of the audit, dates completed etc.
- Analyse the impact and evidence there has been a change in practice through the audit process
- Start collating reports, don't go overboard.

Inspection week

- Four inspectors arrive on Monday lunch-time and leave Friday before lunch.
- Brief introductory meeting with DCS who sets the scene. Inspectors wanted to know how well the DCS knew his business, testing out his knowledge and leadership.
- No planned focus groups during the inspection.

- ## Order of play
- LAC/LC Monday pm/Tuesday am
 - Fostering/Adoption Tuesday am
 - JSDC Tuesday pm two inspectors
 - CiN Tuesday pm two inspectors Wednesday four inspectors
 - SPOE Thursday am four inspectors pm two inspectors
 - Early Help Thursday afternoon two inspectors

When satisfied with what they had seen they moved on. The time spent with services

varied slightly from the original plan.

What did the inspectors do?

- KIT meeting every morning with DCS and AD with lead inspector and one other
- Spent all of their time with front-line staff, talking to them sitting with them and going through files
- No planned visits or observations
- Observed a case conference and had discussions with parents
- Telephone discussion with prospective adopter
- Observed other meetings e.g. legal planning meeting and training workshop with front-line students.

Partnership working

- Expected to be able to provide evidence through the file with discussions with staff.
- Did not meet with lead member or ESCB chair.
- Some staff found this difficult, be prepared, as partners ask when will they want to talk to us?
- Lead inspector did spend half an hour with CEx at request of Cex.

Feedback from staff

- Intense! Might have been short but full on.
- Office felt full of inspectors who stopped you and spoke with you as and when.
- Heads of Service had a brief feedback session prior to the inspectors moving on from their respective sites. This was welcomed.

Friday Feedback meeting

- We had DCS, AD, Heads of Service and Service Managers present.
- Challenge from our HoS/SM asking inspectors to evidence further how they came to their initial judgements.

Conclusions

- More proportionate than a SIF.
- The presumption of “Good” facilitated constructive and open dialogue between the L.A and the inspection team
- Still a struggle to produce all the information required and inspectors didn’t have time to read a lot of it.

Conclusions

- Inspection focussed on the quality of casework, decision-making and improved outcomes.
- Reduced focus upon compliance but still an issue.
- Dificult for inspectors to properly triangulate evidence, may result in temptation to maintain the status quo on judgements.