

Children's Services: Latest visit from Ofsted An update on our progress

Latest monitoring visit from Ofsted –September 2022

On 21st and 22nd September 2022 Ofsted undertook their fifth monitoring visit with a focus on our services for disabled children. The report has been published today and you can view it on the Ofsted website.

We are very pleased to receive our monitoring visit feedback, which identifies that senior leaders have the foundations in place to support improvement and are aware of the challenges faced for disabled children and their families. The inspectors acknowledged the specific improvement plan for the 0-25 service. They highlighted some progress against this plan including an increase in staffing capacity, and a training programme to support workers to develop knowledge about child protection and court work.

Inspectors found committed social workers in the 0-25 service and saw that those children who have had their worker for a consistent period have developed strong and positive relationships. The inspectors saw evidence of some creative direct work with disabled children although noted this is not yet consistent.

The report sets out several areas where we must concentrate our improvement efforts in the coming months to ensure the best quality service for our children in Medway.

Inspectors identified challenges around placement sufficiency for children in care, including children who are being placed out of area. The present offer of support services is not sufficient to meet the current needs of Medway's disabled children or their families. They noted that work has been identified by senior leaders to respond to this however, it is too early to have a measurable impact. Inspectors highlighted a need to strengthen transition planning for young people in preparation for moving into adult services. Recruitment and retention of social workers will continue to be a priority. These issues are addressed in our service improvement plan and we will continue to work on this as we move through the year.

We anticipate that the next monitoring visit will be in held in early 2023, with a focus on our front door and services for vulnerable adolescents. A full re-inspection is expected in spring/summer 2023.