

Ofsted
West Midlands
The Axis
10 Holliday St,
Birmingham B1 1TF

T 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted

Direct T add number
Direct F add number
name@ofsted.gov.uk

23 July 2018

Herefordshire Council
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0LE

To the children and young people in Herefordshire County Council

Inspection of children's services

In June, Ofsted inspectors visited your area. They looked at children and young people's experiences of the help, protection and care given to them by workers at the local authority. They also looked at what leaders at the local authority do to make these services better.

We have asked the workers at the local authority to share this letter with you. It tells you the main things that inspectors found. There is a more detailed report on our website that you can read if you want to.

What grades did inspectors give the local authority

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement

What did the inspectors find

- Managers need to have better oversight of the decisions that are made for children and to make sure they are getting the right help at the right time.
- Staff are trying to help children and families when there are problems at home, but sometimes this can take too long. Children and families sometimes do not get the support they need .
- Plans for children are not always clear about what needs to change to make things better and what will happen if they don't. Sometimes it takes too long for things to get better. Children do not always have their wishes and views listened to as part of the plan. Managers know this needs to get better.
- When children are at risk of being hurt or harmed, social workers and police work hard to make children safe and get them the support they need.
- When children are not safe living with their parents, social workers help to find good homes with other family members or foster carers. Parents continue to be helped by social workers, and if things get better and it is safe for children to go home, social workers will carry on supporting children and making sure everything is going well.
- Children that need permanent new families are well supported. They are often able to live with their brothers and sisters, and sometimes are still able to see other family members if they want to and it is safe for them.
- There is a really good Children in Care Council that represents all children in care and care leavers. These are children that tell workers about what it's like to be in care and help things improve. They are working with managers, social workers and independent reviewing officers to make meetings better and to make sure children's wishes are heard.

Yours sincerely

Pauline Higham
Lead inspector