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To the children and young people in Croydon

Inspection of children’s services

In October 2024, 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	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Good
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

What did the inspectors find

- Senior leaders have worked hard to improve services for children and families since the previous inspection in 2020. Services have improved for children in care and care leavers, and they are now good. Senior leaders know that they still have more work to do to make sure that children in need of help and protection also receive a consistently good service.
- There are lots of different services in Croydon that help families when difficulties arise. Some children though have to wait a little while before they get the help that they need. Senior leaders have employed more staff to prevent this happening and make sure that children receive the right help at the right time.
- When children are at risk of harm, social workers act quickly to make sure that they are made safe. Social workers complete good assessments that help them plan how they can make children's lives better. For most children, their lives do get better. For a few children though, it takes too long before their lives improve.
- If children cannot remain safely living at home with their parents, social workers work very hard to find a family member or friend who can look after them and keep them safe. When it is not possible for children to live with family members or friends, other arrangements are made so that children have a safe, permanent home. Most children in care live in foster carer, where they are happy and well cared for. Some remain living with their foster carers after they turn 18. Some younger children achieve safety and stability by being adopted.
- There are not enough homes for all children in care, and this means that for a small number of children they are living in unregistered children's homes while a more suitable place to live is being found.
- Some children have experienced too many changes in social worker. Children told inspectors how frustrating they have found this. In response, leaders have successfully appointed more permanent social workers to prevent this happening in the future.
- When children leave care they continue to receive good help and support from their social workers or personal advisers for as long as they need this. Social workers and personal advisers help care leavers to follow their dreams and have successful futures.
- There are not currently enough homes for care leavers to live in in Croydon. This means that some care leavers live in temporary accommodation for longer than they would like before securing their own home. Senior leaders are working closely with the housing department to increase affordable accommodation options for care leavers.
- Senior leaders listen to the views of children and young people. Appointed care experienced ambassadors have been instrumental in service improvements and

developments, including the revision and improvement of the care leavers local offer.

Yours faithfully

Christine Kennet

Lead inspector
His Majesty's Inspector