

To all members of ISCB, CLP and LSCB

Safeguarding Update

You will be aware of the revisions to the Ofsted inspection framework for children's services from the various communications that have been produced nationally and recent updates at local meetings.

In particular, briefings for staff across children's services are underway, and I wrote to ISCB on 3 June 2009 about the new inspection framework. As agreed at the April Board meeting I have established a DCS Safeguarding Task Group. A presentation about the framework and how it will work in practice has been put together by Jane Maxwell and shared at various meetings, including ISCB. A Comprehensive Area Assessment steering group, with a range of subgroups, has been set up, led by Jane Maxwell, to oversee inspection and improvement preparation.

I wanted to let you know that we have now had an unannounced inspection in Leeds. Two Ofsted inspectors came to Leeds on 21 and 22 July 2009 and visited Moresdale Lane and White Rose House offices to review the arrangements for contact, assessment and referrals. The inspection letter is likely to be published around 19 August 2009. The inspection feedback so far has highlighted some priority action areas that mean we need to accelerate our collective activities to improve safeguarding in the city as set out in the CYPP.

We now need to refocus around the inspection framework and our preparation for the announced inspection of looked after children and safeguarding. Given that we were early in the programme of unannounced inspections, we must expect an announced inspection later this year, as Ofsted launches its programme of announced inspections. For that reason, I am advising that we prepare for an announced inspection in the autumn term. This will need some re-prioritisation of work amongst all partners through the summer and I am confident I can rely on your understanding and cooperation in these matters.

The implications will be more formally set out in the key children's trust meetings (ISCB; CLP; LSCB) taking place in late August early September. Reports into those meetings will consider the latest data around the overall inspection framework, the implications of the unannounced inspection and the associated action planning and acceleration of work already in progress to plan for our announced inspection. This will include identifying how partner representatives need to support and participate in those preparations. Further communication to keep you up to date will follow and information will be available on the Children Leeds website.

I am asking all partners to prioritise this work, not just because we are being inspected on our collective endeavours and what they achieve for our most vulnerable children and young people, but because it is the right thing to do.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Rosemary k Archer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Rosemary Archer
Director of Children's Services Unit