



**Ofsted: “Protecting Disabled Children: thematic Inspection”
(August 2012)**

Solihull LSCB: Factsheet for Practitioners

Ofsted undertook a thematic inspection to evaluate the effectiveness of work to protect disabled children and young people at all stages from early support to the identification and response to child protection concerns. This was a thematic report based upon findings from all inspections undertaken in 12 local authorities across England. Ofsted considered how well local authorities and Local Safeguarding Children Boards evaluated the impact of work done across agencies and by professionals to ensure the effective protection of disabled children and young people

Key Findings

It is recognised that disabled children are overly represented than non disabled children in being subject of child protection plan and that there are added dimensions and risk of harm for children with disabilities based upon

- Disabled children being more dependent upon parents, or adults, for their day to day care
- For accessing services that they need to ensure their health needs are met
- For ensuring they are living in a safe environment

The impact of neglect on disabled children is therefore more significant and where children’s need were being addressed through a child protection plan due to neglect they had often had significant previous support for a long period of time

The impact of poor parenting for these children was often not seen and the focus on the child was lost.

These are the summary findings

- Most disabled children were recorded to be living with parents or carers who were well motivated to provide good care for them. Parents recognised the need for additional support that their children had. When parents and carers were motivated it was noted that support was provided at an early stage. Where concerns for the child’s welfare arose these were

tackled well, ensuring wellbeing did not suffer and the child's safety was not compromised.

- It is apparent that timely referrals were made to children's social care by a wide range of professionals and staff. However it did not appear that routine analysis took place relating to whether referrals in respect of disabled children reflected the local proportion of disabled children and young people.
- Children in need work was not always well coordinated, some plans were not detailed or focused, and it was noticeable that the multi-agency was not always part of plans. This lack of rigor in management of children in need plans increased the likelihood of the future need for child protection concerns.
- When child protection concerns in respect of neglect were not "clear-cut" there were delays in identifying thresholds. Assessments did not always identify and analyse key risk factors, including previous concerns.
- When children were made subject of Child Protection Plans it was noted there was a marked improvement in their outcomes as action was apparently more effective. However many CP plans did not have clearly identified outcomes.
- The extent to which the views, wishes and feelings of disabled children were captured and recorded varied. It was identified that children with communication difficulties were not always spoken to directly about safeguarding concerns that they were experiencing, advocacy was rarely considered or used in such circumstances.
- Ofsted noted that many LSCB's and Local Authorities were not in a position to assess the quality of work to protect disabled children. Systems appeared not well established to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of work to ensure child protection.