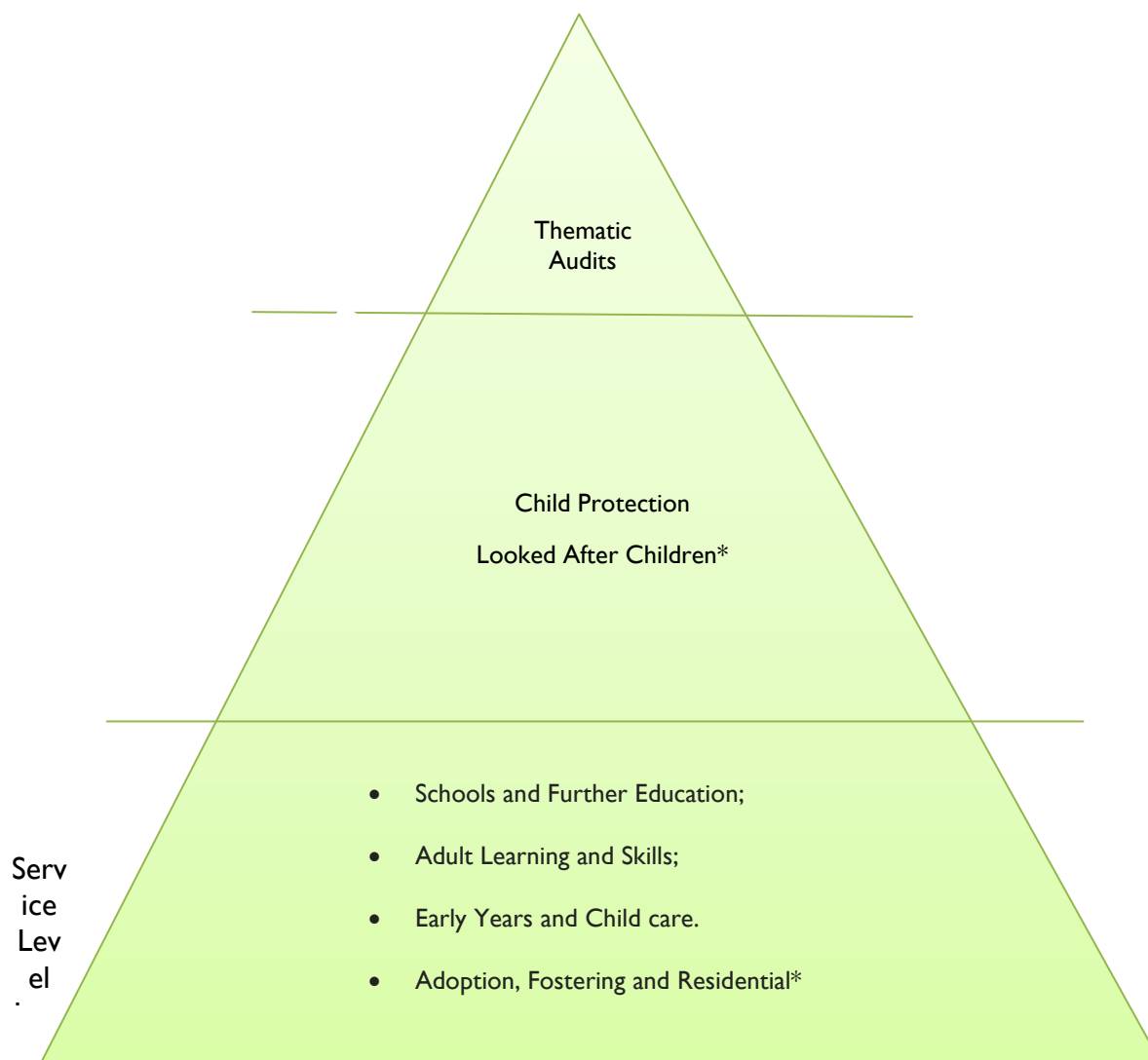


**OFSTED INSPECTION OF LA
ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**



INTRODUCTION

New arrangements for unannounced inspections of child protection arrangements came into effect on May 1st 2012 as one of a range of inspection types. It replaces part of the former announced Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection.



* At present, adoption, fostering and residential settings are subject to on-going separate inspection. Ofsted plan to combine outstanding elements from announced Safeguarding and Looked After Children services with adoption and fostering elements into a single Looked After Children inspection. Consultation is expected to start in June 2012 with implementation from April 2013.

The unannounced inspection will consider how effectively the local authority leads partnership working, and how effectively local services contribute to the protection of children and young people.

This is an interim framework pending introduction of a joint framework during 2013/4 to incorporate:

- the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted),
- the Care Quality Commission,
- Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary,
- and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (with, where appropriate, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons)

How likely are we to be inspected?	<p>Not absolutely clear, not all authorities will be inspected during this interim period. Ofsted are planning to introduce another new regime from 2013 and will only be testing a sample of authorities.</p> <p>The selection of local authorities for inspection will take account of: previous inspection outcomes; information from other sources, such as whistleblowing referrals, complaints, and serious case reviews; and any other relevant information.</p> <p>Based on this there is a low – medium risk that we will be inspected. However, preparations are well underway to ensure we are inspection ready regardless.</p>
How much notice will there be?	All inspections will be unannounced. The local authority will be notified on day one of the inspection (normally a Monday) that the lead inspector will be arriving on site that day to begin the inspection
How long will inspectors be on-site?	The full inspection will be contained within a two-week period.
How will the inspection be organised?	<p>The lead inspector will arrive on day one to begin the inspection.</p> <p>On day two, two additional inspectors arrive on site to focus on the point at which the child is referred to children’s social care because they are believed to be at risk of, or actually suffering, harm. During this first part of the inspection, inspectors will evaluate: the timeliness and management of referrals; the effectiveness of assessment and risk management; the provision of immediate help where required; the extent of focus on the child or young person’s needs; and the effectiveness of multi-agency work at the point of, and immediately following, referral.</p> <p>The lead inspector will then (with the support of an extra two inspectors) focus on all other aspects of the child’s journey.</p>
What is the scope of the inspection?	<p>The inspection will consider key aspects of a child’s journey through the child protection system, focusing on the experiences of the child or young person, and the effectiveness of the help and protection that they are offered.</p> <p>The inspection will focus on the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements: for identifying children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, harm from abuse or neglect; and for the provision of early help where it is needed. It will also consider the effectiveness of the local authority and its partners in protecting these children if the risk remains or intensifies.</p> <p>This includes:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those children and young people identified by other services – such as adult social care, schools, police, health services and children’s centres – as at risk of harm, but who have not yet reached the significant harm threshold (the threshold of ‘suffering or likely to suffer significant harm’), and for whom a preventative service would reduce the likelihood of that risk or harm escalating • those children and young people referred to the local authority, including: those where urgent action has to be taken to protect them; those subject to further assessment; and those subject to child protection enquiries¹ • those who become the subject of a multi-agency child protection plan that sets out the help that will be provided to them and their families to keep them safe and to promote their welfare • those children and young people who are receiving social work services from the local authority where there are significant levels of concern about their safety and welfare, but these have not reached the significant harm threshold • those children and young people who have been assessed as no longer needing a child protection plan, but who may have continuing needs for help and support.
<p>What will the case file analysis involve?</p>	<p>Case file scrutiny and discussion will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which children and young people who may be at risk of, or who are already suffering, harm are identified, assessed and provided with appropriate help and protection • the effectiveness of the help given to children and young people at risk and their families at all stages of their journey: at the point where concerns are first raised; at referral to social care services; through risk assessment, assessment, planning, intervention and review; and, where appropriate, exit from the child protection system • the quality of practice, supervision and the focus on the needs of the child or young person • the quality of planning, management oversight and clear decision making in respect of the needs of children and young people • the extent to which agencies and professionals work together to help and protect children and young people, including the effectiveness of information sharing. <p>In most instances, case file analysis will consist of the following key elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 50 cases will be selected by inspectors. Where available, managers and key workers will be invited to assist inspectors in their analysis of the selected cases. • In a sub-set of the sample, inspectors will seek to meet with children, young people, parents and carers, as appropriate, to seek their views of the effectiveness of the help provided. • Any case file audit activity undertaken by the local authority will be scrutinised and evaluated.
<p>What else will be considered?</p>	<p>The evaluation schedule for the child protection inspection sets out detailed descriptions of the areas covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overall effectiveness, including areas for development

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the effectiveness of the help and protection provided to children, young people, and their families and carers• the quality of practice• leadership and governance. |
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Locally, Joy Howick and Claire Oatway are co-ordinating multi-agency preparation for the new inspection regime. This will ensure that practical and logistical arrangements are in place as well as carrying out a self-assessment against new grade descriptors. Briefings will be scheduled as appropriate.

For more information on the framework:

Ofsted framework: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-inspection-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-protection-of-children>

Evaluation framework: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/inspections-of-arrangements-for-protection-of-children-evaluation-schedule-and-grade-descriptors>