

Looking at how we keep children and young people safe in Denbighshire

A Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements



May 2023

Hello

Care Inspectorate Wales check and inspect services. We make sure services are doing the right things in the right ways. We can take action if they aren't.

Between February and March 2023, we checked how services in Denbighshire keep children safe.

We checked:

- what they do to deal with abuse and neglect
- how they assess, plan and make decisions to keep children safe
- how well leadership and managers work
- how services work together.

Who was involved?

We had help from:

- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
- Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
- Estyn.

We inspected:

- North Wales Police
- Local authority services – children's services, schools and more
- Health services run by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Groups and organisations.

What we did



We held focus groups.



We visited services.



We talked to staff and professionals.



We looked at evidence.



We checked records.



We sent out surveys.



We talked to children, young people and families.



Some of our main findings

The workforce

There are lots of skilled staff and professionals. They know how to keep children and young people safe, and they do a good job.

Recruiting and keeping staff is a challenge. Demand on services is increasing.

Working together

Services and organisations work together well and understand what they must do to keep children safe.

The North Wales Safeguarding Board

The Safeguarding Board is good at sharing information and resources. They arrange training for professionals across Denbighshire.

Child protection conferences

Lots of different professionals from across services and organisations go to these conferences. They share information, raise awareness of how harm affects children's lives and other things.

Schools

Schools across Denbighshire work well with lots of other services to support children.

Leadership

Managers and leaders are positive and support the workforce well. They put children's safety and their needs at the centre of all their work. They work as a team and have clear systems that help keep children and families safe.



Professionals and staff are working together to protect children by:

- sharing information in the right ways
- stepping in early to support children and families
- making sure children at risk get the right care and support plans
- listening to children and young people and involving them in decisions
- making sure information is accurate and up to date
- stopping children getting involved with unsafe people or crime
- reporting if they think a child is at risk of domestic abuse or neglect
- being involved on different panels, groups and forums.

Some of the good points we found

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Keeping children and young people safe is a big priority for the health board.

They:

- tell children's services when they think a child is at risk and why
- make sure information is up to date and shared in the right ways
- have GPs and other staff that understand what they have to do to keep children safe
- make sure Emergency Departments (A&Es) have safeguarding meetings to spot children at risk
- listen to children and young people
- train staff on how to keep vulnerable children and young people safe
- have clear systems that staff know how to use when they think a child is at risk
- make sure children's services know about unborn babies that are at risk of harm
- make sure care experienced children are safe and that staff understand the added risks they face
- go to safeguarding meetings with other services.

The health board has invested in:

- a Safeguarding Team
- Safeguarding Ambassadors that support staff and give advice
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) in hospitals.

**It's everyone's job
to spot dangers and
keep children and
young people safe.**



Year 7 pupils said:

**“We feel safe in school,
we know where to go
for support and we feel
listened to.”**



Schools and education

Schools and education services have a clear vision for keeping pupils safe.

They:

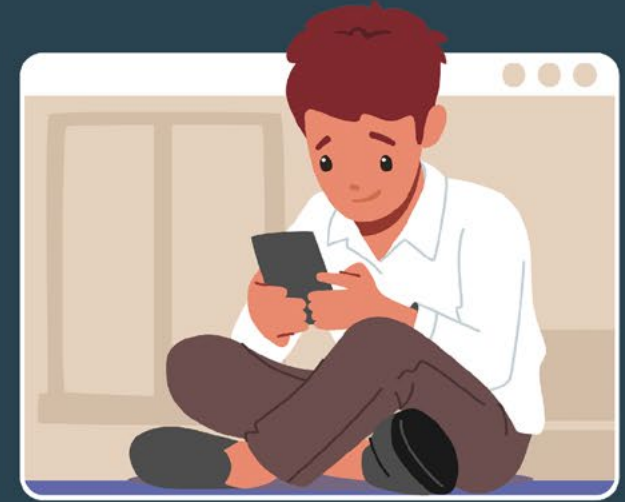
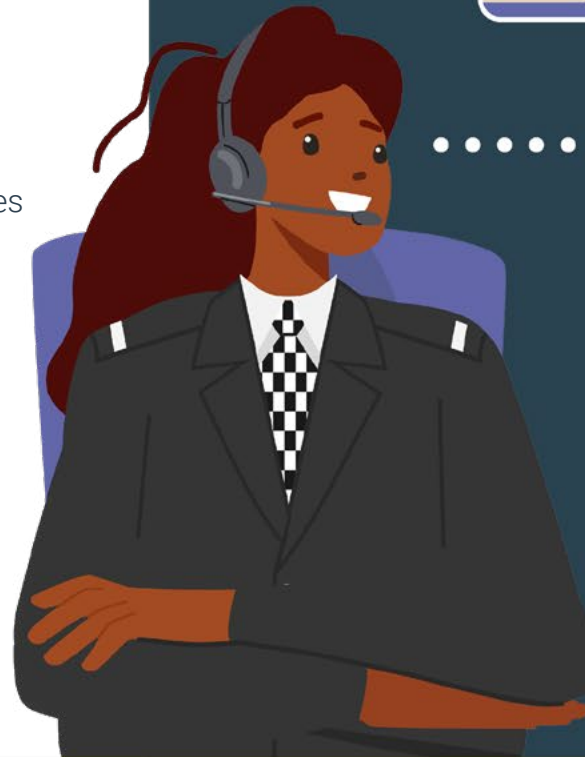
- know how to spot issues quickly and support families
- work well with children’s services
- make sure care experienced children have Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- train staff to understand trauma, behaviours that challenge, and why they happen
- train staff on how to keep all children safe from harm
- work with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) so pupils have support for their well-being and to deal with issues like self-harm
- have professionals to help support pupils’ well-being including Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) and youth workers
- share the right information when a pupil changes school
- have Designated Safeguarding Leads
- have clear systems that teachers and staff know how to use
- involve pupils in planning and decisions
- go to safeguarding meetings with other services.

North Wales Police

The police have good systems in place to keep children and young people safe.

They:

- work well with children's services
- train their staff to spot and report concerns about a child's safety
- have a Central Referral Unit who check records to spot vulnerable children
- have call handlers in the Force Control Room who know how to assess risk and make sure the police get to vulnerable children quickly
- have specially trained staff to spot children at risk of abuse and neglect
- make sure children are kept safe from criminal gangs
- listen to the views of children and make sure what they say is included in reports
- have liaison officers that support schools through the All-Wales Core Liaison Programme
- make sure staff are trained and learn from good practice examples
- go to safeguarding meetings with other services.



It's important to know how to spot children at risk of abuse and neglect.

Young people said communication with social workers was good, they were listened to, and things were explained.



Children's services

Children's services work hard to keep children safe.

They:

- step in early to support children and families
- have weekly meetings about keeping children safe
- work well with schools, the police and other services
- have clear systems that help people report children at risk
- make sure care experienced children are safe
- learn and find new solutions to support children
- let Independent Safeguarding Reviewing Officers check their work
- involve families in planning and decisions
- listen to people's feedback and use it to improve how they work
- actively offer people support in Welsh
- work with Team Around the Family (TAF) and Supporting People
- go to safeguarding meetings with other services.

Children's services have also invested in a new ForMi app so records and plans are live documents that children can get involved with.

The Local Integrated Family Team (LIFT)

LIFT is a team made up of staff from Conwy council, Denbighshire council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. They help families at home and support parents in difficult circumstances.

Making it better for the future

We have set out different ways the health board, the police and services can improve.

Some ways they can improve:

➔ Make sure the right people go to safeguarding meetings.

➔ Share information and communicate better across services.

➔ Make sure everyone knows the risks children face in their area.

➔ Talk to and involve children and young people in decisions more.

➔ Carry out assessments on time.

➔ Check professionals and staff are making the best decisions.

➔ Keep better records of meetings so there's evidence about why decisions happen.

➔ Make sure children get support quickly so things don't get worse.

➔ Make sure midwives, health visitors and school nurses work together better.

➔ Make sure information on the risks of child sexual abuse and neglect are kept up to date.

➔ Make sure staff understand the risks when care experienced children miss health appointments or school.

➔ Make sure all staff understand how important it is to keep accurate records.

➔ Make sure staff are aware of guidance and the rules they need to follow.

➔ Check the quality of work and learning from good practice.

➔ Train staff better so they understand risks.



**Stepping in early
makes a big
difference.**

Next steps

We've written to all the services involved to explain what we found and what they have to do.

They will let us know how they plan to improve their work.

We will inspect services again in the future.

Thanks for reading this.

You can read the full report here:

careinspectorate.wales/joint-inspectorate-review-child-protection-arrangements-jicpa-denbighshire-2023

