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To the children and young people in Hertfordshire

Inspection of children's services

In January 2023, 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	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding

What did the inspectors find

- We found, since the last inspection, that the people who help you and your families still do a good job, and most of that work is now judged outstanding. This means that most children and young people are very well supported, protected and cared for. The people in charge are always thinking of new ideas and planning about how they can help you and get the most out of your lives.
- When social workers and practitioners feel worried about children, they are trained well to help children. People are good at working together to find different ways to make things better for children and their families. Children's wishes and experiences are listened to and taken seriously.
- All the good work done means that children are safer and less likely to need to be in care as families get the different types of help they need. However, sometimes children have to come into care to help them be safe. When they do, social workers search for homes that children will be happy in, whether that's with friends or other family members, or kind foster carers or caring residential staff.
- Many young people who have been in care find work or go on to further education and do well but managers, social workers and personal advisors, alongside councillors and other senior leaders, know that there is more they can do.
- Even when children's services are judged to be outstanding, there are always areas to improve and Hertfordshire is no exception. An example of this is that we want all staff to be able to help care leavers know where to find their health information so that it is there if they need it.
- We would like to say a very big thank you to all the children, young people and family members who gave up their time to talk to us in person or by telephone/Teams – these conversations were really important in helping us decide the judgements for this inspection. We enjoyed speaking to those of you in the CHICC group. I know that leaders are keen for more of you to get involved and have their say, so any ideas you have would be welcomed by Hertfordshire staff.
- We really enjoyed meeting care leavers who are parents at the Ohana group, it was one of the highlights of our inspection. It was great to see how this supports you as parents and as people, and know that managers need to find you a bigger place to meet, as Ohana is so popular!

Yours faithfully

Sarah Canto
His Majesty's Inspector