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To the children and young people in Gloucestershire

Inspection of children's services

In June 2025, 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	Good

What did the inspectors find

- Children in Gloucestershire mostly get the right help at the right time. Workers are kind and curious, they learn about each child's background, feelings and culture to understand what they need. Families are helped early when things get tough.
- In the past some children had to wait too long for things to get better when they were not well looked after. Now social workers do something before it gets worse and they help parents understand what needs to change. When children cannot live with their parents, workers make sure most children live in loving homes where they are well looked after.
- Many children in care have the same social worker for a long time, they get to trust their workers. Workers play, talk, and draw with children to help learn about their experiences, and complete life story work with more children to help them understand their past experiences. For children being adopted, this work includes special messages and stories from their birth families, which helps them know where they came from.
- Children in homes with staff instead of a family (called residential care) are only there if it's truly needed. These homes often help children get ready to move somewhere more permanent.
- Time with family and friends is really important. Workers make sure children can stay in touch with people they care about in ways that feel right to them, whether that's sleepovers, visits, video or phone calls.
- Independent Reviewing Officers help keep children's voices heard, they speak up when something isn't right. Plans for children are written in child-friendly words and help children feel safe, settled and understand what is going to happen.
- Many care leavers feel supported and cared for by their personal advisers. They get help with finding jobs, learning new skills, staying healthy, and feeling confident about becoming adults.
- Some things still need to get better. A few 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless, or young people who have left care don't get the right help from housing and children's services, and some care leavers who aren't in work or education need more support to achieve their goals.
- Leaders care a lot and are making sure services keep getting better, they listen and plans are made with children.

Yours faithfully

Sophie Wales
Lead inspector
His Majesty's Inspector