

Ofsted should meet striking social workers



Ofsted inspectors should meet striking Swindon social workers

GMB Union made the call with social workers at Swindon Borough Council will walk out on 27 and 28 February following a 'botched' pay and re-grading review.

On the same day, Ofsted inspectors are due to visit the council's children's services department following a failed inspection in July [1].

In the wake of the inspection, the council developed an improvement plan, but the 'botched' review has undermined the plan and thrown the whole department into chaos.



GMB has written to Ofsted advising the inspectors of concerns and asking them to meet the striking social workers [2].

Andy Newman, GMB Branch Secretary, said:

"Following the failed Ofsted report the council's top priority should have been addressing the problems that were putting vulnerable children at risk.

"But their warped priorities seemed to put more weight on ramming through unfair and unpopular changes to worsen the pay and status of senior social workers.

"The regrading makes no sense – managers are paid less than those reporting to them, while key child protection and safeguarding experts were effectively demoted [see note 3 for details]

"This has had serious impact; the authority of their role has been diminished and instead of being seen as challenge from senior and experienced experts, the perception is that it has been reduced to a peer review.

"Significant numbers of senior managers have now left the service, taking their collective knowledge with them.

"GMB asks Ofsted to visit the striking social workers on the picket line and hear for themselves what is really going on."

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