

## **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 22 MARCH 2018**

### **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICE – OFSTED MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families and the Assistant Director Safeguarding Services (Children's Social Care) have been invited to the meeting to provide an update on the outcome of Ofsted's third monitoring visit of the Council's safeguarding services, which took place on 30 and 31 January 2018 and focused on the Family Front Door service.

#### **Background**

2. On 24 January 2017, Ofsted published their report entitled 'Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers; and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board'.

3. The overall judgement for Worcestershire was 'inadequate'. Following the Ofsted judgement, an eight-point Service Improvement Plan (SIP) was developed by Children, Families and Communities Leadership Team to cover all of the recommendations made by Ofsted.

4. Ofsted conducted their second monitoring visit on 12 and 13 September 2017, with the focus of the inspection being the Family Front Door service. The outcome letter that was published by Ofsted following that visit reported that 'the local authority has taken steps to tackle the serious weaknesses and is now beginning to make progress to improve services for children and young people.'

5. Ofsted also acknowledged within the outcome letter that a number of the improvements seen during the September 2017 monitoring visit were relatively embryonic and so agreed with the Director of Children's Services (DCS) to do a final monitoring visit inspection at the Family Front Door in January 2018 to ensure the changes they'd witnessed were embedded over time and that further improvements had been made.

#### **Feedback from Ofsted Monitoring Visit – No.3**

6. Ofsted conducted their third monitoring visit on 30 and 31 January 2018, with the focus again being on the Family Front Door service. Jenny Turnross, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) from Ofsted, led the inspection working alongside fellow Ofsted inspector, Andy Waugh (HMI), and Lee-Anne Farrach, Ofsted Inspector.

7. Appendix 1 is the outcome letter which was published by Ofsted on 22 February 2018. The purpose of each letter following an Ofsted monitoring visit is to outline

the outcome of the visit. There are no judgements made, but instead a statement summarising the direction of travel.

8. Ofsted's headline statement on Worcestershire following the monitoring visit in January 2018 is that 'while services for children in Worcestershire continue to require much work to be of a good standard, progress has been made since the last monitoring visit'.

9. Ofsted also reported that 'Leaders recognise that a strong infrastructure needs to be in place to support effective social work practice and while practice overall needs to improve, positive progress is starting to be made.'

10. Ofsted were clear that whilst significant investment into the service has supported improvement and positive progress is being made, there are still a number of challenges that need to be tackled in order for services for children to be of a good standard. Appendix 2 is a presentation which will be delivered to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 22 March, by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding Services and will elaborate on the feedback provided by Ofsted, as well as outlining next steps.

## **Next Steps**

11. The next Ofsted monitoring visit (No. 4) is currently scheduled to take place in April 2018 and will focus on the development of the newly established Through Care service, which is a key part of the new Children's Social Care operating model, which was effective from 1 February 2018.

12. Just over 12 months on from the publication of the Ofsted report, the Children, Families and Communities Leadership Team (CFCLT) have commenced a review of the SIP, to review the progress made and to ensure it continues to remain focused on the key priorities in light of the feedback provided from Ofsted following three monitoring visits which have taken place since the SIP was launched, in May 2017, September 2017 and January 2018.

13. This review will also incorporate feedback provided by other key stakeholders including the DfE Children's Commissioner, and our Improvement Partner, Essex County Council.

14. CFCLT will continue to lead delivery of the SIP and ensure positive momentum is maintained whilst the implementation phase of the Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) is underway in parallel.

15. The SIP will continue to be reviewed regularly, with progress reports provided to key stakeholders and partners including the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Elected Members and Scrutiny Panels, whilst continuing to work in partnership with our Improvement Partner, Essex County Council.

## **Purpose of the Meeting**

16. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- consider the information in the report and the presentation to be provided on the day

- determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny, and
- agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families

### **Supporting Information**

- Appendix 1 – Ofsted Monitoring Visit Outcome Letter
- Appendix 2 – Presentation to be delivered to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel by Assistant Director: Safeguarding Services

### **Contact Points**

#### County Council Contact Points

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) the following background papers relate to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and background papers for the meetings of the Cabinet held on 2 February 2017 and 6 April 2017
- Agenda and background papers for the meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 13 March 2017, 14 August 2017 and 24 October 2017

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)