

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 16 MAY 2018

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICE – OFSTED MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK

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 fourth Monitoring Visit of the Council's children's safeguarding services, which took place on the 18 and 19 April and focused on the progress of children in care, in particular placement stability and achieving permanence for young people aged over 16. Additionally, Ofsted reviewed the quality of practice in the Care Leaver's 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. As a result of this judgement, Ofsted put in place a series of Monitoring Visits to track the Council's progress. To date there have been four such visits in September 2017 and January, April and May 2017. The result of the first visit was not published but Ofsted concluded that the Local Authority was not making the expected progress to improve services for children and young people. In the following two visits, however, Ofsted noted that progress was being made.

Feedback from Ofsted Monitoring Visit – No.4

5. Ofsted conducted their fourth Monitoring Visit on 18 and 19 April 2018, with the focus being on the new Through Care Service and placement stability, permanence and care leavers. Alison Smale, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) from Ofsted, led the inspection working alongside fellow Ofsted inspector, Andy Waugh (HMI), and observed by Steve Lowe, a newly appointed HMI, as part of his induction to role.

6. Ofsted will publish their letter outlining the results of the visit on 14 May 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. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 1 (to follow).

Next Steps

7. The next Ofsted Monitoring Visit (No. 5) is currently scheduled to take place on 11 and 12 July 2018 and is likely to focus on the work of our Locality Safeguarding Teams.
8. The Children, Families and Communities Leadership Team (CFCLT) has the SIP, to ensure it continues to remain focused on the right priorities and is reflective of all feedback received in our improvement journey, including Ofsted, our Children's Commissioner and Essex County Council, our Improvement Partner. A high level version of the plan is attached at Appendix 2.
9. 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 we continue to work with Essex County Council.
10. CFCLT will continue to lead the delivery of the SIP and ensure positive momentum is maintained whilst the implementation phase of the Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) is underway in parallel.

Purpose of the Meeting

11. 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 (to follow)
- Appendix 2 – Service Improvement Plan 2018-19

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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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, 6 April 2017 and 28 September 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, 24 October 2017 and 22 March 2018

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