

Report to:	Health and Wellbeing Board Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	9 June 2021 6 July 2021
Subject:	Ofsted Focussed Visit Item		
Report of:	Interim Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Children's Social Care		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

Overview of the Ofsted focused visit conducted in March 2021 and published 10th May 2021.

Recommendation:

This paper is for the Board's information.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the report.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

Overview and Scrutiny will be provided to progress against meeting the areas of improvement.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

none

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The financial and staffing implications associated with the outcome of the OFSTED focus visit are still being finalised and further report will be submitted to Cabinet for approval

(B) Capital Costs

There are no direct capital costs associated with this report.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): The finer details with costs of review of structure are not yet confirmed and are currently in consultation.								
Legal Implications: none								
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.								
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will <table border="1"><tr><td>Have a positive impact</td><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>Have a neutral impact</td><td>Y</td></tr><tr><td>Have a negative impact</td><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td><td>N</td></tr></table>	Have a positive impact	N	Have a neutral impact	Y	Have a negative impact	N	The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	N
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Have a neutral impact	Y							
Have a negative impact	N							
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Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: This report sets out the Ofsted findings in relation to children and young people and how we protect children at risk of harm.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Children's social care work with children and their families to improve outcomes for children
Commission, broker and provide core services: N/A
Place – leadership and influencer: N/A
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: N/A

Cleaner Greener: N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 6400/21.....) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.4601/21.....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations
N/A

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction

Following a pause in the inspection framework due to Covid 19, Ofsted undertook 'restart' focused visit of Children's Social Care in March 2021. The letter was published on the 10th May 2021 and can be found by the following link: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80550>

The focused visit looked at key decision making points in the child's journey, in the context of the covid 19 pandemic. The findings from the visit were published in a letter, however this was not a graded judgement. Four HMI inspectors were on site virtually for two days.

2. Identified areas of Priority Action and areas of Improvement

Following the visit, inspectors identified, two areas of Priority Action and three areas for Improvement:

2.1 Areas for priority action

- Timely application of the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline where risks for children are not reducing through child protection planning.
- The effectiveness of case supervision and the monitoring of children who are subject to child protection planning, including those children in the pre-proceedings process, to prevent drift and delay.

2.2 What needs to improve in this area of social work practice

- The quality assurance arrangements and senior management oversight of social work practice.
- The strategic and operational focus on achieving change and reducing risk for vulnerable children, including disabled children and care leavers.
- The capacity in social work teams and the number of children on social workers' caseloads

2.3 There were also a number of strengths identified:

- Multi – agency partnership arrangements, decision making and management oversight in MASH.
- Collaboration and partnership working during the Pandemic.
- Senior and Political leaders have maintained a focus on improvement.
- Immediate risk is recognised and responded to.
- Effective partnership working to reduce electively home educated children.
- Response from education and CSC to ensure vulnerable children were being seen, including the 'first day response' during the pandemic.
- Decision for children to come into care is appropriate in most cases.

2.3 In response to the visit, actions taken so far include:

- Review of capacity in CSC with a view to increasing capacity at all levels to reduce caseloads and improve quality of supervision.
- Supervision training continuing to be rolled out to all Team Managers
- Audit of all children in Public Law Outline over 3 months to ensure timely decision making and improvements are made to how they are tracked.
- Children's Integrated Commissioning Group looking at the offer to children who are 16 and over, including our care leavers.
- Work with departments across the council such as Corporate Legal Services, Human resources, communications team and business intelligence to review the support from the broader council.
- Review of Quality Assurance and Performance processes.

3. Conclusion

Following the visit, a draft action plan must be submitted to Ofsted 20 days after the letter was received. This was submitted on 26th May 2021. The final action plan will be submitted to Ofsted, 70 working days from receipt of the letter. OFSTED identified two priorities and the Department of Education have issued a notice to improve against these two areas.

