

Report of the Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 21st February 2023

V

Subject: Full Ofsted Inspection (ILACS)
21st November to 2nd December 2022

Summary statement:

Bradford have been subject to a number of Monitoring Visits and a Focused Visit since the outcome of the full Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in 2018, where services were judged to be Inadequate overall.

Ofsted notified the Local Authority of a subsequent full ILACS on Monday 14^h November 2022 and the inspection took place between 21st November and 2nd December 2022.

The outcome of the ILACS is the judgement of Inadequate in all areas and overall.

The report was published on the [Ofsted website](#) on 31st January 2023.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

An Equality Impact Assessment is not applicable. However, this report will provide an update on the Monitoring Visit concerned with care leavers who are amongst the most in need young people in the district with regard to consideration of equality and diversity.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Executive of the details of the Ofsted full inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) which took place in November 2022. The Council has been subject to a number of Monitoring Visits and a Focused Visit since the outcome of the full Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in 2018, where services were judged to be Inadequate. Inspectors have provided feedback at subsequent Visits that whilst there have been improvements within the service, that overall more improvements were necessary.
- 1.2 Ofsted notified the Council of a subsequent full ILACS on Monday 14th November 2022 and the inspection took place between 21st November and 2nd December 2022 and the report was published on the [Ofsted website](#) on 31st January 2023.
- 1.3 The outcome of the ILACS is the judgement of Inadequate in all areas and overall.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Full inspections are part of the [Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services \(ILACS\)](#) framework of inspection activities carried out by Ofsted.
- 2.2 In September 2021, Steve Walker was appointed by the Secretary of State for Education as Children's Services Commissioner for Bradford, and was asked to bring together evidence to assess the Council's capacity and capability to improve itself in a reasonable time frame and recommend whether or not this evidence is sufficiently strong to suggest that long term sustainable improvement to children's social care functions can be achieved, should operational service control remain within the Council. He was also asked to advise on alternative delivery and governance arrangements for children's social care functions. The Commissioner recommended for the creation of an Executive Commissioner role who would oversee the delivery of children's services as he was concerned about the pace of improvement being inhibited during the establishment of the Trust. The Department for Education was not supportive of this recommendation and concluded that Children's Services in Bradford should be provided through a Children's Trust arrangement. The Council voluntarily agreed to enter into the Trust arrangement with the DfE. The planned go live date is in April 2023.
- 2.3 Preparations for the ILACS were robust and organised. Colleagues formed a highly effective virtual inspection team who supported the leadership to make all necessary arrangements for the inspection. Additionally, through support from the Leeds Relational Practice Centre, a highly experienced practice improvement and Ofsted readiness improvement consultant provided leadership and a framework for preparations and also the development of the self-assessment document with the Directorate Management Team and the social care leadership. This document is the one which sets out the evaluation of effectiveness of services and Inspectors seek to understand if their inspection findings are in sync with the self-assessment.
- 2.4 During the three weeks of the ILACS, which took place between 21st November and 2nd December 2022, Inspectors met with the Chief Executive, the Children's Social Care Portfolio Holder, Interim Director of Children's Services, the Bradford Commissioner, children and young people, foster carers, foster carer support,

Social Workers, Personal Advisers, the local judiciary, CAFCASS, One Adoption West Yorkshire, Adoptive parents, schools, Education safeguarding and the Virtual School. They looked in-depth at work carried out with young people in online case files, sought the views of young people, analysed data, reviewed a wide range of documents including the self-assessment (SEF), and considered the outcomes of audits to judge if they felt the overall judgements were in line with the findings.

2.5 Areas for improvement for The Council were identified by Ofsted which should be considered by the Executive and the wider Children's Partnership, and these are:

- Council and corporate senior leaders should ensure that they fully and effectively discharge their role as corporate parents and ensure that children's social care is provided with the resources and support required in a timely way to expedite sustainable improvements.
- The sufficiency and stability of the workforce, including senior leaders and managers.
- The quality and timeliness of assessments of risk and need in all its forms, including the response to domestic violence.
- The timely completion of statutory safeguarding checks and compliance with regulation regarding private fostering and connected carers.
- The timeliness and quality of decisions in respect of section 47 enquiries.
- The currency and accuracy of children's records.
- The effectiveness of all multi-agency meetings and their influence in driving children's plans.
- The timely escalation to public law outline (PLO) and timely progression of permanence in all its forms.
- The effectiveness and impact of independent reviewing officers.
- Foster carer morale, training, recruitment and retention, including the support offered to special guardians.
- The quality and safety of in-house residential provision, including safer recruitment.
- The offer of safe, appropriate and sustainable homes for care leavers and their preparation for leaving care.
- Clarity regarding the process of completing personal education plans so they are consistently completed by all relevant professionals.
- The quality and effectiveness of supervision to staff at all levels by managers and leaders

2.6 **Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan and Next Steps**

- We have already adapted our improvement plan to highlight any areas for improvement stated by Ofsted in the report. The majority of these areas were included in our existing plans.
- A number of programme, project and work stream teams are established to take forward our improvement agenda.
- We continue to report on progress to the Improvement Board on a quarterly basis.
- We will monitor progress on the stated areas for improvement to Ofsted.
- We are preparing for our first Monitoring Visit following the full ILACS. this will include an updated self-assessment.

- We are preparing a monthly and a quarterly monitoring report on key areas of performance from the Children and Families Trust to the Council.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Not applicable.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 The current 2023-24 budget proposal includes additional funding for Children's Social Care to address demographic growth, demand and improvement activities. These amounts will be part of the financial envelope for the emerging Children and Families Trust.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 Risk regarding the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection (ILACS) relate to the areas for improvement highlighted in the report, set out in section 2:10 of this report. Most of these areas are practice related and were identified already through the self-assessment document (SEF) and the Improvement Plan.

5.2 One of the areas was concerned with the Council and corporate senior leaders fully and effectively discharging their role as corporate parents and ensuring that children's social care is provided with the resources and support required in a timely way to expedite sustainable improvements.

5.3 This constitutes a reputational risk to Bradford, the Council and the ongoing success of the emerging Children and Families Trust.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007 sets out the requirement on the Local Authority following an inspection report. The Local Authority is required to prepare a written statement of the action which they propose to take in the light of the report, and the period within which they propose to take that action. The authority must publish the report, and the statement within such period, and in such manner, as may be prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, normally 70 days.

The main actions being undertaken in the circumstances of this Ofsted report is the establishment of the Childrens Trust and amendments to the Improvement Plan both of which it is understood are well underway.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Not applicable.

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Not applicable.

7.5 TRADE UNION

Not applicable.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific ward implications as this report relates to all wards in the District.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

All the implications in this report are concerned with children, young people and their families and related to Corporate Parenting. The Local Authority and its officers should make themselves aware of the issues raised in the report.

7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

Not applicable.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

9.1 Not applicable. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Full Ofsted Inspection (ILACS) held between 21st November and 2nd December 2022.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Committee are asked to note this report.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 12.1 Not applicable. However, the published letter for the full inspection (ILACS) is available on the [Ofsted website](#) from 31st January 2023.