

Report of the Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Executive to be held on 8 June 2021

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Subject:

Ofsted Monitoring Visit – 28 to 29 April 2021

Summary statement:

Following Ofsted's Inspection of Children's Social Care Services from the 17 to 28 September 2018, the fifth of a series of Monitoring Visits took place on the 28 to 29 April 2021.

The focus of the Monitoring Visit was around Children in Need and Child Protection.

The findings were published by Ofsted on 4 June 2021.

Equality & Diversity:

There are no direct implications for equality and diversity arising from this report. Children's Services have a duty to ensure that vulnerable children and families have their holistic needs addressed in a non-judgemental manner.

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Portfolio:

Children & Families

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The focus of the Monitoring Visit was around Children in Need and Child Protection. The findings will be published in a letter by Ofsted on 4 June 2021. Until such a time, the letter remains under Embargo.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 OFSTED use the “inspecting local authority children’s services (ILACS) frame” when undertaking an inspection or monitoring visit. The Framework was first published November 2017.

- 2.2 These inspections focus on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements:

- to help and protect children;
- the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home;
- the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption;
- the experiences and progress of care leavers.

OFSTED also evaluate:

- the effectiveness of leaders and managers;
- the impact they have on the lives of children and young people;
- the quality of professional practice.

- 2.3 OFSTED will usually carry out between 4 and 6 monitoring visits before a full re-inspection. This was 5th monitoring visit since the 2018 inadequate judgement.

- 2.4 This monitoring visit focussed on “the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection”. At the time of this monitoring visit, there were 2,380 children in receiving help and protection.

2.5 Summary of Findings

See attached letter.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 None to note.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 As cited in the enclosed letter, there are likely to be some resource implications in view of the of additional social work capacity created within the service.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 The Children's Services Improvement Board continues to monitor progress and will ensure that effective responses are made to all Ofsted's recommendations and DfE required improvements. The Children's Services Improvement Board focuses on outcomes for children and provides the drive and focus to ensure that necessary improvements are achieved and evidenced.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 The inspection in September 2018 was undertaken under the new Framework, Evaluation Criteria and Inspector Guidance for the Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). This contains provisions regarding actions to be taken after an inadequate inspection report. These include monitoring by Ofsted including an action planning visit, quarterly monitoring visits and a re-inspection, and also an action plan prepared by the local authority within 70 days of receiving the report.
- 6.2 On 4 December 2018, following the Secretary of State's decision to take a non-statutory approach in Bradford's case, the DfE issued an Improvement notice to the council, requiring the council to take a number of actions to address all areas of improvement identified in the Ofsted report. The notice also provides for DfE reviews of progress against the improvement agenda.

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

Consultation with trade unions continues around structures and budgets. Caseloads continue to be monitored by management.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The Improvement Notice and Improvement Plan affect all Wards, due to the Inadequate Judgement.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

In addition to the improvements identified, further areas of improvement are also necessary within our children in care and care leavers services.

7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None; both the Notice to Improve and Ofsted report have been published on their respective websites and are therefore in the public domain.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 Not applicable.

9. OPTIONS

9.1 Not applicable.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Executive are asked to note the contents of the letter from OFSTED.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Ofsted Report of the Monitoring Visit 28 to 29 April 2021.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 None.