

Committee(s): Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 23 November 2023
Subject: Children’s Social Care Self Evaluation Framework	Public (this report) Non-Public (Annexe 1)
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services	For Discussion
Report author: Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance	

Summary

Children’s Social Care and Early Help are subject to inspection by Ofsted under a ‘Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services’ (ILACS) Framework. These inspections take place every 4 – 5 years and in between there will be a smaller specific focussed visit and an Annual Engagement Meeting (AEM) with Ofsted.

Each year the Department of Community and Children’s Services produces a Self-Evaluation Framework document which is used for the AEM and also for inspections.

This report presents the Self-Evaluation Framework for Members to note.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Children’s Social Care and Early Help are subject to inspection by Ofsted under a ‘Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services’ (ILACS) Framework. These inspections take place every 4 – 5 years and in between there will be a smaller specific focussed visit and an Annual Engagement Meeting (AEM) with Ofsted.
2. For the City of London Corporation, our last full inspection was in 2020 when we were rated outstanding overall. A focus visit took place in November 2022 and

focused on front door services. Feedback was very positive and there were no recommendations for improvement.

3. Each year the Department of Community and Children's Services produces a Self-Evaluation Framework document which is used for the AEM and also for inspections.
4. Though there is no set format or template for the Self-Evaluation Framework, it is designed to provide a space for the local authority to reflect on their delivery and performance, their challenges and how they have responded to them and the impact they have had on children, young people and their families.
5. As part of our work to drive excellence in Children's Social Care, in 2020 we also established the Achieving Excellence Board (AEB) which is independently chaired by a former Ofsted Inspector who provides challenge to us on our services and performance and provides advice on where we could strengthen services or approach.
6. The City of London Corporation SEF is built around the aims of the AEB which are as follows:
 - Doing the core job to a consistent standard
 - Being creative, pioneering and having a can do culture; and
 - Having a relentless focus on outcomes
7. Each area of our work such as contacts, assessments, early help, looked after children and care leavers are considered under these headings.
8. A copy of the SEF can be found in Appendix 1 in non-public items.

Current Position

Doing the core job to a consistent standard

9. Overall, our performance in delivering our statutory responsibilities has maintained excellent quality and performance despite the challenges of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and the financial constraints in which we operate.
10. The number of Children who are Looked After has been decreased in recent years after a large increase around 4 years ago. However, our number of Care Leavers that we support (at an increased level compared to other local authorities) has been increasing. National policy proposes an increased focus on care leavers and their needs. The service already exceeds this in terms of the support offered to Care Leavers.
11. Our Early Help Service consistently achieves positive feedback and outcomes and was particularly effective in supporting our guests who were placed in the City of London as part of the Afghanistan Resettlement Programme. Over the past two years, the Early Help Service has run an innovative parenting course,

developed by the Race Equality Foundation. One of the impacts of this is that parents developed their own peer support network.

12. There have been ongoing challenges around health service provision to children looked after with specific difficulties accessing dentistry and performance on health reviews being less efficient than we would like. In addressing this we have collaborated with health colleagues and paid for some emergency dentistry where needed.
13. A stable workforce means that children are able to form and sustain meaningful, consistent and stable relationships with their workers
14. There is robust governance around Children's Social Care with Members routinely trained and engaged in their role as Corporate Parent

Being creative, pioneering and having a can do culture

15. Developed a family therapy clinic with Kings College London which is proving effective and valuable
16. Introduced the co-location of a Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health (FCAMHS) clinician with members of the social care team
17. Utilised the assets of the City of London Corporation to create enrichment for our Children and Young People – for example the enrichment project with the independent schools in the City for Children who are Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers to enrich their education. This also benefits young people at the schools
18. A new programme of apprenticeships for our CLA and Care Leavers is being developed
19. Secured Home Office immigration interviews online and with social worker support which minimised stress and has increased the speed and outcome of interviews

A relentless focus on outcomes

20. External audits have been positive in terms of the impact for children and their families
21. The SEF sets out some specific case studies illustrating the impact that the service has had

Areas for improvement

22. The SEF sets out a number of improvements which focus on strengthening our existing robust work. These are included in our Service Development Plan which is monitored by the AEB and the Safeguarding Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – Our work in Children’s Social Care helps deliver on Corporate Outcomes 1 – 4 and the outcomes in a number of our other Departmental Strategies including the Children and Young People’s Plan and the SEND Strategy.

Financial implications - none

Resource implications - none

Legal implications – The Children’s Social Care Service operates within a legal framework set out in a number of acts.

Risk implications - none

Equalities implications – none but equalities implications are considered throughout the service and where a new service or initiative is instigated an Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out.

Climate implications - none

Security implications - none

Conclusion

23. This report presents to Members the annual SEF for Children’s Social Care.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 (non-public) – City of London Corporation SEF for Children’s Social Care

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