

Committee	Date:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	17 December 2015
Subject: Inspection Oversight	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information

Summary

This report provides members with a summary of the plans and processes in place to ensure consistency and continuity in preparing for and responding to inspections, peer reviews and other ad-hoc or legislative reporting requirements within the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS).

The aim is to provide members with:

- An overview of the variety of inspection regimes and peer reviews within the department, focusing on adults' social care, children's social care, homelessness, and early years and education;
- A list of upcoming inspections for the City's partners and commissioned providers where their inspection outcomes are of relevance for the City;
- A generic project plan for preparing effectively for inspections and peer reviews;
- An outline of what DCCS has in place and what is planned to ensure linkages between inspections / reviews are utilised to remove duplication of effort and ensure value for money in terms of resourcing;
- How we will be using learning from inspections / reviews to improve processes and outcomes to ensure continuous improvement of practice.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note this report:

Main Report

Background

1. The Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) is regularly subject to inspections and peer reviews by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), our peers and other regulators. A number of these inspections will be unannounced.
2. In order to facilitate joined-up working and greater pooling of resources across the department, we have compiled a table of inspections / peer reviews planned for DCCS over the next few years (Appendix 1).

3. We have also developed a generic project plan for preparing for any DCCS inspection or peer review, which can be adapted depending on scale, scope and duration (Appendix 2).
4. In using a consistent project planning methodology, any service undergoing an inspection or peer review can assure itself that the relevant staff and service are able to effectively demonstrate the high quality and standards of practice, management and leadership in the department.

Current Position

5. There are a number of common elements, particularly in logistical preparation and coordination, between the various inspections / peer reviews that DCCS will undergo in the next few years. Therefore, the following actions are recommended to ensure efficiency and best use of resources:
 - Good practice around planning is shared and utilised;
 - Common documentation tools e.g. Self-Assessments, Service Improvement Plans, Welcome Pack and Welcome presentation, are collated / maintained for use in all inspections / reviews;
 - Where necessary, briefings for interviewees and focus groups are developed to ensure that inspection leads are well-prepared and can support successful inspection outcomes;
 - An evidence base of the required documents as part of inspections / reviews is developed and maintained in each service as part of day-to-day departmental business. This will be used to add value to the department's work and ensure that documentation is widely available;
 - A departmental group is established and meets on a quarterly basis to ensure effective co-ordination of inspections and regular reporting on this to the Departmental Leadership Team (DLT).
6. This joined-up approach will help to avoid duplication of effort, enable knowledge and experience gained from inspections and peer reviews to be shared and provide the opportunity to learn from these experiences and improve practice.
7. Key benefits anticipated from implementing this approach will be:
 - Better responsiveness to notifications of inspections/peer reviews;
 - Greater opportunity to undertake self-assessments / internal reviews and feed into improvement planning;
 - Enhanced decision making / monitoring through the development of the Service Improvement Board. Any action plans monitored through this board will ensure improved outcomes for our service users in the City of London;
 - Easier identification of training requirements in terms of inspection readiness and to support improvements in practice. This will also help to address gaps in workforce development and improve CPD tracking and recording;

- Greater opportunity for DLT to have oversight of inspection preparation and review of actions required for on-going service improvement once an inspection/ peer review is completed;
- If a report or action plan is required in response to an inspection outcome, we will have mechanisms and resources in place to formally undertake post-inspection reviews and use lessons learnt logs throughout the inspection process;
- More opportunities to share good practice and knowledge across DCCS and with partners/other local authorities at partnership events.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. The above outline of the DCCS work in preparing for and responding to inspections/peer reviews has clear links to the Corporate strategic aims of:
 - Providing modern, efficient and high quality local services, including policing, within the Square Mile for workers, residents and visitors;
 - Provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure to London and the nation.
9. These inspection-led activities are also key to the DCCS five strategic priorities of:
 - Priority one – Safeguarding and early help: Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for responding to safeguarding risks, promoting early identification and support to prevent escalation of issues and keeping children and vulnerable adults safe.
 - Priority two – Health and wellbeing: Promoting the health and wellbeing of all City residents and workers and improving access to health services in the Square Mile.
 - Priority three – Education and employability: Enabling children, young people and adults to learn, thrive and achieve their full potential.
 - Priority four – Homes and communities: Developing strong neighbourhoods and ensuring people have a decent place to live.
 - Priority five – Efficiency and effectiveness: Delivering value for money and outstanding services.

Conclusion

10. Through joined-up preparation for inspections/peer reviews and greater oversight of this process by DLT and the wider department, we can support on-going service improvement, decrease time and resource inefficiency in preparing for inspections and deliver value for money on the high quality services delivered by DCCS.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 –Upcoming DCCS inspections and peer reviews
- Appendix 2 – Generic project plan on preparing for inspections/peer reviews

Background Papers

None

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