

Committee(s)	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee – For Information	7/06/2017
Subject: Ofsted Action Plan - progress	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

Ofsted carried out an Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in the City of London, dated 28 July 2016. The full report was published: 20 September 2016. Ofsted found that Children's Services in the City of London are good, with leadership, management and governance as outstanding.

Ofsted made six recommendations that could improve our services. These are listed below, and each has been achieved.

We are ambitious in our work with children and families and strive for continual improvement in our service. To this end, we drew out any areas for development from the body of the report and created a detailed action plan. This action plan is appended, with progress 'RAG' rated.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main report

Ofsted found that Children's Services in the City of London are good. Specifically they found that services for children who need help and protection are good, and the experiences and progress of care leavers are good, children looked after and achieving permanence are good with some outstanding features, and that leadership management and governance was outstanding.

There were six recommendations. These are detailed below with an update on progress.

1. Further improve the quality and consistency of written plans for children, including early help plans, child in need plans, personal education plan (PEP)s and pathway plans. These should be clear and simple, fully integrate the views of children and young people and clearly state what is to be achieved by when.

We have created one template for SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) targets that is used for each of the written plans for children. Internal audit shows that these are now all consistently good or outstanding.

2. When families disengage from services and the threshold is not met to escalate the case further, ensure that any ongoing work is purposeful and that case records clearly evidence managers' rationale for ceasing or continuing support.

Threshold decisions are clearly recorded on any escalation, de-escalation or closure. To strengthen our Child in Need (CIN) work, we will invite the Independent Reviewing officer to chair our initial multi-professional meetings, with an open invite to attend/participate in future reviews.

3. Ensure that permanency planning records include a record of decisions about legal permanence for children, along with the rationale for these decisions.

Every permanency planning meeting includes a legal representative, and all detail the reason for the decisions made.

4. Expedite the provision of health histories for all care leavers.

Strong contract management has meant that every care leaver now has their health history.

5. Increase opportunities for direct contact between children looked after, care leavers and councillors, and between these children and the chief executive, in order to establish even more meaningful personal relationships.

Members have attended the Child in Care Council (CiCC) met and listened to young people. Members and the Town Clerk are invited to the Child in Care Council in the forthcoming year. Alternatively, members are invited to offer our children looked after and care leavers shadowing or work experience opportunities if practicable.

6. Strengthen the inclusion of the perspective of children, families and partners in case auditing, in order to improve services
Every child and parent in our service, including early help, was contacted via telephone and in writing in our last Audit cycle. Their views were listened to and any suggested improvements added into our service improvement plan.

The Ofsted Action Plan as appended, includes detailed actions gleaned from the detail of the full Ofsted reports and progress made to date. The actions are 'RAG' rated, with red meaning 'fully stuck', amber meaning 'more work needed or resolvable issue in sight', and green meaning 'in progress, no barriers to continuing'.

There are areas of the Action Plan shaded in grey. The grey shows that these are additional ways we as a service want to improve, but these actions have not been submitted to Ofsted in our improvement plan. We did not submit all our actions for improvement due to the level of detail involved.

Progress across the six key recommendations has been excellent, as can be seen above. In the more detailed action plan appended, progress has been consistently strong, with no red ratings, two points at amber, and the rest at green.

One amber action is that our Early Help multi-agency partnership is redesigning the CAF (assessment tool). This is amber due to the work schedule of the partnership meetings, with this topic being on the next meeting. The Early Help co-ordinator has sourced a range of 'CAFs' from other Local Authorities to help guide this work.

The other amber action is the embedding of three monthly chronologies into social work and early help practice. The reason updated chronologies are important is that the social worker can look at patterns, context and history of a family, as work progresses. This is particularly important in the area of neglect. Currently, just over half of our cases have an up to date chronology, and the team are working to full completion by the end of May, with then rolling three month updates.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Ofsted Action Plan

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