

<b>Item No.</b> 27.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 19 September 2017	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Ofsted Inspection of 'Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers' – Post Inspection Action Plan	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councilor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS**

Southwark Council's services for children and families are good. The full report of Her Majesty's Inspectorate, Ofsted, of its inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers was noted by Cabinet at the meeting held on 18 July 2017. Cabinet requested that the post inspection plan be returned to cabinet prior to its submission to Ofsted on 20 September 2017.

The post inspection plan gives details on how the council will respond to the 11 recommendations made by Ofsted and a timetable for this work.

The corporate parenting committee (CPC) reviewed and endorsed the action plan on 7 September 2017. In regards to recommendation 6, members were clear that the sufficiency strategy must be of sufficient ambition to deliver the quality and quantity of placements needed for children looked after. This will no doubt be further reviewed by the CPC during the forthcoming year.

In regard to recommendation 9, the CPC felt that the strength and success of the council's outstanding adoption best practice should allow for good progress to be made prior to the December 2018 deadline. Again, the CPC has scope to review this during the forthcoming year.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. To endorse the Southwark post inspection action plan.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2. The single inspection framework (SIF) is national framework for inspecting services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers.
3. The SIF focuses on
  - The effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements to help and protect children as well as the experiences and progress of looked after children – including adoption, fostering, the use of residential care and children who return home.
  - The arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after and

the experiences and progress of care leavers.

- The leadership, management and governance judgement addresses the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people and the quality of professional practice locally.
4. Southwark's inspection took place between 6 March and 30 March 2017 and the report was published on 13 June 2017.
  5. The report to Cabinet of 18 July 2017 set out key findings from the inspection. It requested that the post inspection action plan be brought back to Cabinet for September 2017.

#### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

6. The judgements for Southwark were as follows

**Overall grading** – Good

**Children in Need of help and protection** – Good

**Children Looked After and Achieving Permanence** – Good

**Adoption** – Outstanding

**Careleavers** – Requires improvement

**Leadership, Management and Governance** – Good

7. The post inspection action plans are in response to the 11 recommendations for the local authority as follows:
  - i. Ensure that prompt decisions are made to safeguard children affected by long-term, cumulative neglect, so that they are not left in adverse home circumstances for long periods.
  - ii. Work with partner agencies to ensure that referrals contain sufficient information and that parental consent has been obtained if necessary, so that management decisions on the required action are timely and families receive help quickly.
  - iii. Ensure that strategy discussions and strategy meetings involve all relevant agencies so that multi-agency information informs assessment of risks.
  - iv. Ensure that return home interviews with children missing from home and care are completed consistently and effectively so that the intelligence gained reduces the recurrence of further missing episodes.
  - v. Strengthen management oversight of social workers in the children looked after and care leavers' services.
  - vi. Ensure that the sufficiency strategy, supported by effective commissioning, provides a better supply of high-quality placements for children looked after, particularly for adolescents who display challenging behaviours.
  - vii. Ensure that children's care plans are effectively and regularly reviewed to confirm whether their needs are being met through their placements, and establish alternative plans where necessary.

- viii. Ensure that children looked after who live outside of the local authority area are not disadvantaged through slower access to essential services, particularly child and adolescent mental health services, education support and regular health assessments.
  - ix. Ensure that children looked after are supported to build strong and enduring attachments to their carers through more timely permanence decisions for long-term foster family arrangements. Ensure timely life story work, which is kept up to date.
  - x. Ensure that all social workers and personal advisers working with young people leaving care have a clear knowledge of their current circumstances. This aim should be supported through consistently effective pathway planning, to ensure that young people understand and receive all their entitlements and that their identified needs are met.
  - xi. Ensure that children are aware of how to complain about services provided to them and that more advocacy support is provided for children on child protection plans and for those who are looked after. Ensure good access to independent visitors for children looked after.
8. From the date of publication of the inspection report, the local authority has 70 days to prepare and submit an action plan to Ofsted. The action plans are set out in appendix one.
  9. The progress against the local improvement plan will be overseen by the children's and adults board chaired by the strategic director of children's and adults' services and where relevant the corporate parenting committee.

### **Policy implications**

10. The action plan to address recommendations sit within the context of the current strategic priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan and are actively being aligned to current priorities within the department, these include
  - Budget saving and efficiency programme within Children and Adult Services
  - Transformation and service development work in relation to areas such as early help, including the troubled families programme and local approaches safeguarding such as adolescents at risk
  - Revised sufficiency strategy and improvements to placements both in house and external providers and DFE innovation funding including for residential care and post 16 accommodation strategy
  - Local preparations for the local Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Area Review
  - Local recruitment and retention strategies
  - CATCH 22 innovation programme for a Careleavers Partnership.

### **Community impact statement**

11. There are no equalities implications from this report, other than it being noted that community safeguarding activities, such as those relating to FGM and honour based violence were highly commended in the Ofsted inspection.

**Resource implications**

12. There are at present no additional resource implications arising for this report.

**Legal implications**

13. Services to children and families are provided within the statutory framework of support and protection to local children and young people, as set out in legislation such as the Children Act 1989, Children Leaving Care Acts, and Children Act 2004. SIF inspections are carried out under the s136 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

**Financial implications**

14. There are no direct revenue or capital implications arising for this report. However, the action plan will at times have impact on areas as set out in the paragraph 12.

**Consultation**

15. None.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS****Head of Procurement**

16. None sought.

**Director of Law and Democracy**

17. None sought.

**Strategic Director of Finance and Governance**

18. None sought.

**Other officers**

19. None sought.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board1	Ofsted, London	Ofsted, Tel 0300 123 1231
<p><b>Link (please copy and paste into your browser):</b></p> <p><a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/southwark/052_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20and%20review%20of%20the%20LSCB%20as%20pdf.pdf">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/southwark/052_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20and%20review%20of%20the%20LSCB%20as%20pdf.pdf</a></p>		
Ofsted Inspection Report March 2017	Tooley Street, SE1	Southwark Council Offices, Tel 020 7525 5000
<p><b>Link (please copy and paste into your browser):</b></p> <p><a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s69887/Appendix%201%20Ofsted%20inspection%20reportf.pdf">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s69887/Appendix%201%20Ofsted%20inspection%20reportf.pdf</a></p>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Post Inspection Action Plan – Children’s Services

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	David Quirke Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Elaine Allegretti, Assistant Director Quality and Performance Improvement, Children and Family Services	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	7 August 2017	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		11 September 2017