

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 28 February 2018	Meeting Name: Corporate Parenting Committee
Report title:		Ofsted Inspection of 'Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers' - Post Inspection Action Plan	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Director, Children and Families	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the corporate parenting committee notes the Southwark post inspection action plan as endorsed by cabinet on 19 September 2017 at Appendix 1, and the progress made to date.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Ofsted single inspection framework (SIF) is the 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.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. The judgements for Southwark were as follows

Overall grading – Good

Children in Need of help and protection – Good

Children Looked After and Achieving Permanence – Requires improvement

Adoption performance – Outstanding

Experience and progress of Care leavers – Requires improvement

Leadership, Management and Governance – Good

5. 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.

6. Progress achieved this quarter include:

- Continued improvements in multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and Early help referral pathways and single assessment timeliness year to date now standing at 94%
- New operational child sexual exploitation (CSE) arrangements in place including a newly formed multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) panel operating in line the new Met Protocol
- Access to Resources Team (ART) now staffed and beginning to implement

new ways of working around placements and showing modest improvements in stability in long term stability and improvements in numbers of in house foster carers

- Joint health and social care forum for children in care and careleavers established leading on single oversight of health outcomes for children in care including mental health and placements needs
- New complaints leaflet has been developed by Speakerbox and shortly to be launched

7. 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

8. 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 Department for Education (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

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

Resource implications

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

Legal implications

11. 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.

Consultation

12. None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
London Borough of Southwark 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 Board	Ofsted, London	Ofsted, Tel 0300 123 1231
Link (please copy and paste into your browser):		
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		
Ofsted Inspection report to Cabinet 19 September 2017	Tooley Street, SE1	Southwark Council Offices, Tel 020 7525 5000
Link (please copy and paste into your browser):		
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s71032/Report%20Ofsted%20Inspection%20-%20Post%20Inspection%20Plan.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Post Ofsted Single Inspection Framework Action Plan October 2017

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Alasdair Smith, Director, Children and Families	
Report Author	Elaine Allegretti, Assistant Director Quality and Performance Improvement, Children and Family Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	15 February 2018	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	15 February 2018	