

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Lives Select Commission – 06 December 2022

Report Title

Ofsted Inspection

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Suzanne Joyner, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report provides an update on the Ofsted inspection which took place in June and the development and delivery of the action plan to address all recommendations made.

Recommendations

1. Members of the Improving Lives Select Committee note the outcome of inspection and note the draft action plan.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 The Action Plan

Background Papers

Inspection Report: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80543>

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Ofsted Inspection

1. Background

1.1 Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services are undertaken by Ofsted under the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services framework.

Ofsted evaluate the:

- impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
- experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
- experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
- overall effectiveness

1.2 Between 27 June to 1 July 2022 Ofsted undertook a short inspection under the framework for Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services. The inspection team visited Rotherham Council Children's Services speaking to local children, young people and families about their experiences, interviewing social workers, senior staff, councillors and partner organisations and scrutinising a sample of case files.

They graded Children and Young People's services in four key areas and found:

- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families is GOOD
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection is GOOD
- The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers is GOOD
- Overall effectiveness is GOOD

1.3 Inspectors said that "Children's services are a clear priority for the Council", that there was a "whole Council commitment to children and families in Rotherham" and that "a learning culture is set from the top".

The report praised the way that social workers supported vulnerable children and kept them safe. It said: "The vast majority of social work practice supporting children in need, child protection and children in care seen during this inspection is of a good quality. All the children the inspectors met reported on the high-quality support they receive from their workers. Actively listening and responding to what children say are key components of the local authority's success in helping vulnerable children to be safer and have better lives".

"Well-developed approaches to building resilience in families and supporting children in their communities appropriately ensure that only those with the highest needs are supported by statutory children's services. Children are safeguarded well. Children in care and care leavers services ensure good progress for those children for whom the council has specific responsibilities. Excellent direct work with children and the consideration of their views ensure that children are at the centre of decision-making, resulting in services that best meet their needs."

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 In addition to the identification of good practice, inspections also identify areas for further improvement. There were four areas identified, which are:
- Consideration of previous history and current circumstances when responding to 'front door' contacts and child protection concerns.
 - Assessment of the identity needs of children when planning for their future.
 - The level of ambition for individual care leavers, the support for them to achieve their aspirations and the detailing of this in pathway plans.
 - The quality of individual case audits to inform wider service learning.
- 2.2 Ofsted require every Local Authority to submit an action plan in response to the areas that need to improve. The draft action plan can be found at Appendix 1. This is awaiting approval from Ofsted and is in draft until then.
- 2.3 Findings from inspections are managed as part of our improvement, planning and quality assurance processes. Progress is monitored in the Children and Young People's Services Improvement Plan and reported for review and challenge on a quarterly basis to the Directorate Leadership Team.

Actions advised as complete are submitted to the Evidence Challenge Panel where the action owner presents evidence to provide assurance that the action is complete, and the desired outcomes have been achieved. Once approved this is then submitted to the Directorate Leadership Team for formal sign off to close. Update reports will be received by Audit Committee.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Recommended proposal:

1. Members of the Improving Lives Select Committee note the outcome of inspection and note the draft action plan.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The development of the action plan has involved collaborative working across Rotherham, including Looked After Children and Care Leavers, First Response, Locality Social Work, Commissioning, Performance, Early Help, Legal Services and Finance.

The key statutory partners encompassing NHS South Yorkshire, Rotherham Place and South Yorkshire Police have been consulted and will continue to be engaged in the process, jointly chairing the Evidence Challenge Panel and as part of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The inspection report was received in August 2022. First Evidence Challenge Panel held on 14th November to approve completed actions (6). The action plan to address the four what needs to improve findings was submitted to Ofsted by the deadline of 21st November.

Implementation progress, risks and actions are reported into the Directorate Leadership Team via the Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Improvement Plan.

Additional assurance is provided through oversight by the multi-agency Evidence Challenge Panel.

Update Reports will be received by Audit Committee.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

There are no financial implications.

There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report. Where there is a need to engage third party organisations to assist in delivery of the action plan this must be undertaken in compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

HR are continuing to look at access to potential employment opportunities, work experience and placements within the Council and key partnerships to consider providing employment and career opportunities to our Care Leavers and Looked After Children.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The implications for children and young people are considered within the action plan (appendix 1), inspection report (background paper) and the body of this report. Improving local authority children's services will improve the experience of our most vulnerable children who require help and/ or protection.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 For Cabinet reports, append the [equality impact assessment](#) (EIA) set out any key equalities issues and mitigations identified through the EIA.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

N/A

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Education, Police and Health partners have been involved in the inspection and where appropriate, the development of the action plan. They will continue to contribute to the effective delivery of the action plan.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 N/A

Accountable Officer(s)

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