

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. Meeting:	Audit Committee
2. Date:	20th March 2013
3. Title:	Audit and Inspection Recommendations Update Report
4. Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

This report summarises the progress against recommendations from across all key external audits and inspections of council services.

It is intended that this report provides a high level analysis of progress with a particular focus on outstanding recommendations and new inspections since the date of the last report (September 2012). A summary of these are detailed within the table in Appendix A. In summary;-

- Since the last report there have been one new inspection resulting in 5 new recommendations
- There are currently five action plans relating to Inspection and Audit recommendations which are still “active” in the authority (ie contain outstanding recommendations which are still relevant)
- Across these action plans 21 recommendations have been completed and 21 remain outstanding

6. Recommendations

That the Audit Committee:

- **Note the progress achieved against outstanding actions**
- **Advice further actions as necessary**

7. Proposals and Details

The monitoring of Audit and Inspection recommendations provides evidence that the Council is able to respond to external challenge in a timely manner and is committed to continuous improvement. Additionally through analysing the recommendations we are demonstrating our ability to identify and rectify detrimental trends or issues and to deliver service improvement.

Progress against Recommendations

Since the previous report progress against recommendations is good. Although none have been signed off as complete in this period and some timescales for individual improvement actions have slipped, all plans are on track to be completed and are reviewed regularly by Directorates.

Analysis of outstanding recommendations

Progress against all outstanding audit and inspection recommendations of council services are monitored by Performance & Quality Teams. Currently there are 21 recommendations which still need addressing. All are currently being progressed and monitored within Directorates.

In relation to the Audit Commissions review of Health Inequalities in 2009 which relates to breastfeeding. Progress remains ongoing and breastfeeding initiation has dipped and is off target. Performance has increased to 63.55% (Q3 2012/13). An equity audit is still planned to review the data variation in 2012/13. Challenges in accessing data from RFT have prevented progress.

In relation to the Registration Service, the inspector is satisfied with the improvements made so far. All actions within RMBC's remit will be complete by end March. Monitoring / work with partners will continue beyond this date to further understand the factors / scope outside of RMBC to drive further improvement.

Children's Services continue to monitor OFSTED recommendations as part of the Improvement Panel.

New Inspection Reports received

There has been one new inspection judgements received since the last report.

▪ Youth Offending Services (YOS) – Short Quality Screening

This was undertaken in November 2011 by the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

Although no overall judgement is given the YJB report summary stated that they saw evidence that case managers were committed to providing a good service to children and young people and to the wider community. While they saw some work of the highest standard, they were some inconsistencies in other cases, assessments and plans. The following were highlighted as particular strengths:

- Attention to the changing demographic in Rotherham and earlier this year specialist training had been delivered by a local Czech Roma community worker. We saw evidence of this being put into effect in one particular case in the sample. An interpreter was used and letters translated both for the young person and his mother. Another

member of staff was learning key greetings and phrases and including these on appointment cards.

- A number of children and young people had completed reparation hours at a local hospice, benefiting the community and developing their own insights into the needs of others.
- A voluntary drop-in service was offered to children and young people at the end of their court order where they could seek advice from a YOS worker. By providing this opportunity they felt better supported at the end of their contact with the YOS and would have someone to speak to if they felt tempted to reoffend.

The five recommendations were;

- Improve timeliness of initial assessments (YJB ASSET Tool) .
- Improve quality of assessments, in particular to assess the likelihood of re-offending
- Review of assessments at regular intervals and following significant changes in circumstances.
- Improve screening of vulnerability
- Management oversight, including supervision and quality assurance arrangements.

The action plan in relation to this is monitored by the Safer Rotherham Partnership and the CYPS Improvement Panel.

A summary of progress against all recommendations from “Active” Inspection & Audit action plans is provided in Appendix A. The Performance and Quality Team continue to work with services to ensure that the associated outstanding recommendations are completed and ensure services are prepared for new or changing inspection and assessment regimes.

8. Risks and uncertainties

Any risks and uncertainties are highlighted in the report above and should be noted as a matter of interest in light of the potential impact on other aspects of Council performance.

It is essential that in this time of uncertainty and in the absence of any national performance regime (other than children and adult services) that we continue to be able to demonstrate continuous improvement and self regulation through the implementation of any previously recommended actions.

9. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Approaches to inspection and assessment of local authorities are being developed across Government in the light of the decentralisation and localism agenda. In future any central inspection will be focused on the most vulnerable i.e. help to maintain high standards in children’s services and adult social care. Intervention will focus on cases of serious risk or failure.

In addition, the Government has now published a draft Audit Bill that confirms changes to the external audit regime applicable from 2012/13. New external audit appointments have been made to all local authorities by the Audit Commission, and these include confirmation of KPMG as Rotherham MBC’s external auditor for the next 5 years. The Draft Bill confirms that the scope of external audit will remain substantially the same as in the

current regime, which means we do not expect there to be any significant changes to the external audit programmes in the future.

10. Background Papers and Consultation

- All inspectorates' reports, letters and action plans since mid 2007.
- All new and follow up audit reports.
- All inspectorate frameworks, arrangements and guidance documents

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Summary of Recommendations from “Active” Inspection & Audit action plans (which took place from 2007 to Present)

With summary of progression against recommendations since the last report and in total

Inspection / Review (date)	External Assessor	Number of recommendations	Implemented at last report	Implemented since last report	Still outstanding	Overall Completion Date for Recommendations	STATUS
Resources							
Addressing Health Inequalities (January 09)	AC	10	9	0	1	2012	Ongoing
Environment and Development Services							
Review Report On The Registration Service In Rotherham (July 12)	Home Office	3	N/A	0	3	Mar 13	Ongoing
Neighbourhoods and Adults Services							
<i>No active inspection plans</i>							
Children’s Services							
Thematic inspection of disability services (March 12)	Ofsted	11	3	5	8	Mar 13	Ongoing
Unannounced inspection of child protection (July 12)	Ofsted	13	0	9	4	Mar 13	Ongoing
Youth Offending Service – Short Quality Screening (Nov 12)	Youth Justice Board	5	N/A	0	5	Apr 13	Ongoing
Total Recommendations in “Active” Inspection & Audit action plans		42	12	14	21		