

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

25 January 2024

Children's Services Improvement

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise progress in improving outcomes for children and young people through delivery of Children's Integrated Services Improvement Plan.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:
 - (a) If it wishes to make any comments or recommendations regarding the approach to, or progress in improvement of children's services; and
 - (b) To consider its approach to future scrutiny of improvement, including focus and timescales.

3 Background information

- 3.1 In November 2022, the Committee considered the findings of the inspection of children's services carried out by Ofsted in July 2022, and the action being taken and proposed to be taken to address the arising issues. The Council has been judged to be 'Requires improvement to be good' in the domains of the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families and the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers; and 'Inadequate' in the domain of experiences and progress of children who need help and protection. As a result, the overall outcome of the inspection judgement was 'Inadequate' and Ofsted identified eight specific areas for improvement. At that time the Committee was assured that work had already started on addressing the issues raised by Ofsted, alongside reviewing its pre-existing Improvement Plan to ensure that it reflects the specific areas identified for improvement by Ofsted as well as wider development of the Service.
- 3.2 In January 2023, the Committee reviewed the development and delivery of the Improvement Plan, including speaking to the Independent Advisor appointed by the Department for Education to provide support and challenge who is the Chair of the Improvement Board. He expressed the view that the Corporate Director, Director and Portfolio Holder have a real grip of the issues that need addressing and that a lot had already been achieved in relation to the 'front door' to services, but that there was more to do, for example in relation issues of consent and ensuring consistent thresholds across the service. The Committee was informed

that the most significant risk to delivery of the Improvement Plan was workforce.

- 3.3 The Committee also received a detailed update on progress in addressing the issues relating to the 'front door' to services (the multi-agency safeguarding hub [MASH] and duty and assessment services). At that time the Committee commented that this update was well evidenced and reassuring.
- 3.4 In March 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools updated the Committee on progress and the first Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 28 February and 1 March. The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.4 In September 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Education, and the Director for Children's Integrated Services and Education updated the Committee on progress and the second Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 25 and 26 July 2023. The visit focussed on children in need and children with a Child Protection Plan in place. The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee Members.
- 3.5 The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Education, and the Director for Children's Integrated Services will be present at the meeting to discuss the third Ofsted Monitoring Visit.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Report from the Director of Children's Integrated Services
- 4.2 Inspection of Nottingham City local authority Children's Services
- 4.3 Monitoring Visit to Nottingham City Children's Services February/March 2023
- 4.4 Monitoring Visit to Nottingham City Children's Services July 2023
- 4.5 Monitoring Visit to Nottingham City Children's Services November 2023

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 Ofsted inspection of Nottingham City Local Authority children's services July 2022

6.2 Ofsted Monitoring Visits February 2023, July 2023, and November 2023

6.3 Reports to, and minutes of, meetings of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 03 November 2022, 26 January 2023, 30 March 2023, and 28 September 2023

7 Wards affected

7.1 All

8 Contact information

8.1 Damon Stanton, Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer
E: damon.stanton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
T: 0115 87 64345