

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
11 September 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 the Children's Integrated Services Improvement Plan.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked if it wishes to make any comments or recommendations regarding the approach to, or progress in improvement of Children's Services.

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 multiagency 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.
- 3.5 In September 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People 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.
- 3.6 In January 2024, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education updated the Committee on progress and the third Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 22 and 23 November 2023. The visit focussed on care leavers aged 18 to 25. The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.7 In May 2024, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education updated the Committee on progress and the fourth Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 3 and 4 April 2024. The visit focussed on support to children in care (planning and achieving permanence). The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.8 The fifth Ofsted Monitoring Visit took place on 31 July and 1 August 2024. The visit focused on the Front Door (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Duty and Emergency Duty Team (EDT). The outcomes of this visit will be presented to Committee members at this meeting.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Children's Services Improvement Report from the Directorate
- 4.2 Monitoring Visit to Nottingham City Children's Services July/August 2024
- 4.3 Inspection of Nottingham City Local Authority Children's Services 2022

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/March 2023, July 2023, November 2023, April 2024, and July/August 2024
- 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

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