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**To: Health and Well-Being Board**

**10<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Subject: Re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.**

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**1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Health and Well-Being Board of the re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers specifically in relation to partners.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Health and Well-Being Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Consider the recommendations highlighted in the inspection report
  - 2) Endorse the agreed approach of multi-agency engagement and support to improve outcomes for children
  - 3) Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

**3 Information and Background**

- 3.1 Children's Services were re-inspected by Ofsted 6-30 March 2017.
- 3.2 The Ofsted re-inspection of services report published on **13<sup>th</sup> June 2017**, judged overall Children's Services in Coventry "**requires improvement to be good.**" Services for Children are no longer inadequate, this marks a key point in the improvement journey and demonstrates the improvements made. The Ofsted judgements received are as follows:
- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| • Children who need help and protection          | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| • Children looked after and achieving permanence | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| - Adoption performance                           | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| - Experience and progress of care leavers        | <b>Good</b>                 |
| • Leadership, management and governance          | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
- 3.3 The Department for Education DfE removed Children's Services from intervention on the 13 June 2017, the service are no longer subject to an improvement notice. Supervision and support will be provided by the DfE for the next 12 months, which will include two six month reviews.

3.4 The inspection report attached in **Appendix 1** identifies nine recommendations for improvement. Recommendation 2 and 3 below specifically relate to partners.

- Recommendation 2 - Ensure that the Local Safeguarding Children Board supports partners to understand and consistently apply appropriate thresholds to levels of need at every stage of the child's journey, including the early-help pathway.
- Recommendation 3 - Ensure that the introduction of the risk management methodology across the authority includes partners and the authority at all stages.

3.5 The areas of partnership strength highlighted in the Ofsted report include:

**Supporting timeliness of assessments** - Quality of assessments has improved over the last 6 months. Good partnership work means that social workers receive early alerts from health colleagues, and this provides the necessary time to complete comprehensive assessments.

**Attendance at conference meetings** - Child protection conferences are well attended by relevant partners.

**Contribution to Child In Need Plans** - The majority of children supported under children in need arrangements have plans in place monitored by regular multi-agency meetings.

**Addressing radicalisation** - Partnership arrangements are well established and provide an effective response to the risk to young people from radicalisation.

**Joint Commissioning of mental health** - Joint Commissioning of dedicated mental health services for looked after children is developing with the co-location of a mental health practitioner in the children looked after social worker teams to ensure that assessments are carried out promptly and that children have a clear and easy pathway in to the most appropriate service.

**Meeting the health needs of LAC** - The vast majority of children's health needs are met.

**Care Leavers Health Assessments and Support** - The majority of care leavers have an up to date health assessment. This ensures that most young people benefit from regular access to a range of health professionals. Care leavers who are parents of expectant parents benefit from effective partnership working between their personal advisor, midwives and other specialist support partners. A local charity provides confidential drop in sessions that offer advice and guidance regarding substance misuse and access to sexual health services.

**LAC Education** - The proportion of children looked after who are now attending a good or better school has increased over time, from 62% in 2013-14 to 82%.

**Care Leavers Education** - The educational progress of care leavers studying beyond school-leaving age is good. For example, the proportion of care leavers who successfully progress to positive employment, education, and training destinations has rapidly improved over time from 35.9% (2013-14) to an in-year figure of 66.7%.

**Needs Assessment and Children and Young People's Plan** - The joint strategic needs assessment and the children and young people's plan identify cross-borough needs, based on comprehensive data and analysis.

## 4 Options Considered and Recommend Proposal

4.1 A Children's Services Improvement Plan has been developed in response to the Ofsted recommendations and areas for development.

4.2 The report identifies a number of issues for partners including the application of thresholds and the appetite for risk across the strategic safeguarding partnership. The Improvement Board will work to strengthen and provide assurance and governance role of partners and the LSCB. The LSCB will report on progress made in respect of the required areas of improvement that relate to partners. The areas for partners have been identified as follows:

### **Risk averse approach across partners –**

- A historical risk-averse approach and culture in the city has meant that, when partner agencies have concerns about a child, they refer the matter to children's social care, with the result that the local authority undertakes too many assessments of need and too many child protection enquiries. Many of these lead to no further intervention.
- Partners who undertake less complex assessments of need remain uncertain about the application of thresholds, both at the CAF level and higher levels of need, and this has contributed to high numbers of both contacts and referrals to social care. (Recommendation)
- The authority has invested in a nationally recognised methodology for understanding and management of risk to children. However, although in operation for a year, it is not yet fully embedded. Partner agencies have only recently agreed to jointly use this way of working. This has meant a level of inconsistency in how risk is understood and measured across the partnership. A shared, cross-partnership understanding of risk should contribute to a lessening of the current risk-averse culture in Coventry. (Recommendation)

**Timeliness of some initial health assessments** - There are delays the completion of initial health assessments for a minority of children. The impact of these delays is minimal for most children.

**Care Leaver Health Histories** - At the time of the inspection, only approximately half of care leavers had an up-to-date health history. This means that, at the point at which they leave care, young people may not have full information about their health profiles from birth, including their immunisation status. Plans are in place to ensure that all care leavers have access to their complete health profiles.

## **5 Next steps**

- 5.1 The final Improvement Plan will submitted to Ofsted and the DfE by 20 September 2017.
- 5.2 The report and revised Improvement plan will be shared with staff and partners and progress against the plan reported on a regular basis.

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