

---

**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**4 April 2019**

**Subject: Children's Services Ofsted Focused Visit**

---

### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of the outcome of the Children's Services Ofsted Focused Visit held on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) To note the letter from Ofsted detailing the areas for development
  - 2) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 Ofsted re-inspected Children's Services on 6<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the outcome of the inspection was published on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017, Children's Services were judged as "requires improvement to be good". Services for Children are no longer inadequate.
- 3.2 The Department for Education (DfE) removed Children's Services from intervention on 13 June 2017, the service is no longer subject to an improvement notice. Supervision and support has been provided by the DfE up to June 2018. This has now ended.
- 3.3 A report on the future arrangements for continuing and sustaining improvements in Coventry was presented by the Independent Chair and the Director of Children's Services at Improvement Board on 3 October 2018. The Children's Services Improvement Board will be replaced by an Executive Group to retain political and corporate oversight of Children's Services Continuous Improvement.
- 3.4 The Continuous Improvement Executive Group will ensure tighter focus on continuous improvement and Ofsted preparation. The impact of performance will be managed and monitored by the group. This is an interim measure before returning to business as usual in accordance with the revised arrangements for Children's Safeguarding, and subject to satisfactory inspection by June 2020. At this time the Executive Group would cease, and oversight transferred to the revised Safeguarding Partnership and monitored as business as usual. Board members fully supported the revised arrangements and membership of the group
- 3.5 The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive continue to give public commitment that Children's Services remains a key priority for the Council. This includes prioritising funding for Children's Services to maintain its capacity to improve. The Council, alongside partner organisations continue a relentless focus on securing improvements in services for children, young people and families to ensure they are safeguarded and achieve positive outcomes.
- 3.6 Ofsted's revised framework includes focused visits to local authorities who are judged to be 'requires improvement' the first visit was held on 30-31 January 2018. Two Inspectors spent two days reviewing the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and speaking to social workers and partners. Visits were also made to two area social teams to review

children in need cases. The letter confirming the outcome of the visit was published on 22 February 2018.

- 3.7 The Ofsted Annual Conversation with regional representatives is undertaken each year, this took place on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The meeting is part of a broader meeting covering education and early years. A further focused visit will be undertaken prior to the next standard Inspection which is likely to be between December 2019 and June 2020.

#### **4 Ofsted Focused Visit**

- 4.1 A further Ofsted Focused visit was held on **26th and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019**. The visit focused on permanency planning and achieving permanency. This involved two Inspectors reviewing leadership at all levels and:

- Return to birth family
- Connected (family and friends) care
- Adoption
- Long term fostering
- Special guardianship

- 4.2 Overall, the visit was positive with strong evidence of an improving service. The redesign is having a positive impact for children who experience less turnover of social workers, life story work is improving and fostering to adopt is an emerging strength.

- 4.3 Ofsted stated we knew ourselves well, and that our self-evaluation was accurate. More recent work is significantly better and Ofsted recognised that there is a strategic drive to achieve permanence for our children. However, for some children this takes too long, and some children experience too much drift and delay.

- 4.4 Our audit and quality assurance function was complemented, reinforcing how important it is that we undertake our audits each month and then feedback the learning in to practice. It was also evident how our IRO function has improved. We need to challenge ourselves further to ensure that the robust challenge from IROs results in prompt improvement for our children.

- 4.5 The report was published by Ofsted on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Attached in **Appendix 1**.

Authors: Sonia Watson, Children's Services Programme Manager  
John Gregg, Director of Children's Services

**Contact details:** [john.gregg@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:john.gregg@coventry.gov.uk)  
[sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk)

Tel: (024) 7683 3402

Tel: (024) 7683 1890

#### **Appendix 1**

Ofsted Focused Visit letter 26-27 February attached.