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

**20 October 2022**

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

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## **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of the re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Consider the recommendations highlighted in the inspection report
  - 2) Identify any items to look at in more detail on the work programme 2022-23
  - 3) Receive the Development Plan at a future meeting in response to the Inspection report
  - 4) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

## **3 Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services**

- 3.1 Children's Services were re-inspected by Ofsted 13 June – 1 July 2022.
- 3.2 The scope of the inspection since the last inspection has changed, with a shift in focus to a strength-based approach. The inspection focused on social workers and social work practice. The scope and what Inspectors evaluated is highlighted below:
- 3.3 **Help and Protection Scope:**
- The effectiveness of the front door, with specific reference to any rise in and response to referrals, section 47 enquiries and strategy discussions.
  - The progress of children subject to child protection and child in need plans (those who have experienced abuse, neglect or exploitation).
  - The progress of those recently stepped up or stepped down to early help and the exercise of thresholds.
  - Edge of care/pre-proceedings, particularly those subject to a letter before proceedings

- 3.4 **Children in care and care leavers Scope:**

- The focus on physical/mental health of children in care and care leavers, including how the local authority has maintained contact with the child/care leaver and how they've facilitated contact with families.
- Placement decisions, including the quality of matching, particularly when sufficiency is a challenge.

**3.5 Impact of leader's scope:**

- The quality assurance of practice and 'line of sight' to the quality and impact of practice with children and families.
- Management and workforce capacity, including responses to staff well-being.
- The effectiveness of leaders in leading and contributing to multi-agency working that leads to effective social work practice.

The self-assessment completed in January 2022 was provided to Inspectors and provides details of impact and practice. **See Appendix 1.**

3.6 The Ofsted re-inspection of services report was published on **12<sup>th</sup> August 2022**, judged all areas and the overall judgement for Children's Services in Coventry to be "**Good**", recognising the significant hard work and dedication of so many employees in children's services as well as the many other services that work across the Council to provide good outcomes for children, young people and their families.

3.7 Children's Services are no longer judged to be "requires improvement to be good" marking a key point in the improvement journey and demonstrating the improvement made since 2017.

3.8 The Ofsted judgements received are as follows:

- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families **Good**
- The experience and progress of children who need help and protection **Good**
- The experience and progress of children in care and care leavers **Good**
- Overall effectiveness **Good**

3.9 The full inspection report [www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80456](http://www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80456) is also attached in **Appendix 2.**

3.10 The inspection findings are highlighted below:

- There is strong political commitment to children's services across the whole council. Significant investment has been made to develop a multi-agency early help hubs that cover all wards
- The voice of the child is important in Coventry and there is a strong participation offer that ensures that children's voices are heard and listened to at all levels of the local authority
- Most children enter care when they need to and live in appropriate and permanent placements that meet their needs. As a result, most children have improving experiences, progress and outcomes
- Most children in care benefit from committed social workers who know their children well and take great pride in their achievements
- Senior leaders' drive and determination have led to improved services for children and families in Coventry. This has created an environment in which relationship-based and restorative social work is embedded throughout children's services

- This is an important change in the culture and focus of the organisation since the last inspection, which has led to most children experiencing improved outcomes
- Strong multi-agency working in the local authority protects children from exploitation. This is a real strength, with particularly strong links between children's services and the police leading to effective mapping and disruption work
- The MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) is well managed and provides an effective and timely response to contacts and referrals
- Children's participation is a real strength in this local authority. Children and young people are involved in social work and councillor training. Young people are now involved in the commissioning work that is currently taking place with CAMHS around mental health and emotional well-being provision for care leavers
- All of this ensures that children's services in Coventry are responsive to children and young people's needs

3.11 The inspection report identifies four areas that need further improvement:

- The focus on children's views and carers capacity to meet children's needs in private fostering arrangements
- The response to children aged 16 and 17 who are homeless
- The mental and emotional wellbeing provision for care leavers
- The quality of team managers supervision provided to social workers

## 4 Next Steps

- 4.1 A Children's Services Development Plan will be developed in response to the Ofsted recommendations and areas for development.
- 4.2 The Development Plan will be presented to a future Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) and submitted to Ofsted by November 2022.
- 4.3 The Development Plan will be shared with staff and partners and progress against the plan reported on a regular basis.

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) Tel: (024) 76978470  
[sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: (024) 76971402