

Subject:	Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services – Brighton & Hove 2018		
Date of Meeting:	17 September 2018		
Report of:	Executive Director – Families, Children & Learning		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Carolyn Bristow	Tel: 01273 293736
	Email:	Carolyn.bristow@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 To provide Children, Young People & Skills Committee with an update on the recent Children's Services Ofsted inspection and to seek approval on the required post inspection action plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That committee note the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) report given as appendix 1
- 2.2 That the chair of the committee write to children's services staff on behalf of the committee to thank them for the work they have done to improve services and outcomes for vulnerable children and young people
- 2.3 That committee agrees the post Ofsted ILACS action plan given as appendix 2

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In January 2018 Ofsted introduced a new inspection framework for children's services, replacing the previous Single Inspection Framework.
- 3.2 This new framework focuses on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements:
- to help and protect children
 - the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home
 - the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption
 - the experiences and progress of care leavers.
- In addition, Ofsted evaluate the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people and the quality of professional practice.
- 3.3 The previous framework also had a focus on the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. This no longer features in the new framework.

- 3.4 Brighton & Hove’s Families, Children & Learning directorate and partners have been preparing for this new framework by attending briefing sessions with Ofsted and evaluating our services against the new inspection criteria.
- 3.5 Brighton & Hove were notified on the 2 July 2018 that a standard ILACS inspection would take place and would run until Thursday 19 July, with initial confidential feedback being shared on Friday 20 July 2018.
- 3.6 The main inspection team were made up of 4 Ofsted inspectors who were joined by an Education HMI for 1 day and a Regulatory Inspector (focussing on fostering and adoption arrangements) for 2 days. The team were also joined by a Quality Assurance officer for a number of days across the inspection.
- 3.7 During the inspection, the team spent the majority of their time with social workers looking at individual cases. They also met with some children and young people and a group of foster carers. They visited all our children’s social work teams across the city including our Children’s Disability Service and saw some of our other services too.
- 3.8 The inspection report was published on 21 August 2018 and confirmed the judgements as:

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires Improvement
The experiences of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

Ofsted recognised the effective work that had taken place to improve services since our previous inspection in 2015. In particular the report notes the following:

“The chief executive, director of children’s services (DCS) and lead member have a clear and strong focus on improving services and outcomes for children in Brighton and Hove. Supported by strong, cross-party political and corporate support for children’s services, they are ensuring that children’s needs are prioritised by the council.”

- 3.9 Particular areas of strength have been identified as:
- We know ourselves well, our self-evaluation submitted to Ofsted prior to the inspection was correct
 - Social workers’ morale is high and they enjoy working in Brighton & Hove
 - Children in need of help and protection receive prompt and appropriate help in line with their needs
 - Children in care and care leavers receive very child centred support which is having a positive impact on their lives

- The adolescent service, children's disability services. leaving care and our early parenting assessment programme were identified as areas of strong practice
- 3.10 Some areas for further improvement were identified:
- Case recording to be consistent in all areas
 - The response to children in need to be as robust as that for children in need of protection and children in care
 - The progression of pre-proceedings work to be effectively monitored to reduce any delay
 - The response to children who go missing from home and care, in particular Return Home Interviews to be more robust
 - All private fostering and care leaver cases to be allocated to named workers
- 3.11 The local authority consider the report to be fair and accept the findings and recommendations. Ofsted recognised that we know ourselves well and had already identified all the areas that need improvement.
- 3.12 Steps were already in place to resolve the issues relating to Return Home Interviews for missing children by bringing the pan Sussex commissioned service back in-house; recruitment had taken place to both the private fostering and care leavers service at the time of the inspection; work had begun around Children in Need with a CIN strategy and action plan drafted in June 2018 to address the issues Ofsted subsequently identified; work to improve case recording was already in progress with success achieved in improving the use of chronologies.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 These statutory inspections are conducted under section 136 of the Education and inspections Act 2006.
- 4.2 Ofsted require us to submit an action plan (given as appendix 2) by 30 October 2018 (70 days post release of the report).

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The voice of children, young people and their families is an essential element of our work and is integral to our quality assurance processes. The inspection report is positive about the engagement we and others make with children and young people in the city, in particular children in care and care leavers. We recognise there is more to do to improve our Children in Care Council.
- 5.2 Ofsted have shared with us a child friendly version of their findings which we have shared with relevant children in our social care services

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Ofsted now consider Brighton & Hove to be delivering good children's social care services. There is more to do to ensure all our processes work in the way they should and plans to achieve that are already in place.

- 6.2 It is unlikely that this area of work will receive another full inspection until at least 2021 as the ILACS framework will take around 3 years to be completed with every local authority in the country. We will however receive some unannounced focussed visits from Ofsted (2 day inspections with no judgements attached, just a printed letter) over the next two years. The Local Authority will also be part of an unannounced Joint Targeted Area Inspection, alongside Sussex Police, our colleagues across Health plus the local Probation Services. Planning is underway to ensure we are prepared for those.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There are a number of actions proposed to address the issues raised by the inspection detailed in appendix 2. These will all be funded within existing financial resources either held corporately, in the case of the re-procurement of the new integrated children's system (ICS) or in the current budgets within the Families, Children and Learning Directorate (FCL). The total costs relating to the action plan for the FCL will be £0.046m per annum. Although the action plan will incur no additional financial commitments, one of the proposals is to in-source services for missing children adding one post to the current staffing establishment. It is not anticipated that the measures outlined in the Post Ofsted inspection action plan will have any adverse impact on the councils financial position.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis

Date: 29/08/2018

Legal Implications:

The report sets out how the Council intends to respond to the Ofsted report as it is required to do by The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007

Lawyer Consulted: Sandra O'Brien

Date: 29/08/2018

Equalities Implications:

- 7.1 Broader arrangements for children and young people with disabilities are covered in a separate inspection framework, one we positively engaged with in 2016. During this inspection, the team found that "disabled children benefit from high-quality, responsive support." The team also found the support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children to be a strength, with social workers giving "good consideration to children's cultural and religious needs".

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.2 Social work and early help teams are distributed across the city to enable community working and to reduce the need for travel.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.3 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Brighton & Hove Standard ILACS 2018 report
2. Brighton & Hove post inspection ILACS Ofsted action plan 2018

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

