

Subject:	Ofsted Action Plan		
Date of Meeting:	13 September 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Families Children & Learning		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Tom Stibbs	Tel: 01273 296049
	Email:	Tom.Stibbs@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan from the Ofsted inspection of August 2018 and the focused visit in February 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee notes this report and its contents including the next steps.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The positive development of social work practice for children and families in Brighton and Hove was recognised by [Ofsted's report of their inspection in July 2018:](#)

“The new model of practice has been embedded and is resulting in greater continuity of social work relationships for children and families. Outcomes for children are largely positive and, frequently, risks are reducing, particularly for hard-to-reach, vulnerable adolescents.... Social workers’ morale is high, and workers spoken to as part of the inspection told inspectors that they enjoy working in Brighton and Hove.”

For the first time, children’s social work services in Brighton and Hove were rated as good by Ofsted in 2018.

- 3.2 Ofsted returned to complete a [‘focused visit’ in February 2020](#). The inspectors concluded that we:
“have built on what was working well and have taken steady steps to improve ... Small social work teams, called pods in Brighton and Hove, are embedded, are valued by social workers, and are working well.”
- 3.3 The Ofsted inspectors also identified areas of improvement as part of their visits. In 2018 these were:

- Case recording, including the recording of management oversight and supervision, to monitor children’s progress and outcomes effectively.
- The response to children in need, including clear plans with appropriate actions and timescales and regular reviews through network meetings.
- The progression of pre-proceedings work, in order to reduce unnecessary delay for children.
- The response to children who go missing from home and care, including the timeliness and recording of return home interviews to capture intelligence to inform service delivery.
- The allocation of private fostering and care leaver cases to workers, to allow timely statutory checks and regular visits and contact, in order to ensure that children live in safe arrangements to meet their needs.

3.4 In 2020 the areas for improvement were:

- Multi-agency attendance at strategy discussions in response to child protection concerns about children who are already open to the service.
- The recording of visits to children to ensure that these effectively capture children’s experiences and voices and are relevant to the plan.
- The follow-up to audits to ensure that the actions required are implemented to improve practice.

Updated Action to Address Improvement Areas

- 3.5 Case recording, including the recording of management oversight and supervision, to monitor children’s progress and outcomes effectively:** an audit of the recording model for Children’s Social Work was completed by the Recording Steering Group and the action plan implemented. This included the introduction in June 2020 of new forms to record visits, ongoing work, and supervision. Regular quality assurance processes also include audit of recording and management oversight. While there continue to be areas for improvement in recording, progress is being made. For example, in Quarter 1 2021-22, 2% of the audited records were graded red (‘does not meet required standards’) and two-thirds were graded green (‘meets all required standards’). All of the records had clear evidence of management oversight. Only 47% of records were graded green at the time of the Ofsted inspection in 2018. The move to Eclipse, the new recording system, which is now planned for later in 2021, will support more creative and innovative ways of recording the voice and experience of children.
- 3.6 The response to children in need, including clear plans with appropriate actions and timescales and regular reviews through network meetings:** The Child in Need Strategy was launched in October 2019, placing a clear structure around this work, with a number of key requirements. This represented a new model for supporting, monitoring, and reviewing children in need. Again, there have been challenges in implementing this work, including due to the impact of Covid. However, there has been a significant improvement in work to support children in need since the last Ofsted inspection and the audits in Quarter 1 2021-22 showed that all children in need have a plan and 96% of children in need have

a plan which is clear in terms of actions and timescales. The audits also show that for four out of five children in need, all statutory processes, including multi-agency reviews, have been completed which is a 15% increase on 6 months previously. This improvement in the effectiveness of support to children in need also seems to be making a difference to the outcomes for children. For example, in the first quarter of this year, no children in need were rated red for outcomes and three-quarters were rated green, an increase from 50% the previous quarter.

- 3.7 The progression of pre-proceedings work, in order to reduce unnecessary delay for children.** This action has been marked as completed as a quarterly tracking process has been established to make sure that effective oversight is in place for children in pre-proceedings work.
- 3.8 The response to children who go missing from home and care, including the timeliness and recording of return home interviews to capture intelligence to inform service delivery:** This action has also been marked as completed as since the Ofsted inspection new missing procedures have been launched, in November 2018, and a missing children worker has been established, and is now embedded in the Extended Adolescent Service to increase the capacity to support return home interviews. There was a significant rise in the number of children who were reported missing last year as, rightly, the police stopped using the category 'absent' for missing children. There was an initial decrease when the first lockdown started but this has increased subsequently. A lot of work has been done with social work pods to improve performance for timely return home interviews for children with a social worker, which remains a struggle, and again the improved recording offered by Eclipse should help to improve this.
- 3.9 The allocation of private fostering and care leaver cases to workers, to allow timely statutory checks and regular visits and contact, in order to ensure that children live in safe arrangements to meet their needs:** This action has also been completed and all young people who are care leavers or who are in a private fostering placement are allocated to a named worker.
- 3.10 Multi-agency attendance at strategy discussions in response to child protection concerns about children who are already open to the service:** Again this area has been addressed. Social workers were reminded to include health and education representatives in strategy meetings and the impact of this was audited and, for example, in Quarter 4 2020-21 almost 90% of strategy meetings included a health representative.
- 3.11 The recording of visits to children to ensure that these effectively capture children's experiences and voices and are relevant to the plan:** as described above, this area has been addressed by the development and implementation of new forms that focus on the voice of the child and these will be transferred across to Eclipse and supported by the increased flexibility and creativity of the new system.
- 3.12 The follow-up to audits to ensure that the actions required are implemented to improve practice:** work is ongoing to address this area. Since the focused visit last year, the Quality Assurance Managers have been monitoring audit action plans. This shows that managers need to have a system in place to make sure that actions from audits do not get lost. The Quality Assurance Managers will

review audit actions 3 months after the audit to ascertain whether these actions have been completed.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report highlights that significant progress has been made to address the areas of improvement identified by Ofsted in their last inspection, in July 2018, and the focused visit, in February 2020. Despite the impact of COVID, this progress has generally continued over the last year and a half and this is a testament to the hard work and commitment of practitioners. We do not know when the next Ofsted inspection will be, but we continue to make sure that the learning from previous inspections is taken forward. There remain some areas that require further work and next steps to address these include:

Next Steps:

- The implementation of the Eclipse recording system, which is now planned for late 2021 due to technical issues and the impact of the pandemic
- Further work by Heads of Service and Pod Managers to make sure that support to children in need is purposeful and progressed in a timely way
- Quality Assurance processes in place to make sure that actions arising from audits are completed.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Our model of social work practice was developed on feedback from families and included input from an advisory group of young people. We continue to work closely with the Children in Care Council and Youth Participation Service in evaluating and delivering our services. We are currently working to co-produce a Peer Mentoring Service for parents involved in social work services and an evaluation of our services led by families.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The committee is asked to note the contents of this report including the next steps.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There are no Financial Implications arising from the recommendations proposed in the body of this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis

Date: 28/7/21

Legal Implications:

7.1

Lawyer Consulted: *Date:*

Equalities Implications:

7.2 Equalities impact assessments for staff and for children and families were completed in 2015 as part of the service redesign and the assessment for children and families is in the process of being reviewed.

Sustainability Implications:

7.3

Brexit Implications:

7.4

Any Other Significant Implications:

Crime & Disorder Implications:

7.5

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

7.6

Public Health Implications:

7.7

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

7.8

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Background Documents

