

DECISION-MAKER:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SUBJECT:	PROGRESS REPORT ON POST OFSTED ANNOUNCED INSPECTION ACTION PLAN
DATE OF DECISION:	8 NOVEMBER 2012
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES & DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEARNING
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	

BRIEF SUMMARY

An 'Announced' inspection of Safeguarding and Children Looked After services by OfSTED took place during 23 April to 4 May 2012. Their inspection report was published by OfSTED on 13 June 2012. Key issues arising from the Inspection were reported to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in July 2012.

The OfSTED report recommended that the Council work with its partners to address 17 areas for improvement to ensure the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements and services to Children Looked After.

This report summarises progress in addressing the areas for improvement recommended by OfSTED as a result of their Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Children Looked After services in Southampton. These are detailed in Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Committee consider this report and note the progress made in relation to delivering a stable and improving Safeguarding service, and discuss the content of the Action Plan and identify any related issues or concerns with the Cabinet Member.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To ensure a continued focus upon the areas of improvement identified by OfSTED in their report on Southampton's Safeguarding and Children Looked After services.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

2. The Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 sets out the action taken since the OfSTED inspection of Safeguarding and Children Looked After services. Fundamentally services will improve when we have a stable and permanent workforce. The Council has made significant progress in recruiting competent and able newly qualified social workers (NQSWS) following its proactive early recruitment fair for Social Work graduates in July 2012.
3. The Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services, with the support of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, are working towards agreement on an additional 20 posts which were confirmed on 19 October 2012. Confirmation of this commitment from the Council will significantly improve the morale of staff in Safeguarding services. This will also enable the service to phase out its high level of dependency on Agency social workers while the Council continues to recruit to vacancies. This will be achieved through a range of recruitment strategies including a recruitment drive for experienced social workers following resolution of the Terms and Conditions dispute and agreement of a retention

strategy. If this fails to provide the service with sufficient workforce stability the Council will explore alternative strategies such as the targeted recruitment of experienced social workers from overseas. Agreement of a related Retention Strategy for the workforce will be completed during November 2012.

4. There is a workforce strategy in place to develop the new workers and there will be joint working with health colleagues who have recruited additional newly qualified health visitors. The team continue to move forward in improving services for the City's most vulnerable children at a time of significant financial difficulty.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. To not respond to the considered views of the national regulatory service for inspecting the collective effectiveness of safeguarding and children looked after services would potentially put the Local Authority and its partners at risk of failing to meet the safeguarding needs of vulnerable local children and young people. Not responding to areas for improvement identified by OfSTED would also have significant reputational consequences for the council when its safeguarding arrangements are next assessed by OfSTED.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

6. There are no capital implications as a direct result of this report.
7. In order to respond to a large number of the recommendations revenue resources will be found within the existing Children's Services and Learning budgets

Property/Other

8. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory Power to undertake the proposals in the report:

9. This report has not had the benefit of Legal Services input.

Other Legal Implications:

10. This report has not had the benefit of Legal Services input.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

11. None.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Post OfSTED Integrated Safeguarding Improvement Plan
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Integrated Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject/recommendations in the report require an Integrated Impact Assessment to be carried out.	No
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Other Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	None	
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Integrated Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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