

DECISION-MAKER:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SUBJECT:	PROGRESS REPORT ON POST OFSTED ANNOUNCED INSPECTION ACTION PLAN
DATE OF DECISION:	14 MARCH 2013
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES & DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEARNING

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>				
AUTHOR:	Name:	Felicity Budgen	Tel:	023 8083 3021
	E-mail:	Felicity.budgen@southampton.gov.uk		
Director	Name:	Clive Webster	Tel:	023 8083 2771
	E-mail:	Clive.webster@southampton.gov.uk		

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. The 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 and November 2012.

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

This report provides members with an update on progress since November 2012 in addressing the areas for improvement recommended by OfSTED.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) That the Committee note on comment on the progress made to deliver a stable and improving Safeguarding service.

REASON FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To ensure a continued focus upon the areas of improvement identified by OfSTED on Southampton's Safeguarding and Children Looked After services, May 2012.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2. 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.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

3. Following the OfSTED Inspection, May 2012, the service responded with a detailed action plan, see appendix 1. This plan is monitored, at a senior level, at the services monthly quality assurance meeting. The plan is RAG rated.
4. To date 4 actions are green, 31 amber and 3 red. The key outstanding area of limited progress that continues to provide the greatest challenge to the council relates to the Council's success in achieving a stable workforce with the balance of skills and experience to deliver practice of consistent quality.
5. Overall service effectiveness will improve significantly when we have a stable and permanent workforce that can take full advantage of all of the other system improvements and investments that have been made. In progressing towards this 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. This will provide a core for its future workforce.
 - Implemented a retention payment that was agreed by the council in December 2012 to assist in attracting and retaining more experienced social workers. Whilst this has not delivered an immediate improvement in workforce stability it is too early to gauge what the impact of this will be. The initiative is being used monthly as part of our ongoing campaign to recruit experienced social workers and senior practitioners.
 - Actively pursued a recruitment campaign from overseas and we are in discussions with a specialist recruitment agency to specifically find and recruit first line managers and experienced social workers. If successful it is anticipated that these actions will fill our vacancies by July.
 - Put in place a workforce strategy to develop both our new and existing social care workforce. This involves joint working with health colleagues who have recruited additional newly qualified health visitors.
6. Since the November 2012 report to OSMC the Council's Management Team have:
 - received a presentation on performance, strengths and challenges on 12 February 2013. The report proposed short and long term solutions. These are currently being drawn into detailed proposals.
 - appointed a Change Team to inform the successful development of the People Directorate. The transformation of Children's Services is an essential workstream of this initiative. This work is being actively developed with our partners in Health and across the City Council.

Felicity Budgen, Head of Safeguarding Service and Donna Chapman, Associate Director - Maternity and Child Health Commissioning, are leading this workstream. Staff from both agencies are working on a new Children's Services design. Taking a "whole child, whole family" and all agency approach to resolving issues earlier and thereby preventing high demand. Teams and agencies will work together effectively to identify solutions both for children, their families, staff and agencies. The model will promote self-reliance.

7. In February, the Council took part in a Peer Challenge. Peer Challenges are organised by the Children's Improvement Board. The CIB was established by the DfE and is established in all nine regions. The Board undertakes a range of functions, but in South East the 19 Local Authorities committed to having one Peer Challenge in all authorities. In Southampton a Peer Challenge took place on progress against our Ofsted action plan. The Peer Challenge process specifically does not result in the production of a written report. The observations and feedback offered by the team are limited by the modest amount of time any team has in its fieldwork to triangulate and establish firm conclusions about a service and are therefore offered informally and un-triangulated. The Southampton Peer Challenge team comprises a mixture of professionals from the other 18 South East Local Authorities. Feedback on the team's reflections about the Council's progress against its action plan will be shared orally.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

8. There are no capital implications as a direct result of this report.
9. 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. Where additional resources are needed these will be supported by a business case and progressed through normal corporate resourcing processes.

Property/Other

10. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

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

Other Legal Implications:

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

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

13. None.

KEY DECISION? No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

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

	None
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Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	No
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Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

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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