

DECISION-MAKER:	HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL		
SUBJECT:	OFSTED ACTION PLAN		
DATE OF DECISION:	25 SEPTEMBER 2014		
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None

BRIEF SUMMARY

On July 7th OFSTED undertook a second unannounced inspection of Southampton Children's Services and Southampton Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) over a period of three weeks. This followed the previous inspection which had been declared by Ofsted to be flawed. The report of inspection with their findings and improvements required has now been published. The improvements that have followed the transformation programme were acknowledged by the inspectors and they deemed the leadership and management of the service to be strong.

However due to there being insufficient evidence yet of the impact of the changes to Children's Services and the LSCB, both were overall judged to Require Improvement. In addition the Leaving Care service was deemed to be inadequate due to systemic failures in the multiagency commitment to this group of young people. Ofsted identified a number of issues that need to be addressed before Children's Services' could be considered to be good. The appendices include the Ofsted Inspection report of Children's Services and the LSCB review and the improvements required. Ofsted will re-inspect Southampton Children's Services in 12-18 months' time and will expect to see all the actions completed and the service demonstrating that it is a good service. Children's services have accepted Ofsted's offer to work together to devise an effective action plan to ensure that services for children in Southampton are good.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) The committee note the Ofsted Inspection report and the LSCB review report
- (ii) The committee review the action plan when it is complete and agree an approach to monitor progress

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This Ofsted Report is a statutory requirement and it is important that it is subject to the scrutiny of the Panel and has ownership by the Council
2. The Panel needs to be aware of the concerns that need to be addressed and the requirement to address these concerns

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. It is a statutory requirement to respond to the Ofsted Inspection report and produce an action plan and that there should be sufficient scrutiny by the council. One of the requirements identified by Ofsted is that scrutiny of Children's Services by Southampton City Councillors should be improved. Therefore no other actions were considered.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

3. The report contains the findings of a thorough inspection of Children's Services, which included consultation with service users and staff. The report highlights that services require improvement because:
 - a) Politicians have not been meeting their corporate parenting responsibilities to champion looked after children and care leavers and ensure that their needs are met.
 - b) Too many care leavers are not in education, employment and or training. Only three care leavers are currently in higher education.
 - c) Over 30% of care leavers are either not in touch with services or assessed as living in unsuitable accommodation.
 - d) Adoption is not achieved quickly enough for a small minority (17%) of looked after children.
 - e) Care plans for looked after children are neither thorough nor comprehensive and therefore are not effective in assisting practitioners in their work to ensure that all children's needs are being met.
 - f) The majority of looked after children do not receive good quality life story work.
 - g) Looked after reviews are too often delayed or not held at the right time
 - h) Arrangements to respond to children who go missing from home and care are not sufficiently robust.
 - i) Strategy discussions do not always include all appropriate agencies and are poorly recorded.
 - j) Case recording is often not sufficiently detailed nor purposefully linked to the care plan of the child.
 - k) The supervision of social workers does not consistently promote reflective practice.
 - l) Performance management arrangements are not sufficiently focused on improving the quality of work with children and families.
4. Under each of these points detail is provided of what the local authority needs to do to improve the services for children and the council is required to publish an action plan within 90 days in order to move from 'requires improvement' to 'good'.
5. The inspectors noted the ambitious improvement programme and the transformation programme, in particular that:

"This inspection found substantial evidence that this programme is beginning to have a positive impact in transforming practice, and that this is beginning to improve outcomes for vulnerable children in a number of key areas."
6. However, the leadership management and governance of the local authority is not yet good as, despite significant progress, there are elements of improvement needed, that are not yet in place. For example, services for care leavers are inadequate; strong corporate parenting is not embedded or

demonstrating impact; tracking and risk management for children missing from home and care are not robust; performance management is an improving area of work but is not yet sufficiently focused on improving quality; and the quality and frequency of professional supervision are not sufficiently consistent. Although significant success has been achieved in reducing reliance on agency social workers, challenges remain in securing a sufficiently experienced, skilled and permanent workforce throughout the organisation. Political scrutiny arrangements have not been effectively applied to key areas of children’s services.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

- 7. There are no capital costs to these proposals and it is anticipated that revenue costs will fall within the existing budget for Children’s Services. Successful implementation of the required changes have the potential to lead to reduced costs in the future as children’s needs are met earlier and there will be less demand for placements for looked after children

Property/Other

- 8. There is no impact on property in the Action Plan

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

- 9. All the actions in this report fall within the statutory powers already accorded to Children’s Services. Ofsted, as a statutory body, has required an improvement in the delivery of Southampton Children’s Services and Southampton City Council Children’s Services is required to comply

Other Legal Implications:

- 10. There are no other legal implications

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 11. There are no Policy Framework Implication

KEY DECISION? No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	The Ofsted Inspection report applies to children in the whole of Southampton
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Ofsted Report on Southampton Children's Services including Southampton LSCB July 2014
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	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)
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1.	None	
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