

DECISION-MAKER:	COUNCIL		
SUBJECT:	OFSTED INSPECTION AND ACTION PLAN		
DATE OF DECISION:	19 NOVEMBER 2014		
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR, PEOPLE		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Christine Robinson	Tel: 023 8083 4669
	E-mail:	Christine.Robinson@southampton.gov.uk	
Director	Name:	Alison Elliott	Tel: 023 8083 2602
	E-mail:	Alison.Elliott@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None.

BRIEF SUMMARY

On July 7th OFSTED undertook a second unannounced inspection of Southampton Children's Services and Southampton LSCB over a period of four weeks. This followed the previous inspection the previous month which had been declared by Ofsted to be flawed. The report of inspection and the required action plan has now been published.

The improvements that have been driven by the children's services 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 outcomes and the delivery of assurance by the LSCB, both were judged overall to Require Improvement to be Good.

In addition the Leaving Care service was deemed to be inadequate due to historic 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 here include the Ofsted Inspection report of Children's Services, the LSCB review report and the actions required and the draft action plan. 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 and a meeting took place on 20th October. The workshop developed further the draft available at that time and these have been incorporated in the draft attached here.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To note the Ofsted Inspection report and the LSCB review report.
- (ii) To review the action plan in order to monitor progress and confirm the direction of travel.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. This Ofsted Report is a statutory requirement and it is important that it is has ownership by the Council.
- 2. The Council 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)

- 4. 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.
- 5. Under each of these points there is a detailed list of what the Local

Authority needs to do to improve the services for children and the Local Authority is required to provide an action plan within 90 days in order to move from Requires Improvement to Good. The attached draft action plan addresses each of the requirements.

6. The inspectors also noted the ambitious improvement programme and the transformation programme:

“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”.

7. 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.”

8. The Ofsted Inspectors noted the improvements in the Local Safeguarding Board:

“Board partners have recognised the significant performance deficits that lie within the system and have embarked on an ambitious programme of change. The Board is helping to ensure the co-ordination of this work and is well engaged in monitoring its impact. There are early but significant signs of success, for example in the operation of the MASH, which has a high level of multi-agency input and cooperation.”

9. However they also found that the Local Safeguarding Children Board requires improvement because:

Its use of data to examine the performance of partner agencies is too recent to provide a comprehensive view of strengths and weaknesses in the system:

- a. It has only recently begun to audit the practice of partner agencies and how they work together, and it is too soon to see whether this will bring sustained improvements.
- b. It has not provided effective scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements for children who go missing or for girls at risk of genital mutilation.
- c. The Board’s annual reporting has not provided a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services.
- d. The long term impact of the LSCB training programme in improving child protection and safeguarding has not been evaluated.

ACTION PLAN

10. An Action Plan to address the issues raised has been compiled by staff of the new Quality Assurance Business Unit in consultation with senior

managers, the LSCB and Ofsted Inspectors. In order to keep the plan manageable, actions will be aligned with the existing transformation plan and those actions arising from the previous Ofsted inspection which are not yet complete. A senior manager has been identified for each action and they will maintain an active overview of the progress against each action. Some actions, particularly those in relation to care leavers, will require the commitment of other services both within and outside the council and a strategic commitment to support the improvement.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

- 11. 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

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

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

- 13. 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:

- 14. There are no other legal implications.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 15. There are no Policy Framework implications.

KEY DECISION? Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	The Ofsted Inspection report applies to all of the children of Southampton
------------------------------------	--

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Ofsted Report on Southampton Children’s Services including Southampton LSCB July 2014
2.	Grade descriptions
3.	SCC Ofsted Action Plan

Documents In Members’ Rooms

1.	None.
2.	

Equality Impact Assessment

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

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.		
2.		