



CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

6 JULY 2017

Subject Heading:

Ofsted Improvement

SLT Lead:

Tim Aldridge, Director of Children's Services

Report Author and contact details:

Ali Omar, Head of Innovation and Improvement
Tel: 01708 431671
ali.omar@havering.gov.uk

Policy context:

Ofsted Improvement and delivery of statutory social care.

SUMMARY

To ensure that Havering is meeting its statutory responsibilities and continuing to evidence improvement against Ofsted recommendations, this report updates members of the Committee on progress to improve standards of social care practice, workforce development and associated systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to receive updates on Ofsted improvement and monitor progress against key areas of performance.

REPORT DETAIL

1. The published Ofsted inspection report of December 2016 highlighted the effectiveness of a range of services, with an overall grading for effectiveness. The Committee received a report in January 2017, detailing the contents of this latest report by Ofsted, in respect of their inspection of Children's Social Care.

2. Havering received an overall grade of 'Requires Improvement' but received an 'Inadequate' grade for the effectiveness of services delivered to children Leaving Care. This judgement was not limiting, and did not result in the overall grade being adversely affected.
3. The Social Care department constitutes a range of front-line services;
 - a. Early Help,
 - b. MASH and Assessment,
 - c. Intervention and Support,
 - d. Care Resources,
 - e. Systemic Practice.

Our long-term ambition is for Havering to achieve at least a 'Good' grading against all of the key areas Ofsted measure against their framework. It should be noted that the framework is expected to change in 18-24 months.

4. In March 2017, Havering submitted their formal response to Ofsted's recommendations with the delivery of an Ofsted Action Plan, focusing on what improvements and changes Havering would make over the short and long term, to raise social work standards, increase workforce retention and have more effective IT solutions in place.
5. Havering has also been successful in receiving Innovation funding from the Department for Education. This investment will be distributed across the social care system but predominately across Fostering and Leaving Care. This will enable us to innovate in these areas and enhance the offer available, which will be tracked and monitored as part of the Ofsted improvement programme. It is expected the innovation will contribute to the continuous improvement of the social care service.

Ofsted Action Plan

6. There are 13 recommendations (appendix A), which focus on the following areas;
 - Access for all managers to relevant management information.
 - Understanding and application of thresholds.
 - Assessments consider all areas of risk, need and health issues.
 - Improve pathway planning and ensure all plans are measurable and specific.
 - Care leavers are aware of their entitlements.
 - All children and young people who go missing and offered prompt return home interviews.
 - Improve the sufficiency and availability of placements for children and young in care.
 - Robust tracking is in place for children who are subject to pre-proceedings and permanence planning, to avoid delay and drift.

- There are sufficient independent visitors, for all looked after children, who would benefit from this.
 - Children subject to adoption and Special Guardianship are comprehensively assessed and the plan fully covers their needs.
 - Ensure there is scrutiny of practice through more regular and effective supervision of social work staff.
 - Increase the influence of the Corporate Parenting Board and that involvement of children is central to the aims of the Board.
 - Ensure the procurement of a new social care recording IT system is expedited and is fit-for-purpose.
7. Each recommendation has a defined set of management actions, which are owned by specific senior officers within the Directorate. These each have a timescale, a set of specific measures, key performance indicators and outcomes which benefit children, young people and families.
 8. For the Leaving Care strand a dedicated action plan has been developed, which directly links to the overall plan. This is due to the grading received for this area, and the need for the service to fully understand the issues, mitigate risk and plan for significant service improvement. It also helps identify and plan for the dependencies with the Innovation programme.
 9. As of 27th June, 136 inspection reports have been published. The national breakdown shows that 46% percent of Local Authorities achieved a 'Requires Improvement' grade. 24% received an 'Inadequate' grading with 29% achieving a 'Good' grade. Only 1% of Local Authorities (2 in total) have achieved an overall 'Outstanding' grade.

Monitoring progress

10. Children's Services has a Transformation and Improvement Board, which is responsible for overseeing change initiatives and service improvement. It will also be the governance mechanism where all progress, monitoring and decisions take place for all Ofsted improvement actions. The Director of Children's Services (DCS) is the Senior Responsible Officer, supported by the Assistant Director for Social Care and other key senior managers within Children's Services.
11. Progress against the Ofsted Action Plan will be monitored every month, with a report available describing trends, ongoing activity within the service and the impact this activity is having.
12. As of June 2017, a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has been agreed by the Board. Baselines and targets have been agreed, where applicable. A first draft report has been presented to senior officers and feedback has been gathered to ensure the report meets the ongoing needs of the service.
13. Early measures show considerable improvement in a number of areas, including;

- A reduction in the number of Child in Need plans.
- A reduction in the number of CP Plans.
- An increase in the number of social workers taking up permanent positions.
- An ongoing improvement in the timeliness of interventions in Early Help.
- Improved performance in the MASH
- More direct contact with Care Leavers
- Improved rate of Return Home Interviews completed within 72 hours
- Increase in allocation of independent visitors

As the service reviews its delivery and strengthens the delivery of social care, we expect to see improvement across a number of measures. The service has also taken measures to reshape the structures of delivery services, to ensure there is capacity and the appropriate roles to deliver sustained improvements.

Next steps

14. The delivery of a new business intelligence solution, Power BI from Microsoft, will enable the service to receive data in differing formats and enhance how the Ofsted indicators will be monitored. It will allow for easier retrieval of reports, resulting in being able to manage areas of risk more closely and allow us to determine what factors have led to consistent improvement. The service will start to use this from August 2017, with an approach developed thorough July 2017.
15. The authority continues to monitor the performance of all Ofsted key indicators, against the Ofsted Acton Plan, managing risk and issue and ensuring all milestones and deliverables are agreed and managed.
16. Work with the Safeguarding Board, responding to their challenge and ensuring alignment in activity that is shared or has an overlap.
17. Prepare for the next Ofsted quarterly meeting, expected in Autumn 2017.
18. Begin to plan for the new inspection framework being developed by Ofsted.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Legal implications and risks:

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the content of the Report and notes that further reports will be presented updating on progress against the agreed action plan.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Equalities implications and risks:

As a public authority the Council is required to comply with the general duty as set out in the Equality Act .This states that those subject to the general equality duty must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

It is important that the issues relating to under-performance of specific groups of pupils are addressed urgently to remove potential barriers that could prevent specific protected characteristics from achieving their full potential.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Ofsted Action Plan – March 2017.