

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Ofsted Inspection Update on Action Plan</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 March 2020
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

The action plan written following recommendations made during the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care Services in June 2019 aims to improve the practice and support delivered so that it is consistently good, which in turn will lead to better outcomes for children, young people and families in the Borough.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the progress made on delivering the actions laid out in the plan and the impact to date of those actions is noted.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

In June 2019, Ofsted carried out a two-week inspection of Children's Social Care Services at Wokingham Borough Council. The inspectorate judged that services "Require Improvement to be Good" and requested that an action plan be developed to demonstrate how improvement will be made in five areas:

1. The stability of the workforce in the disabled children's team and the three long-term teams;
2. The effectiveness of child in need and child protection plans;
3. The quality and effectiveness of the social work support that disabled children and their families receive;
4. The level of critical scrutiny, and quality of supervision, provided by frontline managers; and
5. The oversight and impact of the corporate parenting board.

This report describes the progress made in these five areas since the action plan was completed.

## **Background**

The June 2019 inspection of Children's social Care Services by Ofsted resulted in the identification of five areas requiring improvement:

1. The stability of the workforce in the disabled children's team and the three long-term teams;
2. The effectiveness of child in need and child protection plans;
3. The quality and effectiveness of the social work support that disabled children and their families receive;
4. The level of critical scrutiny, and quality of supervision, provided by frontline managers; and
5. The oversight and impact of the corporate parenting board.

An action plan was developed which has now been fully implemented as part of the wider Continuous Improvement Programme in Children's Services.

The improvement action plan with the status of each identified action is attached.

The progress made in each area requiring improvement is laid out here.

## **Analysis of Issues**

### **1. The stability of the workforce in the disabled children's team and the three long-term teams.**

#### **Action taken:**

- Action was taken immediately following the inspection to stabilise and add capacity to the Children with Disabilities (CWD) team.
- Review of the CWD service structure carried out.
- Agreement of CWD permanent structure.
- A Social Care Recruitment & Retention Specialist joined WBC in November 2019.
- The Social Care Recruitment & Retention Strategy has been updated, and implementation is underway.
- Recruitment Campaign "#Why Wokingham" launched in January 2020.

#### **Impact to Date:**

- The diversity of roles in the CWD team has been expanded to provide specialist support – posts currently being recruited to permanently.
- The Social Worker turnover rate reduced from 31.65% in 2018 to 8% in 2019.
- Five agency workers have either converted to permanent employment or expressed an interest – indication of changing culture and improving morale.
- Between December 2019 and end of January 2020 6 Social Work applicants were interviewed, and 5 were offered posts and accepted.

### **2. The effectiveness of child in need and child protection plans**

#### **Action taken:**

- Safety plan training and development programme delivered.
- Programme of 2-day Safety Planning and Direct Work courses offered.
- Safety Planning improvement project designed and underway.
- Two practice consultants appointed to work directly with staff to strengthen practice and provide support and challenge within teams.
- Safety planning standards agreed and communicated.
- Signs of Safety Practitioner's Guide published.
- Safety Plan audit carried out.

### **Improvements to Date:**

Safety planning audit in December 2019 indicated that whilst there is still work to do, there is evidence of good practice including:

- Clear danger statements/safety goals
- Parental strengths clearly articulated
- Words & Pictures work
- Good management oversight
- Good examples of partnership working
- Good safety plans
- Regularly reviewed safety plans

### **3. The quality and effectiveness of the social work support that disabled children and their families receive.**

#### **Action taken:**

- CWD Improvement Board established.
- CWD action plan agreed.
- Comprehensive review of children's files and remedial tasks completed
- Mapping of referral pathways and processes on case management system undertaken
- Development of practice standards and improved use of signs of safety practice
- Agreement of permanent structure and thresholds.

#### **Impact to date:**

- Independent Audit of Children with Disabilities Cases December 19 – January 20 preliminary report concluded that *"In the last six months there has been improved compliance with statutory procedures with increased evidence of management oversight, Children in Care visits and IRO footprint. In some cases, the work undertaken was good and there was evidence of the allocated social worker and IRO working together with other professionals to progress the plan."*

### **4. The level of critical scrutiny, and quality of supervision, provided by frontline managers**

#### **Action taken:**

- 10 "Making the most of your Supervision" sessions delivered to 96 social workers, early help, and social care staff.

- 15 Outcome-Focussed Supervision modules delivered to 37 Social Care Managers and Supervisors.
- The Children’s Social Care Senior Management Team have attended 5 “Making Supervision Work” training sessions.
- Practice Standards for Supervision produced as part of the new Quality Assurance Framework.
- New Supervision template has been produced and shared.
- Supervision contracts now in place between Supervisors and Supervisees.
- Frequency of supervision is monitored via the weekly performance management reports and sent to all Children’s Social Care Managers.

### Impact to Date

- Supervision audit carried out in January 2020. The audit report is currently in preparation and findings will be shared at the committee meeting.

## 5. The oversight and impact of the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB).

### Actions taken

- Review of the CPB terms of reference, structure, frequency and impact carried out.
- New approach developed and implemented.

### Impact to Date

- Engagement opportunities identified and being taken up by Councillors and partners including: Visiting Here4U to meet Social Workers and Personal Advisers; Attending the Independent Living Skills course; Observing a Personal Education Plan meeting; Visiting semi-independent living accommodation; and Visiting Foster Carers.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
N/A

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b> (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)
N/A

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
WBC Inspection of Children’s Social Care Services 3-14 June 2019 Action Plan.

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