

**Agenda Item No: 14**

**OFFICE FOR STANDARDS IN EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SKILLS (OFSTED) INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND SERVICES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2009 – IMPROVEMENT PLAN.**

*To:* **Cabinet**

*Date:* **26 January 2010**

*From:* **Executive Director: Children's Services**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **N/A**

*Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:*

- **To present Cabinet with the Improvement Plan following the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) Inspection of Safeguarding and Services for Looked After Children Improvement Plan**

*Recommendation:* **Cabinet is invited to comment on and approve the Improvement Plan.**

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## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Ofsted's inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children in Cambridgeshire took place between 15<sup>th</sup> September and 26<sup>th</sup> September. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate how well children and young people are safeguarded and the quality of service and outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.
- 1.2 Overall, Cambridgeshire was considered adequate for safeguarding and adequate for Looked After Children, with good capacity to improve and good features. The inspection report confirmed the ongoing improvements that were being made within the service and that all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding were being met. Inspectors recognised the considerable efforts that had been made towards establishing clear vision, structures and detailed operational arrangements for the service.
- 1.3 A paper was presented to Cabinet on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009, which provided an outline of the key findings of the inspection and the actions being undertaken to respond to the areas for improvement identified within the inspection report.

## **2.0 FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The inspection report contains 12 formal recommendations for improvement.
- 2.1.1 Recommendations in relation to safeguarding

Within 3 months:

- Ensure that new referrals are allocated when a decision has been made to undertake an initial assessment
- Improve the timeliness and quality of initial assessments, case planning and the consistency of managerial oversight of cases
- Ensure that record keeping is improved and completed in a timely manner to ensure closure or transfer of case management responsibility to appropriate services

Within 6 months:

- Improve the contribution of children and young people and their parents/carers to service development and evaluation

- Ensure that performance management arrangements are consistently applied and embedded within safeguarding services and are clearly linked to outcomes
- Ensure that thresholds for early intervention and child in need services are better understood and consistently applied across the area
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board should develop performance management, to ensure that services are in line with strategic objectives and plans and that these are monitored and evaluated

#### 2.1.2 Recommendations in relation to Looked After Children

Within 3 months:

- Ensure that the initial case planning processes within contact referral and assessment teams and transfer arrangements to area teams appropriately meet the needs of children and young people newly looked after
- Ensure that all care leavers are living in accommodation that is safe

Within 6 months:

- Ensure that the service is able to respond to the cultural needs of an increasingly diverse looked after children population
- Improve the range of opportunities for looked after young people and care leavers to access education, employment and training
- Ensure that the 16+ service is able to respond to increasing demand for its services appropriately and consistently

### **3.0 THE POST INSPECTION IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- 3.1 An Ofsted Improvement Plan has been developed to respond to the formal recommendations. This is attached as Appendix A. Work on many of the actions has progressed, as outlined in the Improvement Plan, with a number of key actions having been completed. Particular priority has been given to the recommendations to be completed within 3 months.
- 3.2 The Improvement plan will be monitored on a regular basis by Social Care Management Team. The Service could be subject to an Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment within the next 7 months and inspectors will be looking for evidence of improvement against the recommendations of the Safeguarding and

Looked After Children Inspection. Reviews and audits of key aspects of the service will be undertaken to measure whether improvement actions are having an impact on quality of services and outcomes for children and young people. The first review is planned to take place in February 2010.

#### **4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

##### **4.1 Resources and performance information**

4.1.1 The Improvement Plan will be delivered within existing resources.

##### **4.2 Statutory duties/requirements and partnership working**

4.2.1 Partnership working will be crucial to delivering further improvements in services. The emergence of the Children's Trust will provide the environment for the next phase of developments. In addition, the revamped Local Safeguarding Children Board, led by Flick Schofield, the newly appointed independent chair, will make a significant partnership contribution.

##### **4.3 Climate change**

4.3.1 There are no significant climate change implications arising from this report.

##### **4.4 Access and inclusion**

4.4.1 One of the recommendations of the inspection is to ensure that the service is able to respond to the cultural needs of an increasingly diverse looked after children population. Work will take place to ensure the cultural needs of children and young people are considered in service provision.

##### **4.5 Engagement and consultation**

4.5.1 The findings of the inspection were reported to the Children's Trust in November and the improvement plan will be formally discussed at the Children's Trust Executive on 20<sup>th</sup> January.

<b>Source documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children report 2009	Available via the following link <a href="http://camweb/cyps/inspection.htm">http://camweb/cyps/inspection.htm</a>
Ofsted Improvement Plan	Room C009 Castle Court