



# Corporate Parenting Board

## 18 May 2017

<b>Report title</b>	Outcome of Ofsted Inspection 16 January – 9 February 2017	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Emma Bennett, Children and Young People	
<b>Originating service</b>	Service area (not directorate)	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Alison Hinds Tel Email	Head of Looked after Children 01902 553035 alison.hinds@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>		

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### Recommendation for noting:

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to:

1. Note the findings of the Ofsted inspection of the City of Wolverhampton's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Corporate Parenting Board of the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Ofsted are currently in the process of inspecting all local authorities in England under the Single Inspection Framework. Although each local authority is given an overall rating, the inspection also rated performance on children in need of help and protection, children looked after and achieving permanence with additional judgements for adoption and care leavers, and leadership, management and governance. There was also a review of the effectiveness of the Safeguarding Board.
- 2.2 The City of Wolverhampton were notified of the inspection by Ofsted on 16 January 2017. The inspection commenced the next day and was completed on 9 February 2017.
- 2.3 The final report was received from Ofsted on 29 February 2017 and was published on the Ofsted website on 31 March 2017.

## **3.0 Inspection outcome**

- 3.1 The overall judgement received is that Children's Services in Wolverhampton are graded as Good.

- 3.2 The separate judgements awarded were as follows:

Children in need of help of help and protection: Requires Improvement to be Good.

Looked after children and achieving permanence: Good.

Adoption performance: Good.

Experience and progress of care leavers: Good.

Leadership, Management and Governance: Good.

- 3.3 The executive summary details the key findings of the inspection as follows:

Senior managers, leaders, and elected members are systematically driving improvements in services for children and families. Corporate leadership is strong and effective. With a clear sense of vision and purpose, and by focusing on key priorities, senior managers, leaders and elected members are using performance management information to monitor and track performance, and deliver better outcomes for children across a range of different areas.

Early help services have been reconfigured in such a way as to bring together strengthening family workers with health visitors, midwives and social workers in eight community-based hubs. Although it is too early to evaluate the full impact of this new service model, parents told inspectors that it is making a difference to them and their families and that, increasingly, they are able to get the right help, in the right way, at the right time.

The multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) provides a robust and effective service at the first point of contact. With good links to the emergency duty team, timely information-sharing and robust management oversight, the MASH ensures that appropriate action is taken to safeguard and protect children and young people, including those who go missing and/or are at risk of being sexually exploited.

Good and sustained improvements have been made across the whole range of services for children looked after. Edge-of-care services are targeted effectively to prevent avoidable family breakdown. As a result, children only become looked after when it is right that they should.

Most children come into care in a planned way. Permanence planning starts early. The number of children looked after has been significantly reduced without compromising children's safety. A strong and effective virtual school is delivering positive outcomes for children looked after. Most children are living in stable placements.

The local authority takes its responsibilities as a corporate parent very seriously. The Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers' Forum have been influential in shaping the way in which services are developed and delivered.

Good use is made of adoption to achieve permanence for those children for whom it is the right solution. This includes older children and those with complex needs, regardless of their ethnic identity. The timeliness of legal proceedings, and of matching and placing children with adoptive families, is improving.

Care leavers receive a good, individualised service, which prepares them well for independence. They say that they feel valued and are listened to. Too many care leavers are not in education, employment or training, but appropriate action is being taken and the position is improving. All care leavers live in suitable accommodation.

However, the help and protection which children and young people receive require improvement to be good. The quality of analysis, assessments and plans, including child in need and child protection plans, is variable. The child's voice is not given sufficient prominence or consistently clearly articulated in case files. The level of critical challenge provided by frontline managers is not consistently robust. Some children are not getting the help and support that they need quickly enough.

The local authority has recognised the need to rationalise its performance management information and ensure that the balanced scorecard provides a clear line of sight on all

aspects of frontline practice. Further work is also required to embed fully the quality assurance framework.

- 3.4 This outcome means that as of 31 March 2017, the City of Wolverhampton is the second highest performing children's service across the whole of the West Midlands.
- Within the West Midlands Combined Authority, Wolverhampton are the only council to have been rated 'Good'.
  - Of the 128 local authorities inspected up to 31 March 2017, Wolverhampton is in the top performing 24%.
- 3.5 The report contains 11 recommendations for improvement. All the recommendations have been incorporated into the Children and Young People Improvement Plan, with some actions already completed

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.
- 4.2 Any costs associated with the recommendations will be met from within existing budgets in the Children and Young People's Service. [NM/09052017/T]

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. [TC/08052017/S]

#### **6.0 Equalities implications**

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications.

#### **7.0 Environmental implications**

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications.

#### **8.0 Human resources implications**

- 8.1 There are no human resource implications.

#### **9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

- 9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

#### **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 10.1 A copy of the Ofsted report is attached