

Cabinet Meeting

26 April 2017

Report title	Outcome of Children's Services Ofsted Inspection and Ofsted Action Plan	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Linda Sanders, Strategic Director, People	
Originating service	Children and Young People	
Accountable employee(s)	Emma Bennett	Service Director, Children and Young People
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Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board	28 March 2017
	Executive Team	3 April 2017
	Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board	21 June 2017

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Celebrate the 'Good' overall judgement from the recent Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection and note our excellent position in the West Midlands and the country.
2. Approve the Ofsted Action Plan which has been produced in response to recommendations from the inspection.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection and presents the action plan that has been produced in response to the recommendations.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Ofsted inspection commenced in Wolverhampton on 16 January 2017. The inspection lasted for a period of four weeks and finished on 9 February 2017.
- 2.2 Ofsted's Single Inspection Framework for inspecting services for children in need of help and protection and reviewing Local Safeguarding Children Boards was launched in November 2013. Wolverhampton's last inspection took place in June 2011 when the Local Authority was judged to be 'good' for looked after children and 'adequate' in relation to safeguarding. All 152 Local Authorities will be inspected under this framework by December 2017. Ofsted are in the process of finalising a new inspection framework for children's social care from 2018 onwards.
- 2.3 The inspections are conducted under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. They focus on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements to help and protect children; and the experiences and progress of children looked after, including adoption, fostering, the use of residential care and children who return home. The framework also focuses on the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after and the experiences and progress of care leavers. In addition, there is a judgement on leadership, management and governance which addresses the effectiveness of leaders and managers, the impact they have on the lives of children and young people and the quality of professional practice. The inspection provides a separate judgement on the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

3.0 Outcome of the Local Authority Inspection

- 3.1 The Ofsted team were in Wolverhampton over a period of four weeks and during that time they met a range of professionals from the local authority and partner agencies. In addition, they met and spoke with a number of young people, parents and foster carers. They reviewed in detail 26 case files and met with the allocated social workers for these. In addition, the inspectors sampled a high number of case files – over 100, focussing on specific areas of work. A range of information was provided to support our self-assessment and to evidence the work we are doing in Wolverhampton. The following table sets out the outcome from the inspection:

Children's Services in Wolverhampton – overall judgement	Good
Children who need help and protection	Requires Improvement to be Good
Children looked after and achieving permanence	Good
Adoption Performance	Good
Experiences and Progress of Care Leavers	Good
Leadership, Management and Governance	Good

3.2 Putting our ‘Good’ rating into context, we are the second highest performing council across the wider West Midlands and so far, the only one in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) that has achieved ‘Good’. 11 of 14 councils in the wider West Midlands and six of the seven WMCA councils have now been inspected.

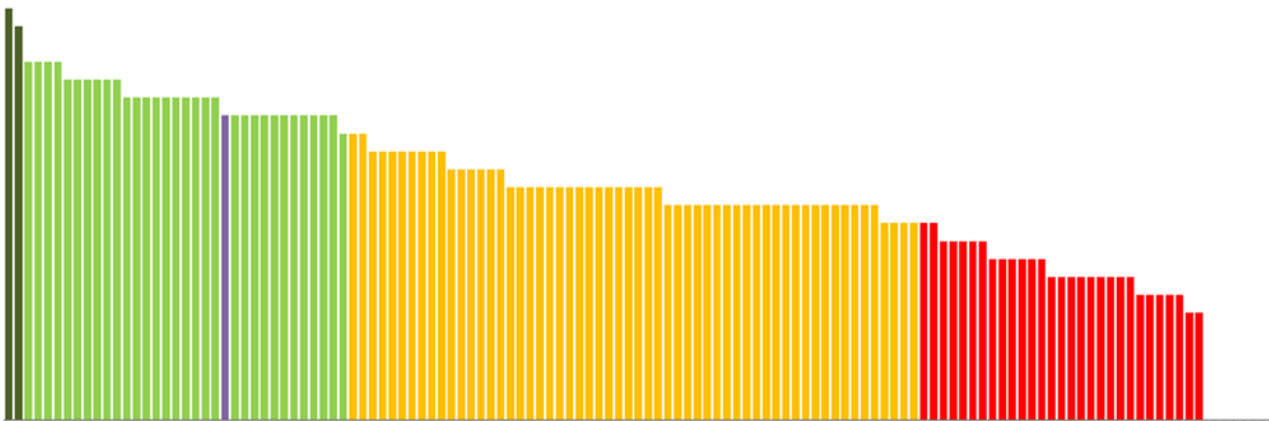
Full details of each of the sub judgements are below for the 14 West Midlands councils and the seven West Midlands Combined Authority councils. Please note that the final column has a different status and is the outcome of a review rather than being a core determinant of the single inspection framework methodology.



Wolverhampton is one of 129 out of 152 councils to have been inspected and under the current framework in the West Midlands only Staffordshire is ranked higher. The current position in terms of outcomes across the Country is:

Current Rating / Position	Number of Councils	% of those inspected	% of all councils
Outstanding	2	1.6%	1.3%
Good	33	25.8%	21.7%
Requires Improvement	58	45.3%	38.2%
Inadequate	29	22.7%	19.1%
Not Published	7	5.5%	4.6%
Not Inspected	23	N/A	15.1%

Overall Ofsted Ratings for England



3.3 Key headline findings include:

- Senior Managers, leaders and elected members are systematically driving improvements in services for children and families
- Corporate leadership is strong and effective
- There is a clear sense of vision and purpose
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub provides a robust and effective service at the first point of contact
- Good and sustained improvements have been made across the whole range of services for children looked after
- The number of looked after children has been significantly reduced without compromising children's safety
- There is a strong and effective virtual school, delivering positive outcomes for looked after children
- The local authority takes its responsibilities as a corporate parent very seriously
- Care leavers receive a good, individualised service which prepares them well for independence

3.4 In addition to the headline findings outlined above, the inspection report provides detailed feedback for each judgement. This is summarised as follows:

3.4.1 ***The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection - requires improvement to be good***

- Reconfiguration of early help services has improved the quality and timeliness of information sharing and increased opportunities for joint working
- Strengthening Family Workers are making a real difference in the lives of children and families
- Parents talk very positively about the help and support that they receive and the difference it makes to their families
- Good partnership working means that children who are at risk of significant harm are promptly identified and decisive action is taken to safeguard and protect them
- Thresholds are applied appropriately
- Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups are effective
- Emergency Duty Team is well resourced and provides an effective out of hours' service
- Arrangements to safeguard and protect children who go missing or are at risk of sexual exploitation are robust and well co-ordinated
- Good use is made of family group conferencing to enable families to understand the needs of their children better
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements are robust and well embedded
- Young people aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless are being well served
- High quality intensive family support is provided to try to prevent avoidable family breakdown
- Children and parents receive timely and well-targeted outreach support
- Robust strategic and operational arrangements are in place to identify, manage and reduce the risks associated with child sexual exploitation
- Children who are electively home educated are monitored effectively
- There is a high level of awareness of female genital mutilation
- Robust arrangements are in place to meet the challenge of and manage the risks associated with radicalisation
- Position of Trust meetings are well chaired and result in effective, well-co-ordinated and well managed responses

3.4.2 ***The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence - Good***

- Very child-centred approach to looked after children with a clear strategic vision, robust arrangements to monitor and track progress and some very sensitive and thoughtful work with individual children
- Vast majority of children looked after live in secure and stable homes
- Only those children who need it become looked after
- Areas of the service are particularly impressive including:
 - the strength of the local authority's partnership with the Children in Care Council
 - the stable influence and expert guidance provided by Independent Reviewing Officers

- the widespread positive impact of the virtual school
- work that is being undertaken to reduce offending and re-offending
- permanency planning
- Children are listened to, their voices are heard and acted on
- Thresholds to care are well understood and consistently applied
- Quality and timeliness of court work has significantly improved
- Positive working relationships with Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service and the local judiciary
- Impressive educational achievement for looked after children
- Sufficiency Strategy clearly sets out the challenges faced and the priorities for children's social care
- Permanence reports appropriately assess and analyse children's needs for lifelong security, provide a strong sense of each child's unique identity and clearly reflect children's wishes and feelings
- Local authority's engagement with the Children in Care Council (CiCC) is anything but tokenistic
- CiCC - an impressive, well integrated, and influential group of young people

3.4.3 **Adoption - Good**

- The team undertakes a successful and creative range of family finding activity
- Adopters talked very positively about the helpful support that they received
- Inspectors saw good evidence of brothers and sisters being placed together
- Children and families receive good quality post-adoption support
- Creative use is made of the Adoption Support Fund to deliver bespoke packages of care
- Adopters talked very positively about the training they had received and valued the support and responsiveness of the adoption team
- Inspectors saw some particularly good examples of life-story, moving on work and later-life letters which were all sensitive, purposeful and child-centred

3.4.4 **Care Leavers - Good**

- Young people talk very positively about their Personal Advisors and the help and support, advice and guidance that they provide
- Personal Advisors are in touch with all care leavers, know them well and provide an effective wrap-around service
- Young people appreciate being involved in co-producing their pathway plans
- Every time that they meet young people, Personal Advisors ask them about their health and actively encourage and support them to make and keep medical appointments
- Care leavers are well supported to develop the skills they need to live independently and talk positively about the independent living course
- The Care Leavers' Forum has played a significant role in shaping the way in which the care leavers service has developed
- Care leavers told Inspectors that they feel valued and listened to
- Annual awards ceremony described as a 'dazzling event'
- Care leavers are able to articulate clearly how, with the support of the Personal Advisors, their confidence has increased and appreciate that their support continues to be available until they are 25

3.4.5 **Leadership, Management and Governance - Good**

- Senior managers, leaders and elected members know themselves and their communities well and are driving service improvements for children and families
- Clear governance arrangements are in place, rigorous scrutiny and a range of effective strategic and operational partnerships
- Senior managers, leaders and elected members make good and effective use of performance management information
- Local Authority is ambitious, realistic and determined to achieve financial stability and improve outcomes
- Experienced, knowledgeable and highly committed group of senior managers has led children's services well
- Good communication between senior managers, leaders and elected members as part of a 'one council' approach
- Partnership arrangements are strong
- Health and Wellbeing Board is appropriately focused on children and families
- Effective commissioning arrangements
- Local Authority is ambitious for LAC and takes its corporate parenting responsibilities very seriously
- Strong focus on participation means that care leavers and children looked after feel involved and listened to
- The local authority is keen to learn and open to challenge
- Complaints from children and families are taken seriously
- Senior managers have acted decisively to improve the quality and timeliness of court related work
- Senior managers are rightly proud of their achievements in reducing staff turnover and increasing stability of the workforce
- The creation of six Advanced Practitioner roles reflects the local authority's commitment to building resilience and succession planning as part of a conscious 'grow your own' strategy

3.5 There were 11 recommendations for Children's Services arising from the inspection. These were:

1. Ensure that management oversight at the frontline is appropriately challenging and consistent, and that frontline managers are able to use the new case file audit tool effectively.
2. Strengthen the line of sight which senior managers, leaders and elected members have on frontline practice by including detailed information about children in need whose cases are being held by team managers, or managed on duty, prior to being allocated to a named social worker.
3. Ensure that children looked after who are living at a distance from Wolverhampton receive the same high level of health and educational support as children living closer to home.
4. Ensure that, when children and young people are placed with family and friends, social workers are clear about what actions must be completed to assess and formalise those arrangements in line with placement regulations.

5. Ensure that all assessments include a consistently robust analysis of risks and protective factors, resulting in child in need and child protection plans which are specific, measurable, and easy for children and parents to understand.
 6. Ensure that greater prominence is given in case files to the thoughts, wishes and feelings of children and young people, so that the child's voice is clearly recorded and understood.
 7. Strengthen advocacy arrangements to ensure that children in need of help and protection and their parents, and children looked after, are enabled to make a meaningful contribution to child in need and child protection processes, and children looked after reviews.
 8. Ensure that children looked after who would benefit from one have access to an independent visitor.
 9. Ensure that all personal education plans are specific, measurable and easy for children and young people to understand.
 10. Ensure that all pathway plans include targets which are specific, measurable and written in such a way that there is no room for ambiguity about who needs to do what, by when, to ensure that care leavers are able to make a successful transition to independence.
 11. Ensure that once children are placed with adoptive families there is no unnecessary delay in applying for an adoption order.
- 3.6 In order to respond to the recommendations an action plan has been produced and is attached as Appendix One. Implementation of this plan will be overseen by the Transforming Children's Services Board and the Children and Young People Management Team.
- 3.7 A 2017-18 Children and Young People Plan is currently being developed which will outline the service priorities and actions for the next 12 months. The actions from the Ofsted Plan will be included in the overall action plan.

4.0 Outcome of the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Review

- 4.1 The judgement for the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board was 'requires improvement to be good'.
- 4.2 **Headline findings from the inspection include:**
- The Board is well chaired and well led
 - Governance arrangements are robust
 - Partner agencies are well represented on the Board at a suitably senior level
 - Attendance at Board meetings is good and a well-developed sub-group structure ensures that the work programme is delivered
 - The website is attractive and easy to navigate, providing a wealth of useful information

- The Serious Care Review Sub-Group and the Child Death Overview Panel are well developed and effective.
- Robust strategic and operational arrangements are in place to safeguard and protect children and young people who go missing and/or are at risk of sexual exploitation

4.3 The Safeguarding Children Board inspection resulted in the following five recommendations:

1. Develop and maintain a comprehensive register of those risks which have the potential to impact negatively on the ability of partner agencies to safeguard and protect children and young people effectively.
2. Ensure that the Local Safeguarding Children Board has the right level of performance management information to challenge and hold to account partner agencies on the effectiveness of their safeguarding responsibilities.
3. Develop a coherent rolling programme of single and multi-agency audits to quality assure the work of partner agencies in safeguarding and protecting children and ensure that the results of Section 11 audits are moderated effectively.
4. Develop a robust training strategy which incorporates a system to evaluate the impact of training on frontline practice.
5. Further strengthen the annual report to ensure that it provides a clear picture of the effectiveness of partner agencies across all key safeguarding services, including the independent reviewing officer service, the work of the designated officer in managing allegations against professional and private fostering arrangements, as well as learning from serious case reviews and child deaths

4.4 The recommendations from the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) inspection will be incorporated into the Board's Strategic Plan and progress against this will be overseen by the Board.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

5.2 Any costs associated with the improvement plan will be contained within existing budgets within the overall approved budget for Children and Young People.
[NM/22032017/Y]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.
[KO/12042017/J]

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 There are no equality implications associated with this report. The Single Inspection Framework includes equality and diversity issues as part of the inspection process.

8.0 Risk Implications

8.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

9.0 Environmental implications

9.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

10.0 Human resources implications

10.1 There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

11.1 There are no corporate landlord implications associated with this report.

12.0 Schedule of background papers

12.1 [Wolverhampton Ofsted Final Report](#)

OFSTED ACTION PLAN

Appendix One

Action	Milestones	Timescales	Lead Officers	Progress
<p>Ensure that management oversight at the frontline is appropriately challenging and consistent, and that frontline managers are able to use the case file audit tool effectively</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 1)</p>	<p>Bi-Monthly Audits to review practice</p> <p>Quarterly dip sampling of supervision</p>	<p>Bi-monthly audits</p> <p>Quarterly dip sampling</p>	<p>All Heads of Service Louise Haughton</p>	<p>Bi-monthly audit currently in progress, outcome report to be produced in April and presented to CYP Management Team</p> <p>Next quarterly dip sampling process to take place in May 2017</p>
<p>Strengthen the line of sight which senior managers, leaders and elected members have on frontline practice by including detailed information about children in need whose cases are being held by team managers, or managed on duty, prior to being allocated to a named social worker</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 2)</p>	<p>Daily updates to be provided to the DCS and Service Director</p> <p>Children Service's Dashboard presented to SEB/Cabinet Member on a monthly basis</p>	<p>28 February 2017</p> <p>31st May 2017, monthly thereafter</p>	<p>Helena Kucharczyk</p>	<p>Daily figures are provided to Service Director and DCS</p> <p>ACTION COMPLETED</p>
<p>Ensure that looked after children who are living at a distance from Wolverhampton receive the same level of health and educational support as children living closer to home</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 3)</p>	<p>Regularly review reports on out of city health assessments</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>	<p>Alison Hinds</p> <p>Alison Hinds</p>	<p>CCG commissioned a new post in the trust that will undertake health assessments with LAC up to 50 miles – leaving approximately 80 children where services will need to be spot purchased</p> <p>Report regularly being</p>

Action	Milestones	Timescales	Lead Officers	Progress
	Virtual Head report on education outcomes of children placed out of city	November 2017	Darren Martindale	produced and presented to LAC Health Steering Group Additional resource aimed specifically at children placed out of city
<p>Ensure that when children and young people are placed with family and friends, social workers are clear about what actions must be completed to assess and formalise those arrangements in line with placement regulations</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 4)</p>	<p>Review permanency policy including the development of a flowchart to inform decision making</p> <p>Audit of all Child Protection cases where children are not living with their parents to clarify whether it is a private family arrangement or connected persons</p>	30 April 2017	<p>Rachel Warrender Louise Haughton Alison Hinds</p> <p>Julian Cunningham</p>	Meeting has been set up to progress this work, to be completed by 30 April 2017
<p>Ensure that all assessments include a consistently robust analysis of risks and protective factors, resulting in child in need and child protection plans which are specific, measurable and easy for children and parents to understand</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 5)</p>	<p>Bi-Monthly Audits to review practice</p> <p>Quarterly dip sampling of assessments</p>	31 March 2018	Louise Haughton	<p>Dip sample of care planning – June 2017, outcome report to be available in July 2017</p> <p>Conference call with Child and Family Training taken place highlighting what our current needs are, emphasising voice of the child as a key requirement. They are currently adjusting their programme of training to reflect this and will deliver 4 cohorts by the end of March</p>

Action	Milestones	Timescales	Lead Officers	Progress
<p>Ensure that greater prominence is given in case files to the thoughts, wishes and feelings of children and young people, so that the child's voice is clearly recorded and understood</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 6)</p>	<p>Bi-Monthly Audits to review practice</p> <p>Quarterly dip sampling of assessments</p>	<p>31 March 2018</p>	<p>Heads of Service Louise Haughton</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Conference call with Child and Family Training taken place highlighting what our current needs are, emphasising voice of the child as a key requirement. They are currently adjusting their programme of training to reflect this and will deliver 4 cohorts by the end of March 18</p>
<p>Strengthen advocacy arrangements to ensure that children in need of help and protection and their parents, and children looked after, are enabled to make a meaningful contribution to child in need and child protection processes, and children looked after reviews</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 7)</p>	<p>Test reporting on this and CiN/CP and LAC Management Teams to receive regular reports</p> <p>Ensure all staff are aware of the revised process re. recording</p>	<p>31 March 2017</p> <p>28 February 2017</p>	<p>Julian Cunningham Alison Hinds</p> <p>Julian Cunningham Alison Hinds</p>	<p>Process has been changed – now embedded in a document so that it can be recorded and reported on</p> <p>Staff have been briefed in relation to the need to facilitate advocacy arrangements where necessary</p>
<p>Ensure that children looked after who would benefit from one have access to an independent visitor</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 8)</p>	<p>Ensure all staff are aware of referral process</p> <p>Changes to be made to LAC review report to ensure this has been considered where</p>	<p>31 March 2017</p> <p>30 April 2017</p>	<p>Alison Hinds</p>	<p>All staff have been briefed on the need to consider access to independent visitors</p>

Action	Milestones	Timescales	Lead Officers	Progress
	appropriate			
<p>Ensure that all personal education plans (PEP) are specific, measurable and easy for children and young people to understand</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 9)</p>	<p>Guidance for social workers and designated teachers on use of electronic PEP to include ensuring targets are easy for children and young people to understand</p> <p>To be measured through quality assurance of PEPs by COPE team</p>	<p>30 June 2017</p> <p>Termly Audits</p>	<p>Alison Hinds</p>	<p>Electronic PEP is being piloted</p> <p>Termly audits are in place</p>
<p>Ensure that all pathway plans include targets which are specific, measurable and written in such a way that there is no room for ambiguity about who needs to do what, by when, to ensure that care leavers are able to make a successful transition to independence</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 10)</p>	<p>Training to be offered to all staff in transition team to ensure improvement in pathway planning</p> <p>Dip sampling of pathway plans to ensure improvement in practice</p>	<p>31 March 2017</p>	<p>Alison Hinds</p>	<p>Workshop for transition team took place on 22 March 2017</p> <p>Dip sampling to measure improvements in quality of pathway plans to be scheduled to assess the impact of training and improvement in quality</p>
<p>Ensure that once children are placed with adoptive families there is no unnecessary delay in applying for an adoption order</p> <p>(RECOMMENDATION 11)</p>	<p>Adoption applications to be made 10 weeks after a child is placed in prospective adoptive household.</p> <p>Annex A's to be completed by the child's social worker and lodged with the court at the</p>	<p>20 March 2017</p>	<p>Alison Hinds</p>	<p>ACTION COMPLETED</p> <p>Dip samples to take place to ensure adoption applications and Annex A's are being lodged at 10 weeks</p>

Action	Milestones	Timescales	Lead Officers	Progress
	same time Care first activity to be utilised to ensure timescales are met			