

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
MEETING DATE:	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2012
TITLE:	Response to Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services
WARD:	ALL

### AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

#### List of attachments to this report:

Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services: Bath and North East Somerset – Ofsted and Care Quality Commission

#### 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The report details the process, contents, judgements and main findings from the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission's Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services undertaken between 9<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012, and outlines how the Council's Children's Service and its partners will be responding to the inspection report's recommendations for areas for improvement.

#### 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the report and the actions to be taken to respond to recommendations for areas for improvement.
- 2.2 Note the arrangements proposed for reviewing and reporting progress with those actions to the Local Safeguarding Children Board; the Corporate Parenting Group: the In-Care Council; and the Partnership Board for Health and Wellbeing.
- 2.3 Request that the Director of People and Community and Divisional Director, Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service present a progress report to this Panel at its July 2012 meeting.

#### 3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### 4 THE REPORT

4.1 The Ofsted/Care Quality Commission's inspection in Bath and North East Somerset was undertaken within the existing framework of unannounced annual inspections of Contact, Referral and Assessment Services and 3 yearly announced inspections of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services. This was the first such announced inspection of Bath and North East Somerset's Services, and followed unannounced inspections in May 2010 and January 2011, and the Joint Area Review conducted in June 2008.

4.2 The Council's Director of People and Communities and the Chief Executive of the Bath and North East Somerset and Wiltshire PCT Cluster were advised of the inspection on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012. Pre inspection documents were submitted to the Ofsted Lead Inspector as required, and an inspection set-up meeting was held with all local partners on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012. The inspection was conducted between 9<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012. The Council and partners were given headline feedback on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and the opportunity to comment upon the draft report. The Council received the pre-publication of the report on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2012. The report was published on the Ofsted website on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2012 and is a public document.

4.3 The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The inspection team consisted of four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one inspector from the Care Quality Commission. The inspection was carried out under the Children Act 2004.

4.4 The evidence evaluated by the inspectors included:-

- Discussions with 21 children and young people and 22 carers receiving services, front staff and line managers, senior officers including the Director and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, elected members and a range of community representatives.
- Analysing and evaluating reports from a variety of sources including a review of the Children and Young People's Plan, performance data, information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day care provision and the evaluations of a serious case review undertaken by Ofsted in accordance with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2010.
- A review of 94 case files for children and young people with a range of need. This provided a view of services provided over time and the quality of reporting, recording and decision making undertaken.
- Direct observation of practice and working groups. Visits to a range of safeguarding and looked after children's services across the partnership.
- The outcomes of the most recent annual unannounced inspection of local authority contact, referral and assessment services undertaken in January 2011.
- Interviews and focus groups with front line professionals, managers and senior staff from; NHS Bath and North East Somerset and NHS Wiltshire, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust; Sirona Health and Social Care; The Royal United Hospital; Great Western Hospital Foundation Trust; Avon and Wiltshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Bath NHS Healthcare Centre.

4.5 All inspection judgements are made using the following four point scale.

Outstanding (Grade 1)	A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Good (Grade 2)	A service that exceeds minimum requirements
Adequate (Grade 3)	A service that only meets minimum requirements
Inadequate (Grade 4)	A service that does not meet minimum requirements

4.6 The following judgements were provided for safeguarding services:-

- Overall effectiveness – Grade 3 (Adequate)
- Capacity for improvement – Grade 3 (Adequate)
- Children and young people are safe and feel safe – Grade 2 (Good)
- Quality of provision – Grade 3 (Adequate)
- The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe – Grade 4 (Inadequate)
- Ambition and prioritisation – Grade 3 (Adequate)
- Leadership and Management – Grade 3 (Adequate)
- Performance Management and Quality Assurance – Grade 3 (Adequate)
- Partnership working – Grade 3 (Adequate)

4.7 These judgements and the actions required by the Council and its partners to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset (as detailed in paragraph 26 of the Inspection report) have been reported to the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and to its constituent members. A briefing paper was presented to the LSCB meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012. The LSCB has given priority within its Work Programme for 2012/13 to actions to strengthen its own governance arrangements and how it challenges and holds to account member agencies; and to receiving reports from the Council's Children's Service and Health agencies dealing progress with their representative action plans in June and September 2012.

4.8 The following judgements were given for services for looked after children:-

- Overall effectiveness – Grade 2 (Good)
- Capacity for improvement – Grade 2 (Good)
- Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers: being healthy – Grade 4 (Inadequate)
- Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers: staying safe – Grade 2 (Good)
- Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers: enjoying and achieving – Grade 2 (Good)
- Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers: making and positive contribution, including user engagement – Grade 2 (Good)
- Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers: Economic wellbeing – Grade 3 (Adequate)
- Overall quality of provision – Grade 3 (Adequate)
- Ambition and prioritisation – Grade 2 (Good)
- Leadership and Management – Grade 2 (Good)
- Performance Management and Quality Assurance – Grade 3 (Adequate)

4.9 The Inspection report has been shared with staff across the Children's Service and all teams have discussed its contents, judgements and recommendations for areas for improvement. Some actions have been taken immediately to improve practice and management oversight and learning points from the inspection have been used to inform further work in the re-design of the Children's Social Care Service – for which a revised timetable and work programme has been established.

4.10 The Children's Service has established an Inspection Improvement Steering Group, chaired by the Director of Children's Service, to detail, coordinate and

progress actions to effect and evidence the required improvements and ensure that the highlighted strengths are maintained and built upon. A process has been put in place to include staff across the Service in this work and in future, and on-going, arrangements for auditing the quality of work. Three meetings have been held with staff to detail the action plan and how improvements will be embedded in the Service.

4.11 A Draft Improvement Action Plan is being developed to bring together all of the improvement activities so that these are led in a coherent manner.

4.12 The Inspection Improvement Steering Group will meet monthly and will make arrangements to provide progress reports and evidence of improvements to the LSCB, the Partnership Board for Health and Wellbeing, the Corporate Parenting Group, and the In-Care Council. It is envisaged that the LSCB will also form a multi-agency Improvement group to oversee the wider improvement agenda across all of the relevant agencies.

## 5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 The risks associated with ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements are the provision of services to children and young people are assessed by the Children's Service (and partner agencies) and included in both the Service and Corporate risk register.

5.2 The risks associated with ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements are also assessed and managed by the LSCB (which receives quarterly performance reports) and the Board has established its own risk register.

5.3 The risks associated with ensuring the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers are assessed and managed by the Children's Service (and partner agencies) and included in both the Service and Corporate risk register.

## 6 CONSULTATION

6.1 Staff; Other B&NES Services; Stakeholders/Partners.

6.2 Staff across Children's Service have been involved in discussions about how the Service will respond to the recommendations for areas for improvement: in detailing the action plan: and in evaluating progress and evidencing improvements.

<b>Contact person</b>	<p><b>Maurice Lindsay</b> – Divisional Director, Safeguarding, Social Care and Family Service          Tel: 01225 396289 Email: <a href="mailto:Maurice_Lindsay@Bathnes.gov.uk">Maurice_Lindsay@Bathnes.gov.uk</a>          And  <b>Ashley Ayre</b> – Director of Children's Services          Tel: 01225 394200 Email: <a href="mailto:Ashley_Ayre@Bathnes.gov.uk">Ashley_Ayre@Bathnes.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Background papers</b>	
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