

Cabinet

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	7 th September 2016
<p><u>Cabinet Member(s)</u> Councillor Rebecca Knox – Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Children's Safeguarding</p> <p><u>Local Member(s)</u> None</p> <p><u>Lead Director(s)</u> Sara Tough – Director for Children's Services</p>	
Subject of Report	Post Ofsted Progress
Executive Summary	Dorset's Ofsted inspection took place in February and March 2016. The Single Inspection Framework report was published on the 23 rd May 2016. An Action Plan has been agreed by the Children's Services Leadership Team and this report provides a summary of the contents of that Action Plan. It also provides information on how the Action Plan will be progressed and monitored going forward.
<p>Impact Assessment:</p> <p><i>Please refer to the protocol for writing reports.</i></p>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment: No specific issues identified</p>
	<p>Use of Evidence: The action plan has been directly informed by the detailed Ofsted report</p>
	<p>Budget: There are no specific budget implications attached to the Action Plan</p>
	<p>Risk Assessment: Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as: Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk MEDIUM</p>
	<p>Other Implications:</p>

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Recommendation	This report is for cabinet members to note and comment upon the progress that has been made since the Ofsted report has been published.
Reason for Recommendation	There is a requirement for an action plan post Ofsted inspections to implement the recommendations from the report.
Appendices	Appendix 1 attached to the report is a copy of the Ofsted Recommendations
Background Papers	Ofsted Report webpage http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/dorset
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dorset's Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the Review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board took place in February and March 2016.
- 1.2 Ofsted published their final report on the 23rd May 2016. It contained 18 main recommendations (Attached at Appendix 1) which we have divided into four topic areas under the Action Plan. These areas are:
- Forward Together
 - Assessment and Planning
 - Fostering/Adoption and Looked After Children (LAC)
 - Additional Areas
- 1.3 Each element of the Action Plan has a lead officer or officers and an agreed deadline for delivery. It has been agreed by the Children's Services Leadership Team (CSLT) that progress under the Action Plan will be monitored on a monthly basis by the Strategy Delivery Group (SDG) and that headline reporting will be back to CSLT also on a monthly basis. The SDG comprises Senior ~Managers from Children's Services with reporting to CSLT.

2. Forward Together

- 2.1 The areas for improvement under this heading include improved management oversight and decision making, particularly at the front door and improved performance in terms of prompt, accurate and professional assessments. The introduction on the 5th September of the Single Point of Access (SPA) arrangements acts as a pre-cursor to the full Multi-Agency Sharing Hub (MASH). The MASH will improve our front door services and commissioning of Level 5-7 Management training and strengthening the performance of our Independent Conference Chairs will also ensure that this area of work is strengthened and supported.
- 2.2 The work that is currently in train under Forward Together for Children to develop our early help provision will also ensure that there are shared priorities and plans across the partnership against which services can be commissioned and measured.

3. Assessment and Planning

- 3.1 A number of measures are already in place to improve the quality of analysis and ensure that children's wishes are accurately reflected. These include some significant changes to our assessment document so that plans are outcomes focused as well as refreshed training for managers and social workers. The timeliness and quality of assessments will be reviewed every month at the Performance meeting.
- 3.2 The Outcomes Chart that was previously developed has been reviewed and refreshed and the system has been changed so that no assessment can be signed off without a completed outcomes plan. There is also on-going work with the Independent Reviewing Officers and the Independent Conference Chairs to strengthen their quality assurance role in this respect.
- 3.3 There is a renewed focus by the Learning and Development team to review and re-commission 'Safe Lives' and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) training which focuses on domestic abuse assessment and referral processes. In addition, all social workers in the new Family Assessment Specialist Team (FAST) (from 5th September) will be trained to complete Parenting Assessment Manual (PAM) assessments, which focus on work with parents who have particular learning needs.

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- 3.4 In terms of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) there are a number of specialist training programmes that have been commissioned and there will be a review of the Level 4 training for our CSE 'Champions'. We are also developing our ability to identify cohorts of young people who are at risk of CSE or who have a number of 'missing' episodes, so that we better understand Dorset's profile and can be more effective in our disruption techniques. There will also be a repeat of the multi-agency CSE audit.
- 3.5 The establishment of processes for providing services to 'Missing' children under the SPA will improve Dorset's performance in terms of collecting the data. The contract with Barnardo's and our provision of quality return home interviews is under review; there are current negotiations with targeted youth support in terms of those children and young people deemed at low risk.
- 3.6 The commissioning team is reviewing our current advocacy provision with a view to providing a more comprehensive service to children and young people who are subject to child protection plans. Learning and Development are also devising a programme of work with foster carers so that they can promote the use of the advocacy service.

4. Fostering/Adoption and LAC

- 4.1 The commissioning team are currently negotiating with Bournemouth Borough Council to undertake the required work with the language schools that are under Dorset's jurisdiction.
- 4.2 In respect of private fostering arrangements that do not include Language Schools, there are still arrangements to be put in place to ensure that Dorset meets its statutory requirements. These arrangements will be better enabled from the 5th September when the new Care and Support model becomes operational. In the meantime, we are commissioning refreshed training for social workers to ensure there is complete understanding of the requirements from the child's perspective, aside from the assessment of the adult.
- 4.3 The Virtual School team case holders have renewed their focus on looked after children who experience short term exclusions from school. The exclusions officer is now made aware and strategies to avoid exclusion identified in the child's first Personal Education Plan of the new academic year.
- 4.4 There are current negotiations with Action for Children to widen participation in the Children in Care Council and Dorset Kidz, so that their views are better reflected and used to influence service development.
- 4.5 The Youth Offending Service (YOS) manager will attend the Corporate Parenting Board to present a report focusing on the recent offending by Dorset Children in Care (CiC). The pan Dorset multi-agency protocol to reduce offending by CiC is about to be circulated for consultation. There are plans to hold a launch event for the new protocol in November 2016.
- 4.6 The capacity of the specialist nurse team for children in care has been significantly increased and now includes services to care leavers. This will enable the health passports for care leavers to be comprehensive and useful documents.
- 4.7 An initial meeting has taken place with Dorset County Council (DCC) web editors to improve information on Dorset for You for our care leavers. The aim is to have a provisional copy to the web editors by the 1st September.

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- 4.8 In July 2016 a pilot work experience with four Year 11 looked after children taking place over August 2016. A larger cohort is planned for 2016/17 and the Alternative Provision Adviser is leading on improving links with Weymouth College.
- 4.9 Dorset's permanence planning for older children and young people will be improved from the 5th September when the 0-12 LAC team is in place. Team Managers will chair permanence planning meetings and ensure that there is a permanence plan in place for all LAC. Children in long term foster placements will be considered at the Permanence Panel. The team will adopt the tracking system used currently by the Adoption Team to ensure that children's progress towards permanence is monitored. There will also be a review of the training and quality of life story books and later life letters for children who are adopted.

5. Additional Areas Recommendations

- 5.1 The Complaints Annual Report will be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on the 20th September. The complaints team are also working on developing approaches and formats for the periodic 'summary and learning reports' for Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)/Directors/Senior Managers.
- 5.2 The final recommendation was to strengthen the oversight and challenge of children's services by the Local Authority's scrutiny function and Corporate Parenting Panel. In July the Chair of the Council was recruited as a new governor by the chair of the governing body. Invitations have gone out to primary and secondary heads to join the Virtual School Governing Body in September 2016. Membership of the Corporate Parenting Board is being widened to include closer links with housing, voluntary sector and children and young people. In addition, a facilitated workshop took place in July to define the role and function of the Children's Trust Board, which agreed the work plan for the next year – focusing on the improvements recommended by Ofsted.

6. Overall Progress

- 6.1 The Ofsted recommendations build on the overall improvement on the programme already underway across Dorset.
- 6.2 The action plan includes both Ofsted specific recommendations and already identified areas of improvement into one plan for Dorset.
- 6.3 Reporting and governance arrangements are in place and satisfactory progress is being made.

Sara Tough
Director for Children's Services
August 2016

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Appendix 1

Recommendations from the Ofsted Report – 23rd May 2016

1. Prioritise the implementation of measures to strengthen management oversight and decision making, to ensure that when children are referred to children's services they are seen, their circumstances are assessed and services that match their needs are provided in a consistently prompt and effective manner.
2. Improve the quality of analysis and the focus on children's and young people's wishes in assessments, so that the plans they give rise to are more sharply focused on their needs.
3. Improve how plans are used to achieve better outcomes for children by making sure that they are clear about what needs to be achieved, who will complete what actions, in what timescale and how progress will be measured.
4. Complete the implementation of plans to improve the scrutiny and challenge of child protection and care plans by the independent conference and review service.
5. Ensure that specialist risk assessments are completed when this is relevant and will support better understanding of children's and young people's circumstances, particularly those for children at risk of child sexual exploitation or living in homes where there is domestic abuse.
6. Take action to ensure that all children living in private fostering arrangements are identified and receive a timely and thorough assessment of their needs.
7. Improve the use of 'return interviews' for children who have been missing from home or care, to protect them better individually and through the identification of any patterns or themes that can inform prevention work and service development, particularly when these relate to child sexual exploitation.
8. Help children and young people to be more actively involved in their child protection case conferences and looked after reviews through strengthening the use of advocacy.
9. Take action to reduce the high number of short-term exclusions of children looked after, particularly those in Years 9, 10 and 11.
10. Broaden the range of children and young people who are able to participate in the Children in Care Council, Dorset Kidz, and improve consultation and participation, so that their views are better reflected and used to influence service development.
11. Commission a review of the children looked after who are involved in the criminal justice system, to understand the issues resulting in the high percentage receiving formal interventions and develop a strategy to reduce this.
12. Make sure that care leavers are provided with clear and accessible information about their health history and their rights and entitlements.
13. Develop a full range of opportunities for work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships for care leavers, to increase the number who are in employment, education or training.
14. Strengthen the quality of permanence planning for children who do not have a plan of adoption and for older children and young people.
15. Improve the quality and timeliness of life story work, life story books and later life letters, ensuring that they are completed by suitably skilled practitioners.

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16. Improve the coordination and impact of both early help and safeguarding services for children by working with partner agencies to ensure that there are shared priorities and plans against which services can be commissioned and progress measured.

17. Conduct an analysis of the increased number of complaints to identify the common themes and, additionally, strengthen the processes for disseminating learning from complaints to improve practice.

18. Help drive service improvement by strengthening oversight and challenge of children's services by the local authority's scrutiny function and corporate parenting panel.