

## **Manchester City Council Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 21 May 2018

**Subject:** Continually improving Children's and Education Services and Post-Inspection Action Planning

**Report of:** Director and Deputy Director of Children's Services

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### **Summary**

This report provides the committee with an overview of the action plan developed to deliver the recommendations set out in Ofsted's Re-Inspection of Children's Services report published on 21st December 2017; which was submitted to Ofsted on 5th April 2018.

In addition, outlined in this report are the arrangements and planning in place within Children and Education Services to respond to the presenting challenges and opportunities to improve the experiences and outcomes of Manchester's children and young people and for services to continually improve.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended scrutiny committee:

1. Note the work that has been undertaken since the re-inspection of Children's Services and the completion of the Post Ofsted Action Plan.
  2. Seek a future report outlining the impact of the actions referred to in recommendation 1.
  3. Discuss and comment upon the proposed seven priorities effectively contributing to our consultation process on the Children and Education Services Directorate priorities.
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**Wards Affected:** All

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### **Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)**

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	the programme of improvement outlined should enable children and young people to make a positive contribution to the city's economy
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining	A sufficiency of high quality education provision will provide future generations with the skills and

the city's economic success	behaviours to benefit from the City's economic success.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The programme of improvement outlined in the plan will ensure children and young people who are known to children's services are, through effective support, given an equal opportunity to positively contribute to their communities
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Investment in modern, energy efficient and high quality education infrastructure drives reductions in carbon across the estate of schools.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Investment in existing and new education provision will enhance the City's attractiveness to potential residents and contribute to the development of high quality neighbourhoods.

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Following the re-inspection of Children's Services by Ofsted in 2017 the City Council was required to submit a post inspection action plan to the inspectorate responding to the 12 recommendations outlined therein. Scrutiny Committee Sub-Group members have considered this plan which is a working document, a copy of which is available for consideration today. It is expected as part of the ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) framework that was launched on 18th January 2018 that progress against the post inspection action plan, self assessments and strategic planning will be considered in future focussed visits, JTAI (Joint Targeted Area Inspection) and annual conversations; together these will inform the timing of Ofsted's inspection of Manchester's Children's Services.

1.2 It is worth noting the post inspection action plan is not solely designed to fulfill a required response to the inspection but is an articulation of key activity already identified by the service to ensure continual improvement and development, through the self-assessment, which was noted in the inspection as precise and robust. Therefore a number of areas and actions iterated in the plan, for the purposes of presenting a detailed description of key milestones for the inspectorate, are parts of activity, strategies and improvements which were already in train or planned by the service prior to inspection. The plan is therefore flexible and dynamic to meet changing circumstance and developments across the service and Council.

## 2.0 Action Plan Structure

2.1 The action plan is divided according to the individual recommendations from the inspection and includes;

- *The Recommendation* - as specified in the Inspection Report, these are the high level requirements to be achieved
- *The Strategic Lead with responsibility for delivery against the Recommendation* - where relevant this is on a partnership basis
- *Performance Management Framework* - which describes the internal reporting placement for monitoring the associated outcomes and metrics aligned to the delivery of the recommendation
- *Measure* - the specific metrics and data which will be monitored as an indicator of performance against the recommendation, including targets where relevant
- *Action(s)* - which details the lower level individual pieces of activity defined by the service as necessary to take place to achieve the requirements of the recommendation
- *Timescale* - being the individual timescales for each of the individual actions to be delivered
- *Progress Note* - to be updated as necessary by the relevant Lead Officers which allows for effective tracking and monitoring of delivery and scrutiny and challenge of performance against the plan
- *Partnership Focus* - critical to the delivery of much of the plan and of the wider essential improvements in the service and child protection system, this field describes any necessary improvement or engagement between the Local

Authority Children's Services and partners in order to achieve the required outcome

- *Link Plans* - confirms the associated service Strategy or Policy under which the recommendation is linked to ensure improvements continue.
- *Governance* - the responsible body for providing governance and assurance under the existing structures
- *Impact* - critically each of the recommendations includes a clear and direct statement of impact which describes what success would look like in terms of impact on outcomes, workforce and service users overall

### **3.0 Delivery**

3.1 The action plan is underpinned by a principled approach to implementation, monitoring and performance assurance that reflects the following SMART structure:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Timed

3.2 Whilst the ownership of the plan will be held by Children's Services it will be delivered via distributed leadership with specific tasks defined and owned by individuals which are assigned across the service and partnership.

3.3 The independently chaired multi-agency Getting to Good Board, Delivering Excellence and associated Getting to Good Plan included the monitoring the progress of the action plan as a key priority. This approach enabled cross-partnership engagement, ownership, scrutiny and challenge, similar to the manner in which the previous Improvement Board was able to.

### **4.0 Recommendations - Progress, Risk & Next Steps**

#### **Recommendation 1**

*4.1 Monitor and improve the frequency and quality of management oversight and supervision in all teams. Ensure that supervision is regular, reflective and challenging, and that managers record the rationale for their decisions*

4.2 Systems and processes for Supervision recording and monitoring are being reviewed to explore potential new ICT based innovations to support managers to more promptly and accurately record supervision activity, and allow middle and senior managers to have better more timely oversight of compliance and performance and more to take more speedy and effective to improve.

4.3 The Service Lead for Safeguarding, through the Quality and Practice Improvement Group and Workforce Strategy Group is refreshing the supervision model, guidance and audit tools to support more effective scrutiny of quality. A revised audit tool has been developed and due to be launched.

4.4 Improvements in the performance of the supervision model rests on the existing activity to recruit and develop more effective middle leaders. The service has commissioned a bespoke Institute of Learning and Management course for social work managers to address this and will continue to develop robust systems to track and challenge both system and individual improvement. This coupled with our recently launched recruitment drive is designed to ensure we have the appropriate capacity, skills and knowledge to deliver improved support to and scrutiny of the work of social workers.

## **Recommendation 2**

4.5 *Ensure that the work allocated to newly qualified social workers is commensurate with their level of experience and that their caseloads are kept within national guidelines*

4.6 Policy and caseload guidance has been revised and circulated which clearly states the caseload expectations for ASYE staff. The Service Manager for the Safeguarding Improvement Unit has established a working group to devise the peer-to-peer dip sampling guidance and programme which will be targeted towards ensuring ASYE staff are undertaking work commensurate with their experience and skill level.

4.7 Delivery against this recommendation is the biggest challenge to the service and the successful delivery of the plan. The actions described above will ensure robust systems and management oversight procedures are in place to intelligently support newly qualified staff to hold work commensurate to their experience. Continuing to reduce complex demand across the whole system is critical to the ultimate outcome of reduced caseloads.

4.8 Further mitigation of the risk is being driven by the renewed campaign to bring more experience high quality social work staff into the service, shift the balance further away from reliance on newly qualified staff and 'over recruit' to create a bank of casual staff to respond to trends and remove the reliance on agency staff. This is complimented by the ongoing improvements to the induction, career pathway and retention offer for staff.

## **Recommendation 3**

4.9 *Ensure that children in need cases are regularly reviewed and that progress is measured and recorded in supervision by manager and analysed in updated assessments.*

4.10 New case review timescales and management guidance has been implemented and distributed to staff. A new data monitoring and reporting system has been implemented to ensure both frontline and senior manager oversight, which will allow for robust first line management oversight of their own performance, and live challenge by senior management on a team, locality and whole service basis. Next steps are aligned to the existing review of the supervision model and guidance.

## **Recommendation 4**

4.11 *Improve the quality of assessments so that the lived experiences of children are fully understood and inform plans. Ensure that plans set out clear and*

*measurable outcomes for children based on comprehensive assessment, and that their effectiveness is regularly reviewed*

4.12 Consultant Social Workers are putting together a SMART planning development session and supporting materials for Social Workers. This roll out of this will commence in May 2018. Service Managers have revised guidance and practice examples on 'good assessment' which have been distributed to staff.

4.13 An overarching challenge that runs through much of the development activity for the service, is that we are able to intelligently track, target and evidence impact of our learning and development activity. The Strategic Lead for Quality Assurance through the Services Modernisation Board and Workforce Learning and Development Strategy Group, supported by ICT and HR colleagues, is exploring new mechanisms for tracking staff progress from induction through to ongoing career development.

#### **Recommendation 5**

*4.14 Review practice in triaging domestic abuse notifications and ensure that frontline police staff have clear guidelines on when children at risk from domestic abuse should come to the attention of the local authority.*

4.15 The responsibility for this recommendation is largely practice improvement within Greater Manchester Police. Respecting the need for strong partnership working the Strategic Lead for Early Help has supported the lead for Children's Safeguarding at GMP To deliver an initial multi-agency workshop which has undertaken a systems review of the process for notification, identifying strengths and weakness; within police practice affecting performance in this area. The output of this work has resolved the issues of triaging and discussed in a workshop held on 23rd March 2018 to develop a more sustainable approach to this issue. This work will report to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Board on its recommendations for improvement in the coming weeks.

#### **Recommendation 6**

*4.16 Improve the quality of assessments of privately fostered children and ensure that they are rigorously reviewed.*

4.17 Revised guidance has been issued to staff on what good assessment and review looks like for privately fostered children. The Service Manager with responsibility for this area had developed a series of briefings and tools for staff prior to the inspection which were due to be rolled out already. These are being progressed.

4.18 To ensure continued oversight and scrutiny of the improvements expected from the revised guidance and staff development materials an individual Independent Reviewing Officer, from the Safeguarding Improvement Unit, has been identified to conduct specific and routine audits and case sampling activity of private fostering cases. This will generate regularly reporting into the Quality Practice Improvement Group on any identified themes, in addition to direct engagement on specific actions and improvements in individual cases. This will commence week of 19th March. This will be supported by a refreshed Audit Tool for Private Fostering which has been developed by the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding

### **Recommendation 7**

*4.19 Identify and then increase the number of children who receive support from an independent visitor or independent advocate at child protection case conferences, or at statutory reviews for children looked after.*

4.20 The promotion of the advocacy service for Looked After Children which was launched at the time of the inspection is now embedded and performing well. Take up of the offer of advocacy by looked after children is tracked and promoted. The Inspection noted benefits in extending this offer to those children on Child Protection Plans.

4.21 A pilot has been recently launched whereby advocacy is offered and assigned to the parents of children subject to a Child Protection Plan on an 'Opt Out' basis. With that conversation with parents required to take place at prior to the first review meeting. The pilot was launched on 1st February 2018. This will be fully evaluated in six months time which if positive will inform an extension of the commission to include both aspects of the independent advocacy service.

### **Recommendation 8**

*4.22 Ensure that plans for permanence progress without unnecessary delay.*

4.23 As well as improvement in frontline practice and care planning, crucial to effective and timely whole system progress of plans for permanence for looked after children is effective middle and senior management challenge and oversight of casework. The North Locality are part way through a pilot programme supported by Coram-I which is delivering an improved locality based permanency tracking system, that allows for more effective live scrutiny of case progress by managers. Early reports from the pilot are positive. The review of progress will form a business case and implementation plan for roll out across the remaining two locality areas. In addition we have purchased a 3 day course in relation to planning for permanency for 50 members of staff this will be delivered through the nationally recognised Research in Practice organisation and is scheduled to take place in June and July 2018.

### **Recommendation 9**

*4.24 Ensure that high-quality work to help children to understand their life experiences is given priority for all children looked after.*

4.25 The Locality Lead for the Central Locality has drafted revised guidance for life story work and engagement with young people. This includes a range of supporting exemplar resources. The combine resources will now be consulted upon with young people and other stakeholders for further development and completion at which point they will be delivered to frontline staff and aligned to the overall service learning and development programme. The oversight and assurance around delivery will be factored into the existing and refreshed Quality Assurance Framework. As mentioned previously it is important that we develop a robust system to track and intelligently manage skills development on an individual practitioner and manager basis, led by intelligence gathered through the QA Framework, Supervisions and About You Appraisals.

### **Recommendation 10**

*4.26 Improve the quality of pathway plans so that they reflect the individual needs of the young person, including their educational needs, and so that the required actions are measurable.*

4.27 Prior to the inspection the service had already taken a policy decision to increase the oversight of pathway plans in two ways. The first was to incorporate the commissioned services quality assurance framework to the mainstream service arrangements, aligning audit and case sampling processes and tools.

4.28 Secondly, new arrangements were put in place to extend the oversight of care planning, by the Independent Reviewing Officer service, into the first post-18 review of the young person's pathway plan. This will provide more consistency for the young person and grip on quality and smoother transition as the child's care plan moves into the young adults pathway plan. These arrangements are now firmly in place and effectiveness will be reviewed on an ongoing basis through the QA Framework.

### **Recommendation 11**

*4.29 Ensure that there are effective arrangements in place to support care leavers with their health needs and to enable them to have an up-to-date summary of their health history when they leave care.*

4.30 Colleagues in health have been meeting with the strategic lead for Care Leavers to resolve two aspects of this recommendation. Firstly that care leavers have a history of their health progress in this area about accessing recording and availability of the information has been made. The second part of the task is to proving more challenging in that care leavers should be provided with up to date and relevant information about health services in their area is ongoing.

### **Recommendation 12**

*4.31 Expedite plans to improve swifter access to suitable accommodation for all care leavers.*

4.32 A workshop with a range of registered providers, supported accommodation providers and housing professional has taken place, led by the Strategic Lead for Care Leavers. This work is progressing plans on two fronts. The needs analysis led review of sufficiency and availability of accommodation for care leavers, which is preparing options to build and release capacity within the City's housing system to match the complex needs of care leavers. It is likely strategic commissioning capacity is required to ensure these initiatives are sustained in the long term.

4.33 Secondly, to develop and improve care planning, referral pathways and joint working between social care and housing professionals and providers to improve the support offer and planning for young people before they leave care and as care leavers.



## 5.0 Conclusion

5.1 In conclusion the post inspection action plan has and will in the near future deliver a range of practical, procedural and policy changes to support improvements in practice, services, management grip and oversight.

5.2 Following the delivery of the action plan the challenge will be to embed and monitor practice changes and the associated impact. The scale of that challenge is mitigated and will be captured by the increasingly effective and robust self-assessment arrangement which will occur bi-annually, the ongoing quality assurance arrangements to inform workforce learning and development and the promotion and scrutiny of the quality of professional supervision.

5.3 Manchester is a large, diverse and complex local authority with high demand on social care services and in addition a growing school age population, increased needs. As recognised by Ofsted significant progress has been made within Children and Education Services in improving the services Manchester's children and young people receive. This has seen Ofsted judge Children's Service no longer to be 'inadequate', school attendance across the school system better than national averages and the percentage of primary schools judged to be good or better increased. However demand/need for statutory social work intervention continues to be a challenge in year school transfers increase (including children with additional learning needs) and the number of children permanently excluded from school exclusions;. This should be understood within a context of changing regulatory framework which for Children's Services will have an increased focus on the quality of social work practice and management oversight; for education services, improving outcomes for children at the end of their formal education and ensuring the education system continues to be inclusive and meets the needs of all learners.

5.4 In response to the aforementioned challenges, opportunities and priorities arising from the needs of children and young people in Manchester and both local and national policies, on 7th March 2018 the Children's and Education Services have been transformed into a truly integrated Directorate. The Children and Education Services Directorate has been 're-shaped and defined' to maximise leadership and management capacity to strengthen practice, partnership working and promoting a strengths based approach so that together we reduce unnecessary demand and improve the lives of Manchester's citizens. Manchester's Children and Young People's Plan, Our Manchester Our Children - building a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for our children which reflects Manchester's strategic vision and Locality Plan. The Children's and Education Services Directorate Draft Plan, "Delivering Excellence, Getting to Good" has been refreshed and proposes 7 key priorities (see below). When fully developed these, in turn will be delivered through individual service plans and strategies which will define and describe how they contribute to Children and Young People's Plan priorities; and how they respond to the identified risks and challenges and maximise the opportunities available.

1. Increase the voice and influence of Manchester's children and young people.
2. Support and develop children's readiness for school and adulthood

3. Everyone a leader - an empowered, capable and stable workforce; effective in the management of risk, Performance and planning for children.
4. Improve outcomes for all children, including CLA/SEND and 'reduce the gap' against National, whilst embracing a programme of early intervention for children and families.
5. Safely reduce the number of children looked after and/or in need of a statutory service.
6. Sufficient range and choice of high quality early years, school , college youth play and care provision which provides value for money.
7. Lead the development of future arrangements for safeguarding partnership in response to legislative changes.