

Division(s): All

Performance Scrutiny Committee - 5 November 2015

Implementation of Oxfordshire's action plan following Ofsted's inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. In June 2014, Oxfordshire's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers were judged to be a 'good' by Ofsted. Oxfordshire is one of only 14 authorities to have been judged good by Ofsted, out of 58 inspected to date within their latest inspection methodology.
2. Following the inspection, the local authority developed an action plan to address the small number of areas where Ofsted had identified the need for improvement.
3. A copy of the action plan is attached, along with an update on progress in implementing each action and achieving the outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

4. **The Performance Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the progress on implementing the action plan.**

Background Papers: *Oxfordshire County Council. Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Ofsted, June 2014. <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>*

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Director for Children's Services

Contact Officer: Clare Rowntree, Strategy Manager, Children, Education and Families

November 2015

**Ofsted Inspection Action Plan
Developed in July 2014**

This action plan is designed to address the 'Areas for improvement' identified within the Ofsted single inspection of children's services published on 30th June 2014.

The plan is divided in to the judgement areas as outlined by Ofsted within the inspection report.

The actions have been developed by the Principal Social Worker in consultation with senior managers and Tier 4 managers within Children's Social Care and Education. In compiling these actions account has been taken of the judgement 'Good' made by Ofsted and the need to now progress Oxfordshire services for children to a standard that achieves 'Outstanding' outcomes.

DLT will act as the board agreeing, overseeing and monitoring progress against the overall plan.
CMT will monitor progress against CSC actions

Officers Responsible for the overall co-ordination and implementation of this plan are:

- Shaun Hanks - Principal Social Worker
- Clare Rowntree - Strategy Manager

Inspection Action Plan, developed in 2014

1.0 Experiences and progress of children who need help and protection

		Actions	Outcome	Progress
1.1	Undertake a review of all children subject to child protection and looked after procedures and ensure that children are not necessarily subject to both processes (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 'one- process' and criteria for when both systems are viewed as necessary. • Run Fwi report 1/4ly • 1/4ly case consideration meeting by Safeguarding Manager-with SM Safeguarding &QA; Corporate Parenting manager of all cases subject of this approach. • Roll out multi-agency training in new system to re-assure other professionals of the rigour in oversight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One process is clearly agreed to manage those cases in two or more systems. • Frequent senior manager oversight of these cases, to ensure a dual approach is required. • Families and Professionals are working to One Plan and the child is safeguarded effectively. 	<p>All actions completed.</p> <p>All outcomes achieved.</p>
1.2	Ensure that Children and young people who are looked after or who receive a child protection service are able to have an independent advocate to represent their views if they wish. (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current advocacy service ability to provide for CP cases as well as LAC. • Approach local Health and Social Work colleges to train/ provide volunteers for this advocacy offer. • Safer recruitment and support to advocates is supported effectively by the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to provide an advocate for CP cases is sufficient and there is no waiting list. • Recruitment and training of advocates from colleges provides a high quality pool of volunteers. • Better ways of encouraging children and young people 	<p>All actions completed.</p> <p>Successful pilot run to test expansion of current advocacy service to support children on child protection plans. However, the resources required to continue this beyond the pilot phase are not currently available.</p>

		<p>advocacy service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore with children and young people how we can best encourage the use of advocates for children. • If the volunteer/ advocacy capacity is sufficient then consider expanding this to all CiN. 	<p>to take up Advocates have been learnt and developed in consultation with young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any additional capacity to extend to other CiN cases. 	
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2.0 Experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence.

		Actions	Outcome	Progress
2.1	Recruit more foster carers within Oxfordshire so that looked after children can be placed in or near their own communities unless there is a specific need for a placement further afield. (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh Recruitment strategy for attracting local long term carers and identify local carers for adolescents. Consider younger foster carers. • Engage CiCC and Care leavers in developing training in relation to caring for adolescents for foster carers and supervising social workers. • Expand the support available from MTFC to be available 24/7 for foster carers to call upon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater pool of local foster carers available for matching long term and adolescent placements. • Foster carers have the skills and support available to care for adolescents. • Fewer breakdowns and placement moves for adolescents. 	<p>Actions completed with the exception of the implementation of an out of hours on-call system to support foster carers. This will commence in late 2015.</p> <p>All outcomes achieved and work continues to maintain them.</p>
2.2	Ensure Life story work is carried out with all looked after	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate agreements as to what constitutes 'Life Story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity over what Oxfordshire expects to be 	All actions completed.

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	<p>children for whom the plan is a permanent alternative family, and not just those moving towards adoption. (3)</p>	<p>Work' and the role of the Later Life Letter within this to be agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in life story work to be commissioned. • Support systems from Admin. and IT in completing and presenting LSW to be agreed and developed. • Expectation on all carers that a photo album of their time in placement/ care will be provided for all children Looked After. • IRO to ensure all current permanent placements have life story work completed. • Permanence Panel to ensure that Life Story Work is completed as part of process for all new permanent placements. 	<p>covered within Life Story Work agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate training in life story work provided. • Appropriate support and time available for Social Workers to complete Life Story Work. • All children will have a photographic record of their childhood while in care. • Systems in place to ensure that Life Story Work is undertaken for all children in permanent placements. 	<p>All outcomes on track to be achieved by end of 2015.</p>
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3.0 Experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence

		Actions	Outcome	Progress
3.1	<p>Ensure that when children are placed with relatives or friends, all necessary assessments are completed and presented to fostering panel within the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking System to ensure that TMs and ASMs are aware of reg24 placements and monitor progress. • Fostering Panel date to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust notification, booking and tracking system is in place that ensures the deadline for panel is clear and achieved. 	<p>All actions completed.</p> <p>Outcomes achieved.</p>

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	<p>required timescales. (4)</p>	<p>booked within 5 working days of ADM agreement to a Reg 24 placement-Booked by the ADM and communicated to the Team Manager & Social Worker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADM Fostering/ Fostering Panel Advisor to monitor performance and report to area managers. • Stretching target of 12 weeks to complete assessment to be implemented. • DBS checks to be commenced the same day that a Reg24 placement is made. • Health colleagues to improve speed with which Health Information is provided for Reg24 assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DBS and Health checks do not prevent timely presentation/ agreement at panel. 	
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4.0 Experiences and progress of children looked after

		Actions	Outcome	Progress
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the role of the virtual head teacher in challenging and supporting school leaders at all stages of education so that the attainment of looked after 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The remit of the Virtual Head teacher is expanded so that they have a responsibility for tracking and supporting educational attainment for children in need as 'vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stage 2&4 meet at least the national average. • Proportion 'Exceeding' expectations in reading and mathematics to be above the average 	<p>All actions have been completed. The implementation of the Placement Strategy for children in and on the edge of care has provided a focus for this work.</p>

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	<p>children improves to at least the expected level of their age. (5)</p>	<p>learners’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Young Carers’ model of working within schools is mainstreamed for CiN by the Virtual School. • Poor attendance and exclusions from school are monitored within CSC for CiN as well as LAC. • Strategic direction is integrated between CSC and Education in relation to improving educational outcomes for CIN / LAC/CL and agreeing what is ‘aspirational’. • Pupil Premium is used to support attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit statement and monitoring of the High Aspiration for Looked after Children’s Education by Local Authority and Partner agencies. 	<p>Achievement of the outcomes is on-going.</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all foster carers receive regular supervision that is properly recorded. (7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of Supervision of Foster Carers is included in the performance reporting. • 6 weekly visits between ‘Supervision’ visits to be strengthened so that they can be recorded as supervision. • Recording template and performance reporting in FWi to be adjusted accordingly. • Training in ‘good’ recording of reflective supervision to be provided to Supervising Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported frequency of Foster Carer supervision accurately reflects practice and improves. • Recording of reflective supervision with Foster Carers is consistently of a high standard as measured by the QA audits. 	<p>Actions and outcomes are on-going. They are on-track to be completed by the end of 2015.</p>

		<p>Workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster Carer's Supervision records are quality assured in line with the QA Framework 		
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5.0 Experience and Progress of care leavers

		Actions	Outcome	Progress
5.1	Develop and implement an ambitious strategy to ensure that care leavers engage in education, training or employment that is commensurate with their ability and potential.(6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Strategy & Tracking system for care leavers so that their employment, education, and training are monitored by the Virtual Head. Compared with national statistics agree an ambitious target for NEET figures within Oxfordshire. Ensure that the joint strategy between CSC and Education uses this target to drive improvement. Through a sounding board learn from high achieving care leavers "what made a difference" for them. Provide career training/ life coaching for care leavers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An 'ambitious' strategy and target is in place to improve the NEET outcomes. Learn 'what works' from care Leavers and implement any changes required. Enhance the focus upon NEET with a joint strategy between CSC and Education. The Virtual Head is able to effectively track the longer term outcomes for care leavers and NEET. 	<p>All actions complete.</p> <p>All outcomes achieved.</p>

6.0 Leadership management and Governance

		Actions	Outcome	Progress
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish effective governance arrangements between the Health & Wellbeing Board, Children and Young People's Board and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) to ensure a robust framework for safeguarding children and young people (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEF Director and Chair of OSCB meet to agree governance framework. Framework agreed between boards and with Chief Executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Guidance is adhered to (Roles & responsibilities of DCS & Lead member) Senior Leadership understands frontline issues (Performance, Quality, Workforce Development & Emerging need) Strategy and Commissioning of services to meet need is joined up across Boards. Full engagement by agencies across partnerships. Role & accountability of Chief Exec/ DCS/ OSCB Chair/ Board Chairs is clear and understood 	<p>All actions completed.</p> <p>All outcomes achieved.</p>
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all children and young people have information appropriate to their age so that they understand how to complain. (10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a 'customer feedback' approach to obtain children's views of the services they have received. Improve the use of social media/ app. technology in obtaining children's feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater return rates and use of children's 'feedback' in developing services and identifying gaps/ poor or good practice. Age appropriate 'complaints' information 	<p>All actions completed with the exception of developing pages on the website relating to complaints. This is due to be completed by the end of 2015.</p> <p>All outcomes achieved.</p>

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		<p>(e.g. Survey Monkey used by ATTACH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce Complaints leaflets and online resource relevant to each key stage level (1,2,3,4)• Distribute leaflets and contact information via Reviews/ Assessment/ Schools/ Awareness Raising/ Online presence.	<p>widely available and accessible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A wider age range of children are submitting feedback/ complaints/ compliments.	
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