

**Report for:** Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee: 29 October 2018

**Item number:**

**Title:** Ofsted Inspection of Local Authorities Children's Services (ILACS)



**Report authorised by :** Ann Graham, Director of Children's Service

**Lead Officer:** Sarah Alexander, Assistant Director of Children's Services

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

This report describes the new Ofsted inspection regime - Inspection of Local Authorities' Children's Services, known as ILACS - the content, length and possible outcomes of such an inspection for Haringey, progress since the previous inspection and preparation for the new arrangements.

**2. Recommendations**

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee to note the content of this report and receive updates on the outcome of any future inspections.

**3. Alternative options considered**

No alternative is available for consideration

**4. Background information**

4.1 The last full inspection of Haringey Children's Services was in May 2014 under the previous inspection regime called the Single Inspection Framework (SIF). At the end of this inspection Haringey were giving the rating of Requires Improvement (RI). In December 2017 Haringey was inspected as part of a new system of inspection through a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI).

As it has been more than four years since the last full inspection, Haringey will receive a full inspection of its services called an ILACS, in the very near future.

4.2 ILACS focuses on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements:

- to help and protect children;
- to assess the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home;
- for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption;
- to assess the experiences and progress of care leavers;

- to judge how effective leadership of the local authority is in creating an environment where social work can flourish.
- 4.3 The primary focus of the new framework is on social work and the quality of professional practice, but will also evaluate the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people through the delivery of services.
- 4.4 ILACS establishes an inspection 'system', aimed at making inspection risk-based and proportionate - the phrase 'catch local authorities before they fall' is often used by Ofsted. The new regime consists of a range of inspection activity as below:
- an annual engagement meeting between the local authority and an Ofsted regional representative to reflect on what is happening in the local authority and to inform future engagement;
  - standard inspections (usually for local authorities judged requires improvement to be good);
  - short inspections (for local authorities judged good or outstanding);
  - focused visits that look at a specific area of service or cohort of children
  - monitoring visits;
  - Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI).
- 4.5. In addition, local authorities are encouraged to participate in improvement activity outside inspections, such as sharing self-evaluations. The Director of Children's Services for Haringey has taken part in two London-wide, sector-led improvement activities since April 2018. In these improvement activities, the sharing of self-evaluations and best practice between authorities takes place to promote learning about what works and how to achieve a 'good' inspection result.
- 4.6 Building on the sector-led improvement activity, senior leaders in Children's Services have produced a bespoke self-evaluation and on 2 October 2018 the Ofsted regional representative visited Haringey for the Annual Engagement meeting with the DCS and other senior officers. At this meeting the Ofsted inspector considered what is happening in the borough, challenged, and tested the content of the self-evaluation.
- 4.7 The next inspection activity for Haringey is almost certainly a standard inspection. During this inspection, a team of four social care inspectors will be on site for two weeks, with a social care regulatory inspector for up to two days and a schools inspector for one day. Ofsted will spend time engaging off site with the local authority in the first week following notification on the Monday, gathering information and intelligence to inform key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) for the two weeks on site.
- 4.8 The focus of standard inspections is social workers' direct practice with families and the impact on outcomes for children. There is an emphasis on observing practice and staff will have been prepared for this approach through the activity of a Practice Week which was held in September 2018 (see below at para. 6.5). Inspectors will ask Social workers about a range of issues, including the quality

and impact of supervision and management oversight, how they are helped to strengthen families and minimise risk, workloads, training, and development opportunities and the availability of resources.

- 4.9 The inspection will involve reading case files and supporting documentation (including previously audited files evaluating individual children's records in the preceding six months by the local authority), meeting with children, parents or carers, relevant staff and stakeholders, and observing multi-agency meetings. The inspection will use case examples to test the effectiveness of Council-wide and partnership working in identifying and responding to vulnerable children and families. The leadership will be judged by how well it can create an environment in which social work can flourish, with any planned action viewed as a strength.

## **5. Haringey's preparation for Inspection**

- 5.1 Haringey Children's Service leadership have focused on embedding improvements from the last inspection in 2014 and the JTAI in December 2017. This has taken the form of governance and practice activity to create and sustain change including:

- the establishment of the Children's Improvement Board to refocus priorities and service improvement;
- the better alignment of performance management and quality assurance mechanisms, which includes the audit programme;
- the development of data used locally to monitor performance including daily, weekly and monthly reporting of key performance indicators used by senior officers and frontline managers to drive improvements at performance meetings – this activity is captured at the Quality Performance Network meeting to establish further improvement and sustainability;
- the implementation and confirmation by review of the changes identified at the JTAI for the MASH and a more robust partnership approach by increased capacity particularly in relation to strategy meetings.
- fostering recruitment has been returned to an in-house fostering team;
- the strengthening of work to protect vulnerable adolescents.

- 5.2 There are positive results from the return to in-housing fostering with a new cohort of carers recruited and taking placements. The team also manage private fostering arrangements long term and there is an annual awareness-raising campaign in place.

- 5.3 Work to protect vulnerable adolescents has strengthened (including children and young people missing from home or education, children and young people at risk of offending or gang exploitation or at risk of CSE) through a multi-agency approach tailored to the child's needs. The strategic, multi-agency Exploitation Panel established in January 2018, is driving greater understanding of risks between CSE, missing, gangs, and other vulnerabilities, developing, and informing a partnership response to keep young people safe. Haringey now has some strong practice around the understanding of gang and CSE-related risk, with the Vulnerabilities Panel driving strong interventions and tracking of both individual situations and trends.

- 5.4 Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers are improving. The Development of Electronic Personal Education Plans (EPEPs) that reflect individual SMART targets is completed. Tighter monitoring of EPEPs targets and targeted programmes and interventions by the Virtual School has led to continued improved outcomes and GCSE results.
- 5.5 There has been a focus and embedding of audit activity launched in July 2018 and a Practice Week during the week of 17 September took place which allowed a deep dive into the journey of the child through the service through Audit and observation. After testing over a period of months, a formal introduction of the Supervision Policy has taken place. This was signed off in September 2018. A set of standards for every level from social workers to assistant directors is now in place giving clarity to expectations of behaviours required to deliver outcomes.
- 5.6 In addition to these developments and in preparation, there are regular dry runs of child level data required following notification of inspection in the offsite information-gathering week:
- weekly inspection preparation meetings;
  - an evidence library of required documents called Annex A;
  - a logistics plan for the inspection period.
- 5.7 However, a number of challenges remain. The introduction of the Recruitment and Retention Board has had some positive impact but recruitment to permanent, experienced frontline social workers in the Assessment and Safeguarding service remains lower than desirable. Managers have been able to recruit nine newly qualified social workers who start employment between October and November.
- 5.8 The practice model Signs of Safety although strong in some areas is not yet fully embedded across every service.

## **6. Conclusion**

Senior Managers in Haringey have captured positive progress and areas for development in Children's Services in the borough within the self-evaluation. Ofsted have a copy of this document and are broadly supportive of its content and the direction of travel. Ofsted uses the self-evaluation as the basis for the inspection investigations and, alongside data, it will form the basis of the development of enquiries for inspectors. The leadership now welcome the opportunity for the inspection at the earliest opportunity

## **7. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

Priority One: Best Start in Life

## **8. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

- Ofsted inspection report of London Borough of Haringey: Inspection of Services for Children in need of help and protection, children looked-after and care

leavers and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards 20 May to June 2014

- Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the multi-agency response to abuse and neglect in Haringey 4-8 December 2017
- Ofsted Framework, Evaluation Criteria and Inspector guidance for the inspections of Local Authority Children's Services