

Report for: CABINET

Title: Outcome of Ofsted inspection of Children's Services

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

Lead Officer: Beverley Hendricks, Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Social Care

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non Key decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 Haringey Children's Social Care Service was inspected by Ofsted between 13 and 24 February 2023. The inspection followed a five-day notice and mobilisation period focused on the effectiveness of the Council's Children's Social Care Services.
- 1.2 The inspection took place in accordance with legislation and the new Ofsted inspection framework that became operational in December 2022. The findings from the inspection were published on 11 April 2023 and the inspectors judged that Haringey's Children's Service is now, for the first time, rated as 'Overall Good' for effectiveness. The inspection noted significant improvement since the last full inspection in November 2017, the report for which, was published in December 2018.
- 1.3 The April 2023 inspection report includes a small number of areas for improvement, and to address these, a Post Inspection Action Plan, will be presented to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel on 26 June 2023.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 I am delighted to welcome this Ofsted report which finds Haringey's Children Service's 'Good' for the first time. This is a significant milestone for the Council and reflects the real passion and determination across the service to provide our young people with the best possible start in life.
- 2.2 The report describes a transformation in our services, with most children now receiving good support from the right people when they need it. This would not be possible without the shared values and determination of staff across Haringey, from the social workers, personal advisers, early help workers and school staff, to the council officers who have worked with me to develop and deliver our programme of improvement.
- 2.3 I am particularly proud of the changes to our working culture, which have played a key role in improving the service we provide and our ability to fulfil our obligations. This is documented in paragraph 59:
'Haringey's diverse population is reflected in the workforce and senior leadership team. This is important to frontline staff and one of the attractions of working for this

local authority. Staff and leaders are acutely aware of the enduring public perception of Haringey children's services. At all levels, staff are proud of working for Haringey. Page 19 Agenda Item 9 Page 2 of 6 A culture of appreciation, kindness and support is firmly embedded. Staff said their leaders care about them, listen to them and take action to address the things that need to change. In turn, staff are loyal and they care about their leaders. Staff who leave often return to Haringey. They talk about the feeling of 'family'. This sense of emotional safety is vitally important, enabling workers to practise with the confidence and persistence needed to effect change for children and young people who are living in very challenging circumstances, the stability in the leadership team and the many positive outcomes for children and young people.

- 2.4 The Ofsted inspection was informed by a self-evaluation by our Children and Young People's Services Panel (CYPS) which was undertaken in December 2022. The positive outcome of the assessment demonstrates that we understand what is happening in our services, as well as what we need to do better. That includes the experience of children in care, which still requires improvement to be good.
- 2.5 Whilst there is much to celebrate in this report, it also acknowledges the hard work that remains to be done and reaffirms our commitment to improve. The great strides we have made, in the challenging context of the Coronavirus pandemic and the Cost-of-Living crisis, give me confidence that we have the ability, as well as the determination, to build on this positive work.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
- a) note the findings and outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care Services, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1; and
 - b) note the approach set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report to address the findings of the inspection and further develop services and outcomes for children who are in care to the local authority.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 Children's services were subject to a full Ofsted inspection called the [Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services \(ILACS\)](#) by a team of Ofsted inspectors over a three-week period. During the first week of the inspection, inspectors were off site and were provided with data and information in line with guidance in the ILACS framework. Inspectors were based in Haringey for the last two weeks of the inspection from 13 February to 24 February 2023.
- 4.2 The inspection framework is focused on gathering evidence on the improving outcomes for children and young people, and evidence of the impact of leaders. There is a strong emphasis on examining frontline practice, speaking directly to practitioners and taking into account the views of children, young people, and their parents and carers.
- 4.3 In advance of the inspection, the service produced a self-evaluation that set out strengths, areas for improvement and actions needed to improve practice and outcomes for children and young people. Ofsted received a copy of the self-

evaluation in advance of the inspection and used this alongside a set of required data and information to form their key lines of enquiry. As part of the inspection process, inspectors look for evidence of progress from previous inspections. A Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) on neglect took place in December 2017. The last full inspection of children’s services took place in 2018.

4.4 The judgement from the 2023 inspection is that the overall effectiveness of Children’s Service is ‘Good’.

Judgement	Grade
Overall effectiveness	Good
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences of children in care	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children care leavers	Good

The Ofsted inspection found that “In 2018, inspectors judged Haringey children’s services to require improvement to be good. Since then, an ambitious and stable leadership team has made considerable progress and much of the service is now transformed. The senior leadership team has achieved steady improvement in the quality and impact of social work practice for children in need of help and protection and sustained good support for care leavers. Services in these areas are now good, with some examples of excellent child and family-centred practice” (Inspection of Haringey local authority children’s services report, page 9).

Ofsted acknowledged that most children are now well supported and “that leaders know there is more to do to achieve the same level of progress in developing services for children in care’. Under a heading, ‘what needs to improve”, inspectors noted the following areas:

- The effectiveness of permanence planning for children in care, including the challenge brought by independent reviewing officers.
- The identification of and response to children in private fostering arrangements.
- The provision and quality of life story work at key developmental stages in children’s lives.
- The quality of supervision in ensuring that plans for children make a positive impact.
- The understanding and knowledge of frontline workers about adoption.

4.5 A Post Ofsted Action Plan, that responds to the areas for improvement, will be presented to the Children’s and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel on 26 June 2023. The Director of Children’s Services (DCS) and the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools, and Families, will submit the action plan to Ofsted on 18 July 2023. The delivery of the action plan will be overseen the AD for Safeguarding & Social Care who will provide progress reports to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel, and the Haringey Safeguarding Children Partnership.

- 4.6 As part of our post Ofsted work towards excellent social work practice we will establish independently chaired, 'Excellence for Children' meetings'. These meetings, that will include the Leader, Lead Member, Chief Executive, DCS, and others, will support the service as it continues the journey towards an overall Ofsted judgement of Outstanding.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 None. After the inspection, the local authority should write an action plan that responds to the findings in the report. It must submit its action plan to Ofsted within 70 working days of receiving the final inspection report. The requirement for this is set out in the [Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(Inspection of Local Authorities\) Regulations 2007](#).

6. Background information

- 6.1 Children's Social Care Services were subject to a full ILACS Ofsted inspection, by a team of Ofsted inspectors over a three-week period from 7 February to 24 February 2023. During the first week of the inspection, inspectors were off site and were provided with data and information in line with statutory guidance. Inspectors were based in Haringey for the last two weeks of the inspection.
- 6.2 The DCS was notified by the Ofsted Lead Inspector that the inspection team would include a further six Ofsted HMI inspectors for Fostering, Adoption, Child Protection, Children with Disabilities, Children in Care, Schools and Learning and the Virtual School and that they would be on from 13 February 2023.
- 6.3 The new inspection framework is focused on gathering evidence on the improving outcomes for children and young people, and evidence of the impact of leaders. There is a strong emphasis on examining frontline practice, speaking directly with practitioners and taking into account the views of children, young people, parents and carers. Our work with partner agencies and as Corporate Parents was also a focus for the inspectors.
- 6.4 In advance of the inspection, the service produced a self-evaluation setting out the strengths, areas for improvement and actions for development. Ofsted received a copy of the self-evaluation in advance of the inspection in December 2022 as part of the Annual Engagement Meeting with inspectors and they used this alongside a set of required data and information to form their key lines of enquiry. As part of the inspection process, inspectors looked for evidence of progress from previous inspections. The last full inspection of Children's services took place in 2018, ([50044253 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](#)) and the self-evaluation set out the areas improved since 2018, and as a result, the impact and outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- 6.5 The inspection team were on site for ten working days and read case files, observed practice, interviewed a wide arrange of frontline practitioners, and other professionals and safeguarding partners, regarding the help and care given to children and young people in Haringey. They also spoke directly to children, young people and their families including through the Children in care Council - ASPIRE, Bruce Grove Youth Space, Rising Green Youth Hub and the Maya Angelou Family Assessment Centre.

The inspectors spent time in Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and met with most designated safeguarding partners including those from Health, Housing, Schools and the Haringey and Enfield BCU – Police Teams.

6.6 The judgement from the inspection is that the effectiveness of Haringey Children's Social Care Services is Overall Good.

6.7 The Summary of the findings is taken verbatim from the full Report as follows :
'Leaders have supported frontline staff to significantly improve practice since the last inspection. Particular progress has been made for children in need of help and protection. Multi-agency partnership work is effective in identifying children at risk of abuse or neglect and providing the right support at the right time. Children at risk of extra-familial harm benefit from bespoke, timely and targeted support to protect them and to disrupt exploitation. Care leavers continue to receive effective help to take up education and employment opportunities and prepare for adulthood. Personal advisers are tenacious and creative in supporting them as young adults.

While most children are now supported well, leaders know there is more to do to achieve the same level of progress in developing services for children in care. Children come into care when it is in their best interests and most live in homes which meet their needs. However, practice is not consistently enabling them to achieve the stability and permanence they need for the future. Many do not receive individualised, sensitive life-story work to help them understand their journeys. Leaders have an accurate and realistic view of the service. Stability of senior leadership and good corporate and political support have helped Haringey make considerable progress in a challenging context. The transformation seen is making a positive difference to most children's lives."

6.8 This is consistent with the Service's self-evaluation.

Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes

7.1 Children Service contributes to delivering the following strategic outcomes in our Corporate Delivery Plan:

- **Inclusive public participation**
- **Best start in life** – the first few years of every child's life will give them the long-term foundation to thrive
- **Happy childhoods** – all children across the borough will be happy and health as they grow up, feeling safe and secure in their family networks and communities
- **Successful futures** – every young person, whatever their background, has a pathway to success for the future
- **A safer borough** – a borough where all residents and visitors feel safe and are safe

8. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

Regulation 3 (Publication of a written statement of proposed action) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007 provides

that the Council must within 70 working days of receiving the Chief Inspector's report, publish a written statement of action which it proposes to take in light of the report by sending a copy to the Chief Inspector, Secretary of State and persons or bodies to whom a copy of the report of the inspection was sent.

8.1 Finance

8.1.1 There are no new financial commitment proposed by this reports with current service costs contained within approved revenue budget provision.

8.2 Procurement

8.2.1 Strategic Procurement notes the contents of this report and confirms there are no procurement implications arising from the recommendations in paragraph 3.1 above.

8.3 Head of Legal & Governance

8.3.1 The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.3.2 The legal framework for Ofsted inspections of Children Services is set out in Section 135-142 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007.

8.3.3 In November 2017, Ofsted introduced a new Framework, evaluation criteria and inspection guidance for the inspections of local authority children's services. The Framework, last updated in April 2023, enables inspectors to be consistent in inspections whilst retaining flexibility to respond to the individual circumstances of each local authority.

8.3.4 Regulation 3 (*Publication of a written statement of proposed action*) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007 provides that the Council must within 70 working days of receiving the Chief Inspector's report, publish a written statement of action which it propose to take in light of the report by sending a copy to the Chief Inspector, Secretary of State and persons or bodies to whom a copy of the report of the inspection was sent.

8.4 Equality

8.4.1 Children's Social Care services are delivered to fulfil the Council's statutory responsibilities towards children in the Borough who are in need of help and protection or are in care or are leaving care. Services are regulated by legislation and by statutory guidance.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Inspection of Haringey local authority children's services report 2023

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

[Inspecting local authority children's services](#) – the inspection framework that Ofsted use to inspect children's services

