

SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: DRAFT INSPECTION ACTION PLAN - CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING AND SOCIAL CARE.

REPORT FROM: COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL – CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CONTACT OFFICER: JACKIE GOWER (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SAFEGUARDING AND SOCIAL CARE)

1.0 Context.

The draft inspection action plan is informed by:

- a) The requirements of Working Together 2013.
- b) The proposed Ofsted Inspection Framework for Children's Social Work and Social Care Services (May 2013)
- c) The Ofsted report on the effectiveness of Independent Reviewing Officers (Tackling Change – June 2013).
- d) Review and self assessment of the effectiveness of Children's Social Work and Social Work services initiated February 2013 and ongoing.

- 1.1. The new Ofsted framework for inspection of CSC is due for publication in September 2013 and for implementation from November 2013.
- 1.2. The draft inspection action plan attached has been constructed against Ofsted's Consultation document (May 2013). It focuses on the proposed key judgement 'The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection.'
- 1.3. The action plan should be viewed as a work in progress – both in terms of content and presentation. A final version will be developed and presented following publication of the final version of the Inspection Framework.
- 1.4. The plan is informed by the Ofsted descriptors of a child care social work service which might be adjudged 'Good' - as opposed to 'Outstanding;' 'Requiring improvement' or 'Inadequate'.
- 1.5. It appears that Ofsted propose three 'key' judgements of effectiveness against:
 - i) The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection.
 - ii) The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence and the experiences and progress of care leavers.
 - iii) Leadership, Management and Governance.

Ofsted propose that a judgement of inadequate in any of these three 'key' areas will lead to an 'overall' judgement of 'inadequate.'

Action plans against each of the three key judgement areas are in development.

- 1.6. Ofsted propose three contributory and graded judgements to describe significant and statutory aspects of provision for adoption and care leavers and the effectiveness of the LSCB. These judgements may be 'limiting' depending on the seriousness and significance of any inadequacy. *There is considerable doubt as to whether the inspection of the LSCB will remain as proposed in the Consultation document.*
- 1.7. The length and detail of the attached draft plan is indicative of the level of scrutiny of practice and effectiveness of services to vulnerable children proposed by Ofsted. In respect of the Key Judgement 'The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection' – there are at least 25 elements which will inform the final Ofsted judgement.
- 1.8. The relevant Strategic Leads will continue to develop the attached draft action plan and a final version will be generated following publication of the final version of the Ofsted Inspection Framework.
- 1.9. In anticipation of a more rigorous inspection regime than previously Children's Services have been proactive in reviewing, remodelling and developing the service. Significant progress has been made over the last 6 months to improve and evidence improvement in the effectiveness of social work/social care services to vulnerable children and families.

2.0. 'The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection'.

Ofsted describe that the quality of service will be judged against whether:

- Children who are at risk or likely to be at risk or about whom there are concerns are identified and protected.
- Help is provided early on emergence of a problem and is co-ordinated through multi-agency arrangements.
- Thresholds between early help and statutory child protection are appropriate, understood and operate effectively.
- Children and young people are listened to and heard.
- Children and young people build effective relationships with professionals in order to assess the capacity and likelihood of change.
- Children receive timely and multi-agency help and protection through risk based assessment, authoritative practice, planning and review that secures change.

List of Background Papers:-

Ofsted Inspection Report
Action Plan

Contact Details:-

Jackie Gower – Assistant Director Safeguarding and Social Care
Tel: 0161 253 5477