

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION & EARLY HELP SERVICES

TO:	ADULT, CHILDREN AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	12 DECEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	OFSTED UPDATE REPORT		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR GAVIN	PORTFOLIO:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
SERVICE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Adult, Children and Education Committee on the most recent Ofsted Monitoring visit (25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October) report published on 24<sup>th</sup> November. (Appendix A).

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Committee recognise improvements have been made as documented by Ofsted and there remains much improvement activity still to undertake.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Ofsted's original inspection findings (report dated 5 August 2016) identified that the safeguarding needs of children were not addressed through consistent and prompt enquiry. Inspectors found children in situations where they had not been seen by social workers in situations where their risks were not understood and acted upon with sufficient urgency.
- 3.2 As a result of the August 2016 'Inadequate' judgement Ofsted is scheduled to undertake quarterly monitoring visits to Reading Borough Council. The first Monitoring Visit was undertaken by Ofsted on 31 October and 1 November 2016; a second on 21 and 22 February 2017 the third on 31 May and 1 June 2017 and the most recent visit on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The next monitoring

visit will take place during February 2018. The February 2018 visit is expected to be the final monitoring visit before a full re-inspection.

#### **4. THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 Progress against key areas of improvement has been made in all areas monitored and reviewed by inspectors.
- 4.2 The monitoring visit recognised that substantial, purposeful progress is being made within Targeted Early Help, the Single Point of Access and the Assessment Teams.
- 4.3 Ofsted recognised that the quality and impact of Early Help is influencing outcomes for children. Delivery to children and families is purposeful and of a good standard. Management oversight is largely effective carried out by constructive and purposeful managers. Morale across the workforce is high.
- 4.4 There is greater workforce confidence in the Single Point of Access. There is quality and reliability of threshold decision making where referrals are managed promptly. The workforce are experienced and committed at all levels. Regular management oversight is supporting quick identification of risk and allocation.
- 4.5 In the assessment service inspectors found effective direct work with children, their voices being prominent in assessments. Social workers reported they were well supported by managers on a daily basis underpinned by regular case supervision. Assessments were well informed by involved partners.
- 4.6 The ability to quality assure work with children and families was recognised as effective within a framework of continuous development demonstrating proficiency, reflection and an outcome.
- 4.7 Good progress has been made on recruitment and a more supportive corporate environment is evident across, finance, legal, HR and workforce development.

#### **5 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 This report is in line with the overall direction of the Council by meeting the following Corporate Plan priorities:
  - a. Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
  - b. Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living.

#### **6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 The Ofsted Inspection Report is a public document and is widely available to provide the community with the original judgement.
- 6.2 Quarterly Ofsted Monitoring Visits are published by Ofsted and as such are public documents that are available to provide the community with an update on the progress.

## 7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Impact Assessment is not relevant to the preparation of this report.

## 8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Whilst there are no legal implications in relation to this report, it is important to note that under Children's Services Legislation, we are required under a general duty of the Children's Act 2004 to address the quality of services and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## 9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 All of the resource requirements associated with the actions identified in the initial Ofsted report and related plan, are met. The Council is currently working under significant financial constraints (as have been outlined to Policy Committee), so as far as practical the action plan is being resourced within the approved budget for 2017/18.

## 10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding board.  
August 2016

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/reading>

Monitoring local authority children's services judged inadequate.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-local-authority-childrens-services-judged-inadequate-guidance-for-inspectors>

Putting Children First: Delivering Our Vision for Excellent Children's Social Care

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/putting-children-first-our-vision-for-childrens-social-care>

Second Ofsted letter to the Local Authority - March 2017

[https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local\\_authority\\_reports/reading/054\\_Monitoring%20visit%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/reading/054_Monitoring%20visit%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf)

Third Ofsted letter to the Local Authority - June 2017

[https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local\\_authority\\_reports/reading/055\\_Monitoring%20visit%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/reading/055_Monitoring%20visit%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf)

Current (Fourth) Ofsted Letter to the Local Authority - November 2017

[https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local\\_authority\\_reports/reading/056\\_Monitoring%20visit%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/reading/056_Monitoring%20visit%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf)