

**Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**  
Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 22 May 2018

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions)

**Lancashire Children's Services Self-Assessment**  
(Appendix 'A' refers)

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**Executive Summary**

This report provides a summary of the overarching findings of Lancashire Children's Services self-assessment, prepared for the forthcoming Ofsted Inspection.

**Recommendation**

The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is requested to note and comment on the self-assessment (as at Appendix A).

**Background and Advice**

This report provides a formal update following a previous presentation to Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

In November 2015, Lancashire Children's Services were judged to be inadequate, in the sub-judgement areas of: children who need help and protection; experiences and progress of care leavers; and leadership, management and governance. Looked after children and adoption were judged to be 'requires improvement to be good'. Seventeen recommendations were made in total.

The subsequent two and a half year improvement journey has seen Lancashire Children's Services committed to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. This has included significant investment of circa £10m to strengthen capacity across children's services; a determined focus on getting the basics right; and improving our leadership, management and governance arrangements to enable good social work practice to flourish.

During this time, we have worked closely with Ofsted to ensure direction and pace. There have been six separate Ofsted monitoring visits and support has been provided from a Department for Education (DfE) Advisor. A strong, dynamic and effective Improvement Board has driven change and scrutinised progress; and the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has ensured effective political challenge. In addition, partnership action has been taken to respond to the main findings and twelve significant concerns identified following the Ofsted/CQC inspection of SEND

services in November 2017.

The feedback offered to the local authority via these mechanisms, as well as feedback from a Local Government Association Peer Review in October 2017, has affirmed the view of children's services that progress is being made, key challenges are being addressed and that services for children, young people and families in Lancashire are increasingly effective. However, it also affirms our view that services are not yet considered to be consistently good.

Our commitment and determination to improve can be seen and measured within the self-assessment (as at Appendix A). This is a key document, which will be used by Ofsted in the forthcoming inspection, to assess how well we understand ourselves in each judgement area, particularly how well we know where we are increasingly effective and where we need to continue to improve.

We are ambitious for our children, young people and families and for our children's services. Although the overall judgement of this self-assessment is that we 'require improvement to be good' across all judgement areas, we are determined to continue improving the quality of our services, with a clear goal of being good in all areas.

## **Consultations**

Views from the workforce and key partners, such as health and the police, have informed this self-assessment. The findings have been shared and agreed by the Lancashire Improvement Board and at a series of recent senior manager partnership events.

The self-assessment will continue to be a working document, taking account of views of partners and key stakeholders, until the Ofsted inspection commences.

## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Ofsted will use the self-assessment as a key measure to assess how well we know ourselves. It is therefore imperative that the self-assessment is honest and measured.

## **Risk management**

The self-assessment has been developed by working closely with key leads across Children's Services and partner agencies. It has been regularly reviewed by the senior management team and shared with a variety of audiences, including the Lancashire Improvement Board. Feedback has confirmed that the self-assessment is in line with front-line views and is a true and measured reflection.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**  
**List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
NA		

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate  
NA