

Appendix A - Ofsted Post Inspection Update

Ofsted Monitoring Visit

The last Ofsted monitoring visit took place on the 30 & 31 October 2017 and focused on the quality of help and support given to children in need. This was the fifth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate following the inspection in September 2015. The findings were published on the 29 November 2017. [Click on the link to view the letter.](#)

It was noted that the authority continued to make progress in the improvement of services for children and the quality of auditing activity had improved significantly. In all cases tracked inspectors broadly agreed with our own audits and social workers valued the learning from this. Management oversight of child in need cases had improved and children in need were being seen regularly, with evidence of direct work being undertaken to capture their views. Child in need plans were being regularly reviewed by social workers and there was evidence of the involvement of partner agencies and schools in particular, in supporting children. However, further work is required to ensure plans are outcome focused and are more specific about the purpose of social work involvement. Staff spoke about children and families with knowledge and genuine care. Whilst regular staff supervision was taking place, the recording of this was too variable.

There remains a strong focus on improving the quality of practice and the Advanced Practitioners (APs) are delivering a series of workshops across Children's Services focused on purposeful practice and the child's lived experience. This includes a workshop on supervision for practitioners and managers. The APs also continue to offer reflective supervision sessions to social workers in respect of more complex casework and deliver ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) workshops to support newly qualified staff, as well as risk sensible clinics to further embed a more strengths based approach to the use of the risk sensible model.

The next monitoring visit is scheduled for the 27 and 28 February 2018 and will focus on the MASH, (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and the interface with early help services.

SEND Inspection

In November 2017, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Lancashire, to judge how effectively we have implemented the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms, set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The inspection took place between 13 and 17 November 2017 and involved five inspectors undertaking a range of activity from reviewing documentation, observing frontline practice and face to face meetings with a range of service users. They spoke to staff at all levels, to SEND service providers, to children and young people with SEND, their parents and carers, governors, and leaders from the local area for health, social care and education. The finding of the inspection is that the local authority and the area's clinical commissioning groups (CCG's), have been asked to submit a joint written statement of action to Ofsted, because of identified areas of weakness in the local area's practice. The local area strategic partnership, including school leaders, will be working with Ofsted, CQC and the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver a SEND action plan to address the issues identified by the inspectors. Work has already begun on addressing the issues found by the inspectors and we have identified and started to implement a number of actions in response to Ofsted's findings.

The main issues we will be working on are as follows:

- Ensuring children and families are at the heart of what we do.
- Robust and comprehensive assessments of children who have SEND are carried out in a timely way.

- Strategic oversight of SEND across the local area.
- The appointment of designated clinical officers to fulfil the designated medical officer function.
- Developing a shared understanding of co-production with children, young people, families and other partners.
- Refreshing and publicising the Lancashire local offer.
- The further development of pathways for Autistic Spectrum Disorder including diagnoses across the local area.
- Collaboration with school leaders to reduce the exclusion of pupils with SEND.

To help achieve these improvements, we have taken a number of actions since the end of the inspection last month. These have included:

- Setting up a SEND partnership board that includes representatives from parents and young people.
- Changes to the Local Offer.
- Advertising Designated Clinical Officer posts.
- Sending questionnaires to all families with children with an Education, Health and Care Plan in order to elicit their views and experience in greater detail.
- Arranging to meet school leaders to deliver ways to reduce exclusions as a matter of urgency.

The development and delivery of an improvement plan will be closely monitored by the DfE and Lancashire's Improvement and Accountability Board. The effective implementation of the improvement plan will be critical to achieving an improved outcome when Ofsted undertakes a further, shorter inspection of these services in due course.

New Inspection Framework

In January 2018, Ofsted implemented a new inspection framework for the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS). This applies a proportionate and risk based approach to inspection incorporating a number of elements:

- Local authorities sharing an annual self-evaluation of the quality and impact of social work practice.
- An annual engagement meeting between Ofsted's regional representative and the local authority, to review the self-evaluation and what is happening in the local authority.
- Ofsted local authority intelligence system (LAIS) which brings together data and information about the local authority.
- Focused visits that look at a specific area of service or cohort of children.
- Standard and short inspections where Ofsted make judgements using a four point scale. (Outstanding, good, requires improvement to be good and inadequate). Graded judgements are made for: overall effectiveness, the experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection, the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers and the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families.
- Joint targeted area inspection (JTAI).

Following either an inspection or focused visit, Ofsted will publish a report or letter setting out their findings. Where concerns arise about a local authority the regional director will decide whether to undertake an inspection (standard or short) or whether a focused visit would be more appropriate. Progress in between inspections will be reviewed through the local authority's self-evaluation and annual engagement meeting. The approach aims to support improvement whilst still holding the local authority to account in meeting their legal responsibilities to children in need of help, protection and care.

The self-evaluation should answer three questions:

- What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local authority?
- How do you know it?
- What are your plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice?

Standard and Short inspections will focus on social worker's direct practice with families and will include: scrutinising and discussing a sample of children's cases; meetings with children, young people, care leavers, parents and carers, foster carers and adopters; shadowing staff in their day to day work and observations of practice in multi-agency and single agency meetings.

Ofsted have confirmed that Lancashire's re-inspection will be completed under the previous Single Inspection Framework that was used to inspect Children's Services in 2015. Under the new inspection framework, local authorities judged inadequate remain subject to quarterly monitoring visits. Local authorities judged to be requires improvement to be good will receive a standard inspection (once in a 3 year period) and up to 2 focused visits in between inspections and a possible JTAI (would replace one of the focused visits).

Ofsted Annual Conversation

Lancashire's annual conversation with Ofsted was held on the 15 January 2018 to review progress and performance. In line with the introduction of the new inspection framework there was a particular focus on the quality and impact of social work practice, how this is known and the plans for the next 12 months to improve practice. An update was provided to Ofsted in respect of the measures being taken to improve practice and the findings of recent external reviews, including the LGA Peer Review, Six Month DfE Review and recent Ofsted Monitoring Visits. However, there was challenge from Ofsted regarding the pace of the improvement work and evidence of impact.