

Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee - Commissioned Slot
Date	28 June 2022
Present	Councillors Daubeney (Chair), Fitzpatrick, Heaton, Orrell, Wann and Webb (Vice-Chair)
In Attendance	Councillor Waller
Officers Present	Jamaila Hussain – Interim Director, Children’s Services Niall McVicar – Head of Innovation and Children’s Champion

1. Declarations of Interest (5.31 pm)

Members were invited to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

None were declared.

2. Minutes (5:32 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meetings held on 13 April 2022 and 03 May 2022 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. Public Participation (5:32 pm)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council’s Public Participation Scheme.

4. Children's Services Ofsted Report (5:33 pm)

The Interim Director for Children’s Services presented a report which outlined the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of Children’s Social Care under the Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Service (ILACS) framework. She introduced the

draft action plan in response to identified areas of improvement which had to be submitted to Ofsted by 12 August 2022.

She noted there had been some inconsistencies in practice and that decision making had sometimes been slow or delayed at leadership level. This had led to insufficient progress being made towards targets. The pandemic had been a factor in this, although it had been identified that social workers had been supported well during this time. Whilst work with partners had slowed down during the pandemic, the service was in a position to act quickly in the implementation of the improvement plan. One of the key areas for improvement was Children's Voice, particularly in relation to the Care Plan. The action plan would be owned by Ofsted and City of York Council (CYC) and Ofsted would check progress biannually or more often, as required.

The Head of Innovation and Children's Champion highlighted the areas that had been developed well such as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Targeted Families Support Service. He thanked staff for their efforts and noted that consistency, the ability to act quickly and a focus on quality was essential moving forward.

Cllr Waller, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, thanked staff and noted the short term deadlines. He identified the need to balance pace with capacity.

In response to questions it was confirmed that:

- Work was already underway on many aspects of the Action Plan and the deadlines were achievable.
- Regular updates to Scrutiny would be provided.
- Corporate parenting initial training and briefings would take place in July. A video briefing would be shared with all elected members.
- The additional financial investment had been spent on improving social worker recruitment and retention. The 'grow your own' scheme had two pods which would produce 10 qualified staff in September, there was to be one pod moving forward. Dedicated business support had been provided, freeing time for social work.
- Quality Assurance was in place through Heads of Service and regional support was available through ADCS (Association of Directors of Children's Services). Practice

standards had been agreed for the quality assurance framework and case sampling was taking place monthly.

- The Ofsted assessment of 'requires improvement to be good' recognises that the improvement journey has started but has not yet reached good.
- The protocol had lapsed prior to the Ofsted inspection for point e in paragraph 17 'the responses to children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless'. This had since been updated.
- An unregistered placement was one that was not regulated by Ofsted. These placements were used when the registered care available did not match the needs of the child. This was a national issue and CYC had been working towards securing closer to home provision, especially for children aged 14-19.
- Future inspections by Ofsted will focus on the Action Plan and the pace of progress. The previous Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) from 2019 would also be examined and an assessment made of the progress since then.
- The Executive Member highlighted the key priorities, ensuring deadlines contained in the Action Plan were met and the voice of young people was heard. Public scrutiny meetings would ensure quality and consistency, he would also be investigating the performance of external partners.

The Chair confirmed that the Committee would monitor the progress of the Ofsted Action Plan, through regular updates at scrutiny meetings.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure the Committee was kept up to date with the Children's Services response to the Ofsted report.

Cllr S Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.25 pm].

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