



Report to Cabinet

Date:	12 July 2022
Title:	Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan
Author and/or contact officer:	Richard Nash, Corporate Director Children's Services
Recommendations:	For Cabinet to note the content of the Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan submitted to Ofsted following the December 2021 inspection.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide Cabinet with the final version of the Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan submitted to Ofsted on 25 May 2022.

2. Content of the Report

- 2.1 In December 2021, Ofsted conducted their Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) reinspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. This inspection found that Buckinghamshire was no longer 'Inadequate', and the overall judgement of Children's Services was 'requires improvement to be good'. Ofsted's report highlights examples of strong practice across the service, including the strengthening of performance measures and increased levels of managerial scrutiny and support for staff at every level which has led to demonstrable improvements in the experience of many children. However, the report also highlights areas where improvement is required and made the following recommendations:

- i. The understanding, and reduction of, a high rate of re-referrals and assessments that result in no services being provided for children and their families.
- ii. The consideration and cumulative impact of earlier interventions and family histories in children and family assessments.

- iii. The quality of social workers' direct work with children.
- iv. The support provided to children aged 16 and 17 years who present as homeless.
- v. The impact of independent reviewing officers (IROs) in decisively escalating children's cases when there is drift and delay in the progress of their care plans.
- vi. The quality of case supervision for social workers in order that it promotes consistently effective work with children.
- vii. The engagement and participation of children in care in the corporate parenting work of the council.

2.2 As a result of this continued improvement of services, the revised Statutory Direction issued to Buckinghamshire in July 2018 has been lifted and Buckinghamshire will now enter a period of 'support and supervision', in line with all authorities who exit formal intervention.

2.3 As a service, we will continue to use our existing Quality Assurance Framework and Check & Challenge process to review practice and monitor progress on a regular basis. Action Leads will also provide 6 weekly updates which will consider progress alongside Performance and Impact Reporting (including data trends, quality assurance and key performance indicators). Progress against this plan will also be a standing item on each Improvement Board Agenda.

3. Other options considered

3.1 N/A

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 In light of the positive Ofsted judgement, the Statutory Direction issued to the Council in relation to Children's Services under Section 487A(4B) of the Education Act 1996 is in the process of being revoked by the Secretary of State.

4.2 There are no immediate financial implications but if any of the proposed actions result in financial requirements then approved funding will be sought before commitments are made .

5. Corporate implications

5.1 N/A

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

6.1 N/A

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

7.1 N/A

8. Next steps and review

8.1 Local authorities judged as 'requires improvement to be good' at their most recent inspection will receive standard inspections by Ofsted. The standard inspection will usually take place about 3 years after the previous inspection. In between inspections, the local authority will receive up to 2 focused visits.

8.2 An independently chaired Board will continue to meet every two months. The Board will maintain oversight of the progress being made against the Ofsted recommendations and other improvements required across the service. John Coughlan, CBE, will continue to be the Independent Chair.

9. Background papers

Appendix 1: Post Inspection Action Plan

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone [01296 382343] or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]

