	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHILDREN, EDUCATION and SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1 July 2019</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>Update report on the Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Social Care Services – May 2019</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Chairman of the Committee, Councillor David Longstaff</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Urgent</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p><b>Appendix 1: Inspection of children’s services summary letter</b>  <b>Appendix 2: Inspection of children’s social care services report</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Officer Contact Details</b></p>	<p>Chris Munday  Executive Director for Children and Young People  <a href="mailto:Chris.Munday@barnet.gov.uk">Chris.Munday@barnet.gov.uk</a></p>

## **Summary**

Children's services in Barnet were judged by OFSTED to be inadequate when OFSTED undertook a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) during April and May 2017. The Council fully accepted the findings of the report and worked collectively with the partnership to drive the improvements needed to transform social care services for children, young people and their families from inadequate to good rapidly.

In response to the recommendations and areas for improvement identified by OFSTED, the Barnet Children Services Improvement Action Plan was developed and a final version presented to Committee in November 2017.

Ofsted undertook an Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services (ILACS) in Barnet between 13 May and 24 May 2019. OFSTED judged Barnet to be good across all inspection domains. This report provides an update on the inspection findings and recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

**1. To consider and note the inspection findings as set out within Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.**

**2. To refer the report to Full Council for consideration.**

- 1.1 Children's services in Barnet were judged by OFSTED to be inadequate when OFSTED undertook a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) of these services in April and May 2017.
- 1.2 The Council fully accepted the findings of the report and worked collectively with the partnership to drive the improvements needed to transform social care services for children, young people and their families from inadequate to good rapidly.
- 1.3 Under the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Framework, local authorities judged as inadequate are subject to ongoing monitoring activity from OFSTED; in Barnet, this included an action planning visit, quarterly monitoring visits, and a full ILACS inspection.
- 1.4 A standard ILACS took place from 13 May to 24 May 2019. Inspectors found the service to be 'good' across the four inspection domains:

- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
- The experience and progress of children in care and care leavers
- Overall effectiveness

1.5 OFSTED informed the local authority of the inspection findings and published their report on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019. This also means that all Department of Education Directions will also cease from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019. The full inspection report can be found in Appendix 1. A young person's summary is published as Appendix 2.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Members are asked to consider and note the inspection findings to ensure scrutiny by elected members and ensure the effectiveness of the local authority in protecting and caring for children and young people as a corporate parent.

2.2 Members are asked to refer to report to Full Council.

## **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

3.1 Not applicable.

## **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

4.1 Not applicable.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

5.1.1 The delivery of good services to children and families is a key mechanism through which Barnet Council and its partners will deliver the Family Friendly Barnet vision to be the most family friendly borough in London by 2020.

5.1.2 This supports the following Council's corporate priorities as expressed through the Corporate Plan for 2019-2024 which sets out the vision and strategy for the next five years based on the core principles of fairness, responsibility and opportunity, to make sure Barnet;

- Is a pleasant, well maintained borough that we protect and invest in;
- Residents live happy, healthy, independent lives with the most vulnerable protected;
- Has safe and strong communities where people get along well.

### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

- 5.2.1 Policy and Resources Committee of June 2017 agreed to invest an additional £5.7m in Family Services, some of which was invested to improve practice to ensure improvements are made which result in better outcomes for children, young people and families. The detailed breakdown of this additional £5.7 million is provided in item 7, CELS agenda 18 September 2017.
- 5.2.2 Medium Term Financial Savings (MTFS) for 2018 - 2020 were reviewed in light of the Family Services improvement journey to consider achievability. The original CES Committee target for 2018/19 – 2019/20 was £8.303m was revised to £4.409m in the 2018/19 Policy & Resource Committee Business Planning Report.

### **5.3 Social Value**

- 5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

### **5.4 Legal and Constitutional References**

- 5.4.1 Local authorities have specific duties in respect of children under various legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004. They have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and, if this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing services appropriate to the child's needs. They also have a duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing services appropriate to the child's needs, provided this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare. They should do this in partnership with parents, in a way that is sensitive to the child's race, religion, culture and language and that, where practicable, takes account of the child's wishes and feelings.
- 5.4.2 Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides the statutory framework for OFSTED inspections. Section 136 and 137 provide the power for OFSTED to inspect on behalf of the Secretary of State and requires the Chief Inspector to produce a report following such an inspection. OFSTED will have monitoring visits on a regular basis in local authorities found to be inadequate. A new OFSTED framework has been in place from January 2018, however monitoring visits are still undertaken for authorities found to be inadequate. In addition to OFSTED's statutory responsibilities, the Secretary of State has the power to direct local authorities. This power of direction includes the power to impose a commissioner, direct the local authority to work with improvement partners and direct alternative delivery options. Subsequent directions can be given if the services are not found to be adequate.
- 5.4.3 Article 7 of the council's constitution states that the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee has the responsibility for all matters relating to children, schools and education. In addition to this, the committee has responsibility for overseeing the support for young people in care and enhancing the council's corporate parenting role.

## **5.5 Risk Management**

### **Children's Services Improvement Action Plan**

- 5.5.1 The nature of services provided to children and families by Family Services manage significant levels of risk. An inappropriate response or poor decision-making around a case could lead to a significant children's safeguarding incident resulting in significant harm. Good quality early intervention and social care services reduce the likelihood of children suffering harm and increase the likelihood of children developing into successful adults and achieving and succeeding. The implementation of the Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan based on inspection findings and recommendations reduce this risk and drive forward improvements towards good quality services.

## **5.6 Equalities and Diversity**

- 5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public-Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
  - advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
  - foster good relations between people from different groups
- 5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services
- 5.6.3 Equalities and diversity considerations are a key element of social work practice. It is imperative that help and protection services for children and young are sensitive and responsive to age, disability, race and ethnicity, faith or belief, sex, gender reassignment, language, maternity / parental status and sexual orientation. Barnet has a diverse population of children and young people. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 52%, compared with 30% in the country. The percentages of children and young people from minority ethnic groups who receive statutory social care services account for 61% of Children in Need cases, 56% of child protection cases and 60% of all Children in Care. The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language across primary schools is 44% (the national average is 18%). The trends in the ethnic, age and gender identity of Barnet's looked after children compared to the published population statistics for England can be seen in the children looked after (CLA) graph below. The snapshot is the CLA population as at February 2019.

## Comparing CLA demographics

CLA figures compared to published population statistics

### Ethnicity

	LA Latest snapshot			LA 2017			Eng 2017		
	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference
White	40	53	lower -25%	42	53	lower -20%	75	75	no dif 0%
Mixed	20	11	higher 87%	17	11	higher 61%	9	6	higher 56%
Asian	6	13	lower -56%	12	13	lower -12%	5	11	lower -58%
Black	18	12	higher 56%	18	12	higher 54%	7	6	higher 25%
Other	16	12	higher 38%	x	12		3	2	higher 44%

### Age

	LA Latest snapshot			LA 2017			Eng 2017		
	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference
Under 1	4	6	lower -26%	4	6	lower -25%	5	6	lower -5%
1 to 4	10	23	lower -57%	7	23	lower -70%	13	23	lower -45%
5 to 9	9	30	lower -69%	11	30	lower -63%	19	29	lower -34%
10 to 15	35	31	higher 13%	37	31	higher 19%	39	32	higher 24%
16-plus	41	9	higher 333%	40	9	higher 324%	23	10	higher 126%

### Gender

	LA Latest snapshot			LA 2017			Eng 2017		
	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference
Male	62	51	higher 20%	61	51	higher 19%	56	51	higher 10%
Female	38	49	lower -22%	39	49	lower -20%	44	49	lower -10%

5.6.4 Barnet also has an above average rate of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children when compared to statistical neighbours, and the statistical neighbour average. In 2018, Barnet had 66 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, compared to an average of 34 amongst statistical neighbours. The only statistical neighbour which had more was Hillingdon, a London Borough which is within a 10-mile radius of Heathrow airport.

5.6.5 Unaccompanied young people experience separation and loss from their families, and in addition to this they are also likely to have experienced further trauma, such as abuse an exploitation whilst travelling to the UK. There have been several practice and service developments to ensure the needs of this group are met, many of whom arrive in the UK without being able to speak English. In 2018,

- an education programme was commissioned from Whitefields School to induct unaccompanied young people into the UK and education system;
- an initial health assessment pathway was created that included specific processes for unaccompanied young people, to accommodate the range of checks that need to be undertaken for this group;
- a new unaccompanied asylum-seeking children specialist Personal Advisor role was created in Onwards and Upwards. The worker speaks Pashtu and Albanian – the two most common languages spoken by Barnet's unaccompanied young people – and has experience in dealing with the Home Office and dealing with tasks such as Human Rights Assessments, which has been invaluable in supporting this vulnerable group of young people;
- Practice improvements in life story work resulted in a former unaccompanied young person creating a video work as an outcome of his successful life story

work and foster placement;

- All newly arrived unaccompanied young people are now allocated to a worker in Onwards and Upwards upon arrival to reduce the number of workers and times a young person has to repeat their story.

5.6.6 In Barnet, we have a higher percentage of children in need with a recorded disability compared to the London and England rat. As at 31 March 2018, the rate of disability was as follows:

Local authority	Number of Children in need episodes at 31 March	Number of children in need episodes at 31 March with a disability recorded	Percentage of children in need episodes at 31 March with a disability recorded
England	404,710	49,770	12.3
London	72,810	9,460	13.0
Inner London	31,460	3,900	12.4
Outer London	41,350	5,560	13.4
<b>Barnet</b>	<b>2,107</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>15.0</b>

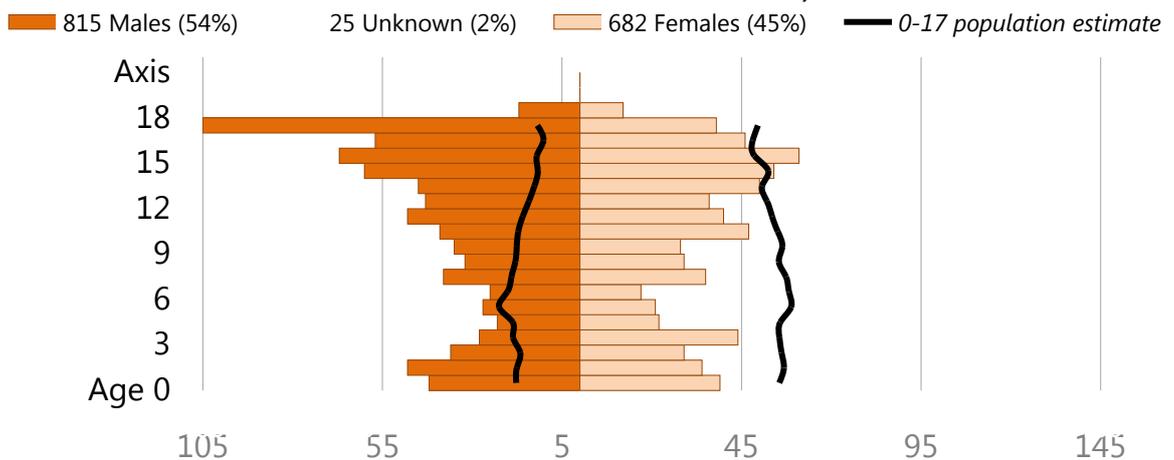
5.6.7 One key service which supports disabled children, young people and families is the 0-25 service. The service was reorganised in September 2017 and consists of a team of social workers, family support workers, direct payment workers and occupational therapists who work with young people as per the Children Act 1989 and Care Act 2014. The service supports a strength based model of practice that aims to build families strengths, resilience and capacity. The service intervenes and supports families earlier and throughout young people's transition to adulthood, building their capacity and resilience.

5.6.8 Since the service's introduction, and the inadequate Ofsted rating, practice has improved across children and adult cases, and there is significantly better partnership working with Adult services, SEND, Health and parents - with the aim to achieve effective co-production. There is a better understanding of safeguarding within the service which means that children with disabilities are better protected.

5.6.9 The focus for 2019 regarding support for disabled children, young people and families pertains to practice development, data and systems and support for families, such as recommissioning the Short Breaks service. These fall under the OFSTED improvement plan themes of 'enhancing practice leadership for children' and 'strengthening planning for children', which will lead to better outcomes for children, young people and families.

5.6.10 As at 20 December 2018, there are more children in need aged 14 to 18 than any other age group, as illustrated in the graph 1 below.

**Graph 1: Age/Gender of all Children in Need (1522) (including Child Protection and Looked after Children)**



5.6.11 The number and needs of adolescents has resulted in several services being invested in to ensure that emerging and existing issues are supported to prevent them becoming more serious problems; data shows that this age group are more likely to be affected by issues such as exploitation, criminality and poor mental health. As at 30 November 2018, of 27 young people identified as known to the Youth Offending Team and vulnerable (gone missing, those with an open Child Sexual Exploitation or gang flag, and those who have been the subject of a Sexual Exploitation And Missing meeting, within a selected time period) 96% (n=26), were aged 15 to 17, one was 12 years old.

5.6.12 One of the services that has been invested in to engage vulnerable young people in this age group is the REACH Team. This team was set up in April 2017 to provide multi-agency wrap-around support to young people at high risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. Further to this the Trusted Relationships Project will be delivered in 2019 following a successful bid to the Home Office in September 2018; more details about this can be found in 2.10 to 2.19.

5.6.13 A further way in which the service is attempting to meet the specific needs of this age group, is through the provision of mental health support at Onwards and Upwards, which includes 1:1 appointments with trainee psychotherapists from Terapia which is available for care leavers in need of emotional support.

5.6.14 Some areas of social work practice in relation to inequalities and disadvantage still remain inconsistent. Learning from audits and practice week has highlighted attention to diversity and the cultural context in assessments is an area of practice in need of immediate support from management, the Practice Development Workers and targeted training. The Ofsted improvement action plan addresses the additional work which needs to be done to ensure that children’s diversity and identity needs are met; “5b(ii) Strengthen consideration of diversity in assessment so that assessments thoroughly explore and consider family history including the influence of cultural, linguistic and religious beliefs, norms and expectations”, and training is ongoing to ensure this work is embedding.

5.6.15 Additional equalities and diversity information and data in relation to service improvements that have, and continue to be made following the 2017 OFSTED

inspection, are outlined within the Self-Evaluation Framework presented at the November 2018 CES Committee. For example, a new programme of diversity training for social workers has been introduced, which has resulted in improvements in this domain of practice, as evidenced by audit grades.

## 5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 In July 2016, the Government published their Care Leavers' strategy *Keep on Caring* which outlined that the "... [the government] will introduce a set of corporate parenting principles that will require *all departments* within a local authority to recognise their role as corporate parents, encouraging them to look at the services and support that they provide through the lens of what a reasonable parent would do to support their own children.'

5.7.2 The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

1. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
2. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
3. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
4. to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
5. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
6. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and;
7. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

5.7.3 A number of activities have been undertaken as part of the OFSTED improvement journey and to ensure that Barnet has due regard to the Principles and improves on the delivery of corporate parenting to its children in care and care leavers. This includes:

- A Children in Care survey relaunch in December 2018 resulted in a 60.9% increase in responses from children and young people when compared to the previous survey. Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel will use a more in-depth analysis of the results, alongside the results of the other work with young people over the last 12 months to agree what will happen as a result of the messages from the survey.
- Barnet have committed to supporting children and young people to achieve their best in childhood, adolescence and adulthood within the Corporate Parenting Pledge for children in care and care leavers, as approved by full council on 29 January 2016.

- Learning and development for elected members and senior officers has and will continue to be delivered, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities to children and care and care leavers and ways in which the Principles can be embedded and sufficient challenge provided regarding work and decisions of the council. The last training session for members was delivered on 31 May 2018.
- Improved our Mental Health offer for Children in Care and Care Leavers, in partnership with the Barnet Integrated Clinical Service and Terapia.
- To ensure that Barnet has due regard to the Principles and improves on the delivery of corporate parenting to children in care and care leavers in Barnet, the administering of council tax relief was approved at Full Council on 31 July 2018 and backdated to April 2018 when implemented in September 2018. This scheme helps care experienced young people have a more successful transition to independence, through the provision of guaranteed relief in their first two years of independent living.

Young people, key services and senior officers developed the policy, which was amended based on feedback received from the care leavers that responded to the public consultation.

The introduction of the care leavers council tax policy aims to help improve the emotional and physical health of care experienced young people and contribute to the achievement of the best outcomes for this cohort.

- A Care Leaver Participation Coordinator has been recruited to lead on a targeted participation project which seeks to improve the education, employment and training (EET) outcomes of Barnet's Care Leavers. The Coordinator's role includes working with key stakeholders to develop and implement an appropriate and accessible EET Pathway for Barnet Care Leavers, action EET related tasks within the Corporate Parenting Plan and work with staff and care leavers to increase skills and opportunities available to care leavers. This project has been funded by the Council's Chief Executive until March 2021.
- We ensure elected members, senior officers and partners can monitor and challenge the performance of the council and its partner agencies pertaining to consideration of the Principles and outcomes for children in care and care leavers through the appropriate channels. This includes the Children, Education, and Safeguarding Committee (bi-monthly), Corporate Parenting Advisory (quarterly) Panel and Corporate Parenting Officers' Group (monthly).

## **5.8 Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.8.1 Consultation and engagement with children and young people is central to social work practice and service improvement across the Safeguarding Partnership. A service user experience strategy has been developed and was launched on 19th February 2018. The strategy ensures that how we work with children and young people is child centred,

that we know, understand and can capture the lived experience of children and feed lessons learnt into service improvement. We have nominated Voice of the child champions across partner agencies and within Family Services to promote and lead on the Service User Engagement agenda within their respective areas.

- 5.8.2 Our Voice of the Child Strategy Group enables the wider engagement of children and young people in service design and commissioning of provision across the partnership. This includes youth forums such as Barnet Youth Board and Youth Assembly, the SEN forum (to co-design services) and Children in Care Council (to improve the support children in care receive). The team have been working closely with UNICEF UK to deliver the Child Friendly Communities and Cities initiative. This is a global programme that aims to advance children's rights and well-being at the local level. More recently the team have had a change in staff with a newly appointed Voice of the Child Coordinator and Child's Rights Lead. The team are reviewing the current Youth Voice Offer to develop a structured action plan to focus on increasing reach and impact for children and young people in Barnet.

## **5.9 Insight**

- 5.9.1 Insight data will continue to be regularly collected and used in monitoring the progress and impact of Barnet's Children's Services Improvement Action Plan and to shape ongoing improvement activity.

## **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 Single Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board report, OFSTED, 7 July 2017

[https://reports.OFSTED.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local\\_authority\\_reports/barnet/051\\_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf](https://reports.OFSTED.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/barnet/051_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf)

- 6.2 Barnet's Corporate Parenting Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers (2016)

[https://www.barnet.gov.uk/dam/jcr:c33f12a5-86d9-4215-9c89-a8c82675fba4/Pledge%20for%20Children%20in%20Care%202016%20\(digital\).pdf](https://www.barnet.gov.uk/dam/jcr:c33f12a5-86d9-4215-9c89-a8c82675fba4/Pledge%20for%20Children%20in%20Care%202016%20(digital).pdf)