

	<p style="text-align: center;">CHILDREN, EDUCATION and SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10 September 2019</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Post Ofsted Children’s Social Care Reporting Arrangements</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman of the Committee, Councillor David Longstaff</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix 1: Letter from Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families Appendix 2: CHaT Report Appendix 3: Performance and Quality Assurance Report Appendix 4: Performance Matters Appendix 5: CYPP Partnership Updates</p>
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Summary

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. In a letter published on 1st July 2019 the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families confirmed that due to the significant improvement of services, the revised Direction issued to Barnet in June 2018 would be lifted with immediate effect. The full letter can be found in Appendix 1.

To maintain the scrutiny by elected members and continue to improve the effectiveness of the local authority in protecting children in need and caring for children and young people as a corporate parent, Family Services are proposing to report to committee against the priorities set out in the Barnet Children and Young People's Plan.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee agree the proposed new arrangements for Family Services reporting to Committee

- 1.1 A standard ILACS took place from 13 May to 24 May 2019. Inspectors found the service to be 'good' across the four inspection domains. OFSTED informed the local authority of the inspection findings and published their report on 1st July 2019. This also means that all Department of Education Directions will also cease from the 1st July 2019. The letter from the Department for Education confirming the end of the Directions is attached in appendix 1.
- 1.2 To maintain the scrutiny by elected members and continue to improve the effectiveness of the local authority in protecting children in need and caring for children and young people as a corporate parent, Family Services are proposing to report to committee against the priorities set out in the Barnet Children and Young People's Plan:
 - Family and Belonging
 - Safe and Secure
 - Education and Learning
 - Culture
 - Cooperation and Leadership
 - Communication
 - Health and Wellbeing

- 1.3 The updates to committee will include progress both in Family Services and across the partnership in achieving the aspirations articulated in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 1.4 A schedule of thematic reports will be presented to Committee to ensure Members are able to scrutinise information at key points of our reporting cycles. This will include:
- November 2019: Corporate Parenting Annual Report
 - December 2019: Ofsted Self Evaluation (SEF)
 - February 2020: Education results paper
 - April 2020: Children with Disabilities and SEND update report
- 1.5 The council has specific duties to fulfil as a Corporate Parent many of which apply specifically to the work of Children and Young People's Services. For this reason, we propose that the Committee continues to receive performance information against key indicators. Going forward this will include the ChaT report, developed by the Department for Education and included as appendix 2, and a Performance and Quality Assurance report included as appendix 3. These reports will replace Performance Matters, which is currently included as appendix 4.
- 1.5.1 July data shows a vacancy rate of 55 social work posts. We expect this to reduce as our cohort of students on their Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) move into social work posts, and several agency staff complete on-boarding into permanent roles. We are holding a small number of social work posts vacant for staff affected by the adoption regionalisation. The current projected social work vacancy rate for December 2019 is 34, and this may reduce further following the launch of a new recruitment campaign in September which will coincide with an article in The Guardian promoting the positive improvements made across Children's Services.
- 1.5.2 Supervision and management oversight remain an area of focus to ensure social workers receive the support they need to provide a good service to families. A second cohort of practice managers and supervisors will be completing year 1 of the Postgraduate Certificate in Systemic Practice, with the impact of this training evidenced in the high calibre of supervision seen in audited cases from those team managers who completed this course in 2019. Audit data shows that compliance based issues are preventing more audits from moving into 'good', however audit information is clear that children and young people are held at the centre of assessment, planning and decision making.
- 1.5.3 MASH has seen a consistent increase in the number of contacts coming in to the service over the past year. Analysis of the data shows that the increase is in low level concerns at a universal and universal plus level leading to signposting or the provision of information rather than a spike in contacts requiring a statutory social care intervention. The MASH Steering Group has identified actions for the partnership with the support of Early Help to raise awareness of services across the borough for families to access without the need to make a referral into the MASH.

- 1.5.4 Performance data for Duty and Assessment Teams (DAT) shows that Child Protection Conferences are well attended by multi-agency partners and this contributes to the analysis of risks and protective factors. Assessment timeliness has improved and the percentage completed within 45 days is now 93.7%, an increase from 86.6% in March. Audit findings show that the quality of assessments is being maintained, and there is good evidence that social workers are using research, engaging children in direct work to ascertain their views and demonstrating greater insight and analysis of risk and need. The workforce development programme will be supporting staff in DATs to complete more sophisticated analysis of family functioning, capacity for change and complex issues, such as personality disorder, gender identity and child mental health needs.
- 1.5.5 There are currently 202 children on Child Protection Plans (CPP), which is the highest volume reported over the last 12 months. 174 of these CPP's have been open for under a year, meaning we have low numbers of children on CPP's for over a year. This shows evidence of robust reviewing mechanisms and the impact of good quality planning, and is supported by audit findings that show an increase in children and young people attending their Child Protection Conferences and Core Group Meetings which is leading, together with increased parental engagement, to Plans that are co-produced and more effective interventions.
- 1.5.6 We have been reviewing care plans and convened more placement stability meetings at an earlier stage, resulting in earlier and planned decisions where children and young people's needs can be best met in alternative or more suitable placements. One of the factors leading to the reviewing of care plans is that we demand higher quality care for our children and young people which has in some instances resulted in a need for children to move placements, and explains the increase in the number of children experiencing 3 or more placement moves. Practice and case recording continue to improve in the Children in Care service, and workers are providing peer support to enable smarter and more child focussed care planning.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and agree the reporting framework to enable continued effective scrutiny of the work of Children and Young People's Services, and to fulfil the council's statutory obligations in this regard.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The Ofsted Improvement Plan was monitored via the Ofsted Improvement Board for the duration of the Ministerial Direction. This Board has now been disbanded due to the outcome of the Ofsted inspection and the implementation of new Working Together arrangements, which will perform the functions of the partnership and senior leaders in ensuring a good quality of service provision and improvement for children in Barnet.

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 2022.

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 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.

5.2.2 A finance report providing a thematic overview of performance for Q1 2019/20 focusing on the budget forecasts and activities to deliver both corporate and committee priorities in Children, Education & Safeguarding committee is included on the agenda for the 10th September 2019 Committee meeting.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 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.

5.4 Risk Management

Children and Young People's Plan 2023

- 5.4.1 The nature of services provided to children and families by Family Services manage significant levels of risk. 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 and Young People's Plan (CYPP) based on consultation with partners and stakeholders, is one mechanism through which this risk is managed. Partners have provided feedback on their progress against their actions in the CYPP, which are included in appendix 5, with the family services updates summarised below.
- 5.4.2 Corporate Plan priority 'Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do' incorporates the CYPP outcomes 'Family and Belonging', 'Safe and Secure', and 'Health and Wellbeing'. 'Education and Learning' sits under the Corporate Plan priority 'Ensuring we have good schools and enough school places so all children have access to a great education'. Finally, under the Corporate Plan priority 'Ensuring we are a family friendly borough', we have the 'Culture', 'Communication' and 'Cooperation and Leadership' outcomes.
- 5.4.3 Under Family and Belonging, Family Services are finalising the Get Real Project whereby young people placed out of borough will move back into borough and reside in local property acquired through Barnet Homes. We are launching a new recruitment campaign with target of 20 new carers and 10 supported lodgings to consolidate our progress after recruiting 31 foster carers in Barnet in 2018/19. The workforce development programme has been developed for 2019/20 providing access to a range of resilience based practice tools and approaches. Reflective practice forums and systemic approaches to group supervision are established.
- 5.4.4 The Safe and Secure outcome is a priority area, and we continue to develop our prevention agenda to ensure children and their families can access help early in the life of a problem. The 0-19 Early Help Strategy 2019 – 2022 and the Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy are interwoven with the Youth Justice Plan 2018-2020. The Vulnerable Adolescents Community Partnership Board has been established to drive the Trusted Relationships Programme and wider workstream integration for this cohort of children and young people. The programme aims to ensure young people have access to safe spaces in which they can undertake activities that are developed in co-production with them and be supported by trusted adults using psychologically informed approaches to building relationships.
- 5.4.5 Health and Wellbeing outcomes are delivered through a multi-agency approach across the borough. Currently 115 schools in Barnet are registered on the Healthy Schools London scheme, and 63 bronze, 39 silver and 21 gold awards have been achieved. Schools are provided specialist support to participate in this scheme by a service commissioned by public health. Barnet Public Health team have commissioned a service to support Early Years Settings, including childminders, to participate in the newly launched Healthy Early Years London scheme.

- 5.4.6 Education and learning continue to be a strength. Following recent inspections, there are now only four schools in Barnet which are not Good or Outstanding. The Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores for looked after children is better than national and London averages and statistical neighbour LAs. Educational attainment at KS2 (RWM) and KS4 (Attainment 8) for children and young people with SEND is in the top 10% of LAs nationally. We will continue to develop training programmes for SENCOs in response to identified areas of need, liaise with the school improvement team to ensure priorities for next academic year align with SEND attainment and progress priorities. Our ambition is to continue to improve outcomes at EYFS so that attainment is raised and is in the top 20% of LAs nationally.
- 5.4.7 Under the Culture outcome, the Voice of the Child 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. LBB are one of only five Local Authorities that are part of the initiative and the aim is to get accredited with Child Friendly status in the next two years. Council Management Team champions have been identified for each of the UNICEF badges.
- 5.4.8 The partnership demonstrates a commitment to Cooperation and Leadership. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards with new arrangements that place a shared and equal duty on the local authority, the police and the Clinical Commissioning Group to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In line with the guidance published in Working Together 2018, the statutory partners agreed and published their arrangements in June 2019.
- 5.4.9 Work has begun on delivering the new Children and Young People Communication Strategy. Campaigns this year will focus on mental health and crime/safety, based on findings from the Children and Young People's survey that these were their top concerns. A tender has gone out for the Young People's Perception Survey, which will run in October and November 2019.

5.5 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.

5.6.3.1 Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 52%, compared with 30% in the country. More referrals are received for families from minority ethnic groups than from white families, who make up 34% of contacts into the MASH. The percentages of children and young people from minority ethnic groups who receive statutory social care services account for 60% 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%).

5.6.3.2 Boys are overrepresented in most parts of the statutory system. The majority of contacts received into the MASH are for males aged between 11 and 15, and overall 53% of contacts are for boys versus 47% for females. 55% of assessments are for boys, 51.5% of children on child protection plans are boys and 58.6% of children in care are male.

5.6 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.'

5.7.3 The Corporate Parenting Annual Report is being finalised and will be included in the next report to Committee, and will detail all corporate parenting activity over the past 12 months. Current performance information is available in the accompanying appendix 3 report.

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

5.7.1 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 (SUE) agenda within their respective areas.

5.7.2 The SUE report for quarter 1 considers feedback from 641 young people and parents/carers receiving support from our Early Help and statutory social care teams. This quarter has seen a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with our interventions. Service users felt that communication was effective and that they were listened to, and they appreciated their workers, commenting on their supportiveness, empathy and compassion. We continue to work across our quality assurance and training and development systems to ensure learning from service user feedback is used to inform future service delivery.

5.8 Insight

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

6 Background Papers

- 6.1 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)