

<b>CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE</b>	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
<b>21 MARCH 2018</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

Report of:	Executive Director People and Communities Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services.	
Contact Officer(s):	Nicola Curley Assistant Director Children's Services	Tel. 01733 864065

## **BRIEFING ON THE NEW OFSTED INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES FRAMEWORK**

<b>R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S</b>	
<b>FROM:</b> Assistant Director Children's Services	<b>Deadline date:</b> N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To consider and note the contents of the report and raise any comments or concerns they have with lead officers.</li> </ol>	

### **1. ORIGIN OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee following a request from the Chairman, Councillor Bisby.

### **2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to explain the new framework launched by Ofsted in relation to how it inspects children's services in Local Authorities. The attached report has been shared with staff, and will give the Committee an insight into how the Authority is preparing for Inspection.
- 2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting Committee to consider and is relevant to all areas of the terms of reference specifically:
  - 2.4.3.1 - To act as advocates for looked after children and care leavers.
  - 2.4.3.2 - To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children's homes with a view to recommending any changes.
  - 2.4.3.3 - Ensure that the needs of looked after children and care leavers are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council overseeing interagency working arrangements.
  - 2.4.3.4 - Review complaints from looked after children to ensure officers have dealt with these appropriately and made any recommendations for change.
  - 2.4.3.5 - Raise awareness in Peterborough City Council and the wider community by promoting the role of members as corporate parents and the Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities.
  - 2.4.3.6 - To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care.
- 2.3 This report explains how the Local Authority will be externally scrutinised in terms of its delivery of services to children in care and care leavers. It is relevant to all aspects of the Pledge and the Charter.

### 3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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### 4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

#### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 From January 2018 the new universal ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services) inspection framework will replace the Single Inspection Framework (SIF).

4.1.2 The ILACS will focus on the local authority function regarding the help, care and protection of children and young people. Where all or part of an LA’s functions have been delegated to a third-party provider, the inspection is still of the LA.

#### 4.2 A ‘whole system’ approach

4.2.1 Driving up improvement and catching LAs before they fall are the underpinning principles of the new framework, which has been described as a system rather than a programme of inspection.

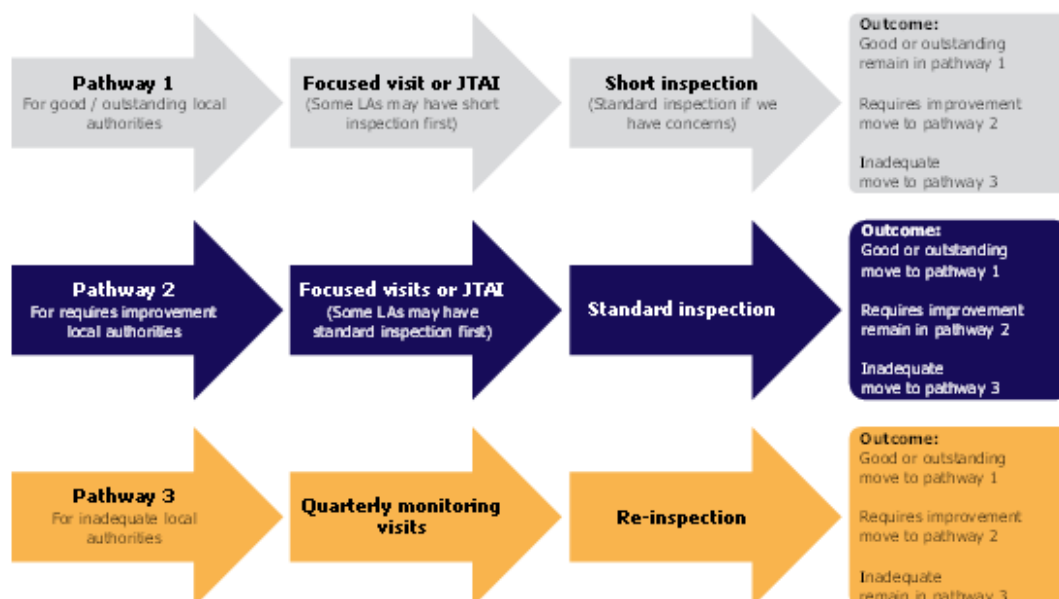
4.2.2 Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services attempt to take a proportionate, whole system approach that is less intensive than the SIF. This inevitably involves more contact (approx. 80% of inspector’s time will be spent with frontline social workers and team managers reviewing case files). Support staff to feel confident to sit with inspector and talk eloquently about cases – making sure staff feel able to do well is key component of preparation.

4.2.3 In addition to onsite inspection activity, this new way of working is both supported and informed by:

- The submission of an annual self-evaluation by the LA
- An annual conversation between the DCS and the relevant Ofsted regional director (Peterborough’s is scheduled for April)
- Up to two focused visits in between the three-yearly judgement inspection, one of which may be a JTAI (Peterborough had their JTAI in June 2017)
- Ofsted’s Local Authority intelligence system

4.2.4 Ofsted does not plan to publish advance notification dates, however, the new inspections and focused visits come with five days’ notice. Inspections will not usually commence in August or over the Christmas period.

4.2.5



4.3 **Peterborough City Council was inspected in April 2015, under the SIF Framework, and received a judgement of Requires Improvement. Peterborough will therefore fall in to the 'Pathway 2' programme. As we had our JTAI inspection in June 2017, we can expect a standard inspection (once every 3 years) and two focused inspections (in between the full inspection cycle of 3 years).**

4.4 The handbook suggests every effort will be made to ensure there is a gap of at least 6 months between each episode of inspection e.g. focused visit or JTAI.

NB: during a standard/short inspection there will be two additional inspectors – an education inspector looking at the impact and effectiveness of the virtual school and a regulatory inspector looking at recruitment processes for foster carers and adoptive families.

4.5 **Focused visits – 5 days notification, two days of fieldwork, two inspectors (no judgements)**

4.5.1 Focused visits concentrate on an area of anticipated good practice or possible concern. The self-evaluation and the annual conversation both feed into the process of identifying areas of focus. Each visit will cover a service area or cohort of children e.g. the front door or the protection of vulnerable adolescents, whilst taking in the impact of leadership and management.

4.5.2 Findings from these visits will be set out in a narrative letter to the DCS, which will be published. However, any serious concerns evidenced during the visit will be identified as areas for priority action, which may in turn inform the nature and timing of future inspection activity. Pilot LAs reported this process was intensive but resulted in a rich picture of practice.

4.6 **Judgement inspections – 5 days notification, four inspectors plus education/regulatory HMI**

4.6.1 Standard and short inspections will result in an overall judgement on the usual four-point scale (inadequate; requires improvement to be good; good and outstanding) and a narrative judgement for the three additional key judgements which largely echo the areas of focus under the SIF:

4.6.2

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS JUDGEMENT		
<b>Key judgement:</b> The impact of leadership on social work practice with children and families	<b>Key judgement:</b> The experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection	<b>Key judgement:</b> The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
<b>Narrative:</b> How good leaders are at creating an environment where social work can flourish	<b>Narrative:</b> Early Help, Children in Need, Children on a child protection plan Will look at our success at achieving permanence for all	<b>Narrative:</b> How well permanence is achieved (including adoption), Care Leavers will remain a priority, making good decisions (matching, where they live, decisions about transitions)

- Small team of 4 inspectors will be in the same service looking at the same cohort at the same
- time
- Spend less time reporting their findings to one another as will move around together
- They can challenge/moderate one another to enable use of time more effectively / efficiently,

- closing lines of enquiry and arriving at robust judgements quickly
- Supported by education specialist 2 days EHE care leavers etc and social care regulatory HMI
- recruitment assessment training and support of both foster carers and adoptive carers
- Data analyst to follow inspectors as they move around to respond to requests
- Thursday will be a key day as the service will need to respond to enquiries that inspectors have raised. We will need everyone available to respond quickly

#### 4.7 **Self-evaluation**

4.7.1 The self-evaluation is a new feature of the ILACS. The LA's submission will be discussed in detail during the annual conversation and then triangulated during the inspection process. Ofsted has no plans to issue a standard template, but asks that local evaluations succinctly answer the following questions:

- What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice with children and families in your authority
- How do you know it
- How do you plan to maintain or improve practice

4.7.2 It should be noted that the leadership and management judgement is driven by the views of frontline staff so pilot LAs reported it is helpful to incorporate their views into this process.

#### 4.8 **The annual conversation**

The LA's self-evaluation forms the basis of the annual conversation between the relevant regional Ofsted director and the DCS. Other available intelligence will also be drawn into this process, eg serious incident notifications, SCRs etc. This exercise will inform focused visits and the timing / key lines of enquiry (KLOE) of a full inspection and will be an open and honest conversation. The DCS will receive a letter following the meeting. There will be no published outcome or grader resulting from this activity.

#### 4.9 **Logistics / onsite activity**

- The notification period / offsite week will be intensive, responding to requests from the inspection team
- Inspectors will spend more time looking at childrens experiences with social workers
- Inspectors will talk to managers if their findings indicate a strength or concern that they need to triangulate further
- There will be keeping in touch meetings between the inspectors and senior leadership team but they may ask DCS to meet inspectors at the office where they are inspecting that day
- **Will talk about practice most of time – 80% - staff feeling confident to sit with inspector talk eloquently about cases – making sure staff feel able to do well is key component**
- Some managers have previously felt short changed as they didn't get the chance to talk to inspectors – will not speak to unless need to – practice speaks for itself
- Focus of KLOEs and emerging findings
- Fewer set piece meetings – if do will be by exception – where particularly impressed or worried – with particular manager to explore in detail

#### 4.10 **TOP TIPS TO PREPARE**

- Clearly demonstrate the voice of children and parents across all cases
- All plans need to be SMART, child-friendly, focussed on the child's needs and outcomes are clear

- Think about what you are doing, and what difference you are making, all the time.
- Stay calm and speak to your team manager or one of the inspection team if you are feeling anxious or require support before your meeting.
- Think about all your cases in terms of reasoning and outcomes – why are you working with this family, what are you doing to make things better, how are you checking to see if things are getting better?
- Make sure your case recording is up to date and include a clear commentary on the outcomes that you are working towards as well as why we are working with families.
- Assessment - be clear about how you make sure children, young people and their families, and relevant other people, are involved in assessments; be clear about your reasoning for the conclusions you have come to.
- Risk - remind yourself of what risk assessment tools you use, and how you make sure that you keep the child and young person at the centre of your thinking at all times.
- Planning and reviewing – remind yourself of how you make sure children, young people and their families are involved in creating plans, what you do to make sure plans are shared with all family members, and how you make sure progress on plans (evaluating impact, outcomes and progress) are checked with children, young people and their families during visits as well as at meetings
- Think who you work most closely with and how collaborative working helps and protects children and young people
- Think about what and who helps you do your thinking, assessing and planning. Supervision? Training? Colleagues? Team meetings? CP Co-ordinator/IRO? Anything/anyone else?
- Identify at least good practice case examples where you can clearly demonstrate you made a difference and that you feel proud to showcase.

#### 4.11 What are inspectors looking at?

- How you present yourself
- If there are problems with the case, clearly demonstrate what you are doing to sort them out
- You are clear about 'step up' and 'step down' services for families
- Be professional and measured in your language and manner at all times
- Do not be afraid to ask the Inspector to repeat a question in order to clarify or confirm the information or details they require. If you are not sure about an answer ask the Inspector if you can come back to them with the information requested

**The inspection team are available to help and support all staff through the inspection. If in doubt, please ask.**

## 5. CONSULTATION

5.1 N/A

## 6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 The new approach by Ofsted does mean that Children's Services will need to adapt their preparation of staff and engagement with Ofsted at the Annual Conversation, but the work of the Service in relation to children and young people will remain the same.

## 7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Ofsted Inspections are a statutory Government requirement and the Local Authority needs to

comply with the new Inspection regime. It is helpful for Members to be aware of the new expectations.

## **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

8.1 The Inspection Framework is a requirement.

## **9. IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial Implications**

9.1 None

### **Legal Implications**

9.2 None

### **Equalities Implications**

9.3 These have not changed from the last Ofsted Inspection Framework.

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 Inspecting local authority children's services from 2018: Ofsted's framework and guidance for inspecting local authority services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers, November 2017.

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 None