

**Ofsted focused visit. 1-2 May 2019**

**Report of the Head of Children's Social Care (Deputy Chief Officer)**

*Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.*

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Focused Visits are part of the new Inspection Framework for Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). They are designed to support improvement and Local Authorities are invited to identify the area of practice they think will most benefit from a Focused Visit. Most Local Authorities are weaker in the area of Children in Need and Child Protection and Devon is no exception. Members may recall that in our independent Service Review in 2017, Children in Need was identified as a priority for improvement, hence we selected this area.
- 1.2 In our Annual Conversation with Ofsted in January 2019, we had asked that any visit be timetabled to take place at least six months after Eclipse implementation, as we recognised the inevitable risks associated with major system change. The visit took place three months post implementation. Inspectors were on site from 1-2 May 2019.
- 1.3 Two inspectors were on site, visiting teams in Exeter and Totnes on the first day and sampling fourteen cases from across the service in day two.

**2. Feedback**

- 2.1 At the time of writing the final letter is unpublished. It will be published on the Ofsted website on 28 May 2019 and the link is included here (<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50079995>).
- 2.2 The letter identifies where progress has been made and where further progress is needed, in particular in four key areas:
  - The quality of assessments so that these include an analysis of all presenting risks and what these mean for the child
  - The focus of children in need and child protection plans so that they link directly to and address the risks identified in assessments
  - The level of challenge and scrutiny that managers give to social workers
  - The accuracy of performance management data and the consistency of quality assurance audits.

### **3. Service response**

- 3.1 Senior leaders in children's service have responded quickly and with appropriate rigour. Service priorities have been reviewed and additional performance and management information reports commissioned. A period of accelerated improvement focusing on key areas of practice is underway and will remain in place until the full ILACS takes place (expected later this year or early next).
- 3.2 The Chief Officer has instituted a Board that will meet monthly to monitor progress against the recommendations made by Ofsted and to test and challenge progress against the wider Service Improvement Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny may wish to ask for an update report in 6 months.

#### **Darryl Freeman**

Head of Service (Deputy Chief Officer)  
Children's Services

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools: Councillor James McInnes

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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