



## **Inspections and assessments update – Children's Services**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 In December 2012 Derby's services for the protection of children were inspected by Ofsted and judged to be 'good'.
- 1.2 The inspection framework used to assess Derby was an interim framework, in place whilst a new 'multi-agency' framework was developed for child protection and a separate framework for looked after children (to replace the Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection framework). Plans for the introduction of two frameworks have since been re-evaluated and a combined framework is scheduled to be introduced in November 2013. In the interim period adoption and fostering agencies are still being inspected on frameworks published in April 2012.
- 1.3 Derby's fostering services was last inspected in 2011 and the adoption service in 2009. Inspections are completed on a three-year cycle and consequently Derby is preparing for an adoption inspection. To support preparations for an adoption inspection the service had a diagnostic assessment in June 2013.
- 1.4 A new inspection framework for local authority support of school improvement was also published by Ofsted in June 2013 and Derby has prepared a self-assessment, with supporting evidence log in anticipation of an inspection.
- 1.5 Alongside responding to and preparing for inspections by Ofsted, Derby also participates in a regional sector-led improvement programme that will involve a 'peer challenge' in November 2013.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note changes to the inspection frameworks for vulnerable groups to be introduced from November 2013 (Appendix 2)
- 2.2 To note current performance on inspections and sector-led improvement preparations and consider further opportunities for Scrutiny involvement and / or challenge.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Inspection frameworks are the basis against which Derby's Children and Young People's Services are judged. It is critical the Members understand the key features of

the frameworks, their responsibilities and any risks to achieving a rating of 'adequate' or above.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 5 Key changes in Ofsted Frameworks

#### Safeguarding, Looked After Children, Adoption and Fostering

- 5.1 In September 2012 Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board received a report on the interim changes to Ofsted's inspection frameworks for services for the protection of children and looked after children and care leavers. Members were informed of the introduction of an interim inspection framework for the protection of children against which Derby was expecting an inspection.
- 5.2 Ofsted reviewed Derby's services for the protection of children in December 2012 and we were judged to be 'good'. The interim framework was in place until August 2013 and Derby is one of only four other local authorities judged to be 'good', with a large proportion of inspected authorities falling into the 'inadequate' category.
- 5.3 Alongside the interim framework for the protection of children Ofsted were piloting a further two frameworks, which they had planned to introduce from July 2013 onwards...
- A multi-agency inspection framework for the protection of children (which would replace the interim framework against which Derby was assessed).
  - A pilot framework for looked after children and care leavers that would include a separate sub-judgement on stability of placements and adoption services.
- 5.4 Following pilot inspections Ofsted announced in April 2013 that they would not be proceeding with the implementation of two separate frameworks for the protection and children and looked after children and care leavers and went out to consultation on a revised combined framework for 'vulnerable groups'.
- 5.5 The consultation for the single framework for vulnerable groups was opened in June 2013 and ran until July 2013, with a plan to introduce the new framework from November 2013 onwards.
- 5.6 Proposals for the inspection of services for 'children in need of help and protection and children looked after and care leavers' are set out in **Appendix 2**, key features to note include...
- Receiving an 'inadequate' judgement on any of the three key 'grade descriptors' will result in an 'inadequate' judgement overall.
  - The introduction of a separate judgement on the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

- The criteria in relation to looked after children is very broad, particularly when considered in conjunction with the two supporting sub-judgements on adoption and care leavers.
- There is a large focus on engagement with children, young people and their families and targeted and appropriate support at all stages of a child's journey.

5.7 To support preparations for an inspection under the combined framework for 'children in need of help and protection and children looked after and care leavers' Derby is completing a self-assessment against the provisional grade descriptors, which will be reviewed and challenged through the directorate-led Improvement Board.

### **School Improvement**

5.8 In June 2013 Ofsted published a framework for the assessment of local authority support for schools.

5.9 The purpose of the inspections are to *'provide an independent view of how well local authorities are carrying out statutory duties in relation to promoting high standards so that children and young people can achieve well and fulfil their potential'*

5.10 Key features of the framework include...

- Inspections are not universal and will only occur when Ofsted has concerns about the performance of an authority (i.e. school judgements are lower than national averages, attainment levels across the LA are below national standards and improvement trends are 'weak') or where it is requested by the Secretary of State.
- There are five working days notice of an inspection and the inspection will usually not last any longer than five working days.
- Assessments will be made with regards to an authority's strengths and weakness to arrive at a summary judgement.
- Ofsted will evaluate a number of aspects of LA services and supporting including...
  - The effectiveness of corporate and strategic leadership of school improvement.
  - The clarity and transparency of policy and strategy for supporting schools' and other providers' improvement, and how clearly the local authority has defined its monitoring, challenge, support and intervention roles.
  - The extent to which the local authority knows schools and other providers, their performance and the standards they achieve and how effectively support is focused on areas of greatest need.

- The effectiveness of the local authority's identification of, and intervention in, underperforming schools, including, where applicable, the use of formal powers available to the local authority.
  - The impact of local authority support and challenge over time and the rate at which schools and other providers are improving.
  - The extent to which the local authority brokers support for schools and other providers.
  - The effectiveness of strategies to support highly effective leadership and management in schools and other providers.
  - Support and challenge for school governance, where applicable.
  - The way the local authority uses any available funding to effect improvement, including how it is focused on areas of greatest need.
- 5.11 To support preparations for an inspection of Derby's support to schools a self-assessment, against all the evaluation criteria, has been completed and an evidence log is being compiled.
- 5.12 It should be noted that despite falling below national averages for the percentage of schools judged to be 'good or better' that there has been a large improvement in performance over the last 12-months with the percentage of maintained schools considered to be good or better rising from 48% in June 2012 to 69% at the end of June 2013.

### **Others Inspection**

- 5.13 In addition to Ofsted publishing changes to the inspection frameworks for vulnerable groups and support to schools they have also been publishing revised frameworks during 2013 that impact on other services that Derby provides / supports...
- A new framework for inspecting Children's Centres came into effect from April 2013.
  - The frameworks for the regulation of early years and childcare providers were updated in May 2013.

## **6 Recent Inspections and Assessments**

- 6.1 Since April 2013 Derby has participated in a number of inspections and assessments...
- In June 2013 there was a diagnostic assessment of Derby's adoption service, in preparation for an Ofsted inspection. As a voluntary assessment there was no formal judgement made there were however a number of recommendations for improvement. Full details of this have been reported to Scrutiny separately.
  - In July 2013 Ofsted completed a thematic assessment of Derby's looked after children placed more than 20 miles outside of the city. The purpose of

the assessment was to inform a national report on; good practice, areas for improvement and national priorities. There was no formal judgement as a result of the assessment however informal feedback was provided, a summary of which is in **Appendix 3**.

## 7 Future Inspection and Assessments

7.1 In the interim period before the introduction of the new framework for vulnerable children (paragraphs 5.1 to 5.5) Ofsted are continuing to inspect both fostering and adoption agencies under the frameworks published in April 2012. The inspections are conducted on a three-year cycle. Derby's fostering service was last inspected in 2011 however our adoption service was inspected in 2009. As Derby is considerably past the three-year statutory inspection timescale, for adoption, preparations are on-going for an inspection.

7.2 Alongside statutory inspections Derby participates in the East Midlands Sector-Led Improvement Programme. As part of this process each local authority is subject to a peer challenge (informed by an annual self-assessment and nationally published performance data). Derby will be assessed in November 2013 and there are two key lines of enquiry to guide the assessment...

- **School improvement** - *Is there sufficient capacity across the city to support the necessary improvements required to reduce the number of schools causing concern and increase the percentage judged to be good or better?*
- **Children in care** - *What has been the impact of early intervention in Derby on the total number of children coming into care?*

### OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b>	N/A N/A N/A N/A Andrew Bunyan – Strategic Director for Children and Young People Frank McGhee – Service Director for Commissioning Jane Parfremment – Service Director for Early Intervention and Integrated Safeguarding Lynda Poole – Service Director for Learning and Inclusion Mark Barratt – Service Director for Specialist Services Heather Greenan – Head of Performance and Improvement
<b>Other(s)</b>	

<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Sarah Walker Tel: 01332 64366 e-mail: sarah.walker@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications
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	Appendix 2 – Proposals for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers
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## IMPLICATIONS

### **Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 Any financial implications relating to inspection activity will be contained with existing budgets.

### **Legal**

- 2.1 Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) carry out the inspections under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Ofsted conduct inspections under sections 20–23 of the Children Act 2004.

### **Personnel**

- 3.1 Workforce development issues are picked up through the evaluation frameworks for inspections.

### **Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 Equality and diversity issues are picked up through the evaluation framework for the inspections.

### **Health and Safety**

- 5.1 None.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

- 6.1 None.

### **Property and Asset Management**

- 7.1 None.

### **Risk Management**

- 8.1 Risks associated to inspections are managed as part of the self-assessment process and ongoing preparations.

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 9.1 The various evaluation frameworks for Children's Service align broadly to the Council's priorities for improvement...
  - A thriving sustainable economy.

- Achieving their learning potential.
- Good health and well-being.
- Being safe and feeling safe.
- A strong community.
- An active cultural life.
- Good quality services that meet local needs.
- A skilled and motivated workforce.



### **Proposals for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers**

The framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers will be implemented from November 2013 onwards and will replace interim inspections frameworks for the protection of children and the pilot framework for looked after children and care leavers (and ultimately the Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection, which ceased to be used in 2012).

Key features proposed...

#### **Judgements**

- There will be four judgement categories; 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' (replacing 'adequate') and 'inadequate'.
- The criteria to achieve 'good' will be used as the benchmark for all other judgements and is considered to be the minimum standard that any child in need of help, protection or support can expect.
- Any 'inadequate' judgements against the three proposed evaluation criteria or 'grade descriptors' will limit an authorities overall judgement to 'inadequate'.
- It should be noted that to be judged as *'inadequate' means that 'children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not being promoted'*.

#### **Evaluation criteria**

- There are three key 'grade descriptors' against which authorities will be judged...
  - The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection.
  - The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence (including sub-judgements on adoption performance and progress of care leavers).
  - Leadership, management and governance.
- In addition to the three key grade descriptors above there will be two contributory and consequently graded judgements for care leavers and adoption. Although a key part of the overall judgement on the related evaluation criteria a judgement of 'inadequate' within these two areas will not automatically result in an overall judgement of 'inadequate'.
- A judgement on the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board will be consulted upon and it is proposed that the Board's effectiveness will be evaluated alongside the new 'integrated' inspection framework. Furthermore,

the results for this judgement will be contained within the report on the help, protection and support services available for vulnerable children. An 'inadequate' judgement within this area will not impact on the overall judgement for an authority as it is 'standalone'.

## Appendix 2

### **Thematic Assessment of Derby's Services for Looked After Children Placed Out of Area**

#### **Key findings from the assessment...**

##### **Strengths**

- Clear and focused ambition
- Commitment to improving services
- Social workers and managers have a good awareness of notification processes for placing a child outside of the city
- Good communication with independent placement providers
- Established transfer protocols to support good health and education outcomes
- Established process for recording children looked after by other authorities placed within Derby City
- Strong arrangements for making decisions on placements.
- The quality of out of area provisions are appropriately monitored and challenged.
- Strategic communication considered to be 'commendable' with an effective Safeguarding Board. Corporate Parenting is raising their knowledge and profile.
- Children in Care Council feel listened too and that their views are taken into consideration and acted upon.
- Strong senior commitment to audits.
- Contacts with siblings and birth parents well managed.
- Carers reported that they were able to access on-going support, as required during placements

##### **Areas for Improvement**

- Corporate Parenting should consider visiting out of area placements
- The quality of assessments seen was variable and some were considered to be out of date The frequency of statutory visits was variable and not always within required timescales
- Recording on CCM was variable and it was felt the system does not reflect the level of social work practice within Derby
- It was noted that officers should always see a child independently before a review

- All opportunities to engage children out of area on decision making should be considered (i.e. paying for transport)
- It was noted that CAMHS can be difficult to access, which is a national issue