

IMPROVEMENT UPDATE**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PEOPLE SERVICES****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of improvement activity over the last three months following the Ofsted inspection. The report will be supplemented by a detailed presentation by the Executive Director People Services and the Director of Children's Services.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The four week Ofsted inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers, and the effectiveness of the local safeguarding board in Sunderland took place between 11 May and 4 June 2015. The report was published on 20 July 2015 and the overall judgement given was that services for these children in Sunderland are Inadequate.
- 2.2 Following the Inspection the Minister for Children placed Sunderland's Children's Services in intervention, and appointed a Commissioner for Children's Services.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The local authority has worked with the Commissioner for Children's Services to develop a comprehensive improvement plan to address all of the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted report. The plan will be presented to the Children's Scrutiny Panel on 10 September, 2015.
- 3.2 Sunderland, with the support of the Commissioner for Children's Services, negotiated the secondment of the Deputy Director of Children's Services in Leeds, Steve Walker to support the council to implement and take forward the improvement plan.
- 3.3 Steve Walker has over 30 years of experience in the field of Children's Social Care. Over the past 4 years, Steve has supported Leeds to improve from Inadequate to a judgement of Good, which it received in their most recent Inspection in January of this year.
- 3.4 All cases individual cases identified by Ofsted, where there were concerns, have been reviewed.
- 3.5 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub has been strengthened. The backlog of work in the hub at the time of the inspection has been addressed and caseloads have been reduced to a safe and manageable level.

- 3.6 A new performance management dataset has been developed which will ensure that there is robust oversight of practice and that any areas of concerns can be identified and acted on promptly. If the Committee would find it helpful, the report can be submitted to them on a regular basis.
- 3.7 The Child Protection and Independent Reviewing Officer Service has been strengthened and additional administration allocated and there are plans to further strengthen the service to ensure that plans for the most vulnerable children in the city are informed by the views and wishes of children, are of a high standard and are implemented in a timely manner.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the content of this report and to receive the associate presentation.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider receiving further updates with regard to Safeguarding Performance data.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Ofsted Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection,
Children Looked After and Care Leavers, July 2015

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