

Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 14 June 2022

Wards affected: All

Report Title:

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report has been prepared to provide members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the Ofsted inspection of our Children's Services which took place between 21st March and 1st April 2022.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

2.1 Following the inspection Ofsted has recognised that services for children in Torbay have significantly improved and that our services, across all four areas of the inspection, are now rated as 'Good'.

2.2 This means that we are achieving good outcomes for our children and young people, and that we have made significant improvements which Ofsted inspectors have described as an "impressive achievement."

2.3 The Ofsted report states that this was a "remarkable transformation" from an 'Inadequate' rating, moving up two gradings to receive good ratings across all categories.

2.4 The report attributes this radical change to a clear and ambitious improvement plan and sufficiency strategy, underpinned by a 'root and branch' analysis addressing the long-standing history of inadequate practice in Torbay, together with a strong political and corporate commitment to the improvement agenda.

2.5 Our multi-agency work has been recognised by inspectors. Here are a few related comments taken from the report:

- “Strategic partnerships are now strong.”
- “...well-planned and cohesive partnership arrangements.”
- “Effective information-sharing results in the right decisions being made for children.”
- “Tenacious work across the partnership....”
- “Effective multi-agency work....”

2.6 It will be vital that we continue to build on these successful foundations to make further improvements across all our services. This ‘Good’ rating shows that we have the determination and ability to make the improvements necessary and we are committed to bringing the same focus on driving up the quality of services for those children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

2.7 We are now striving towards our goal of achieving an outstanding rating by continuing to take a whole council approach in building a child and family friendly Torbay where all children can grow up safely and thrive.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That members of the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Board note the contents of the Ofsted report, the Ofsted rating of ‘Good’ and the significant progress made.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Ofsted Report: ‘Inspection of Torbay local authority Children’s Services’.

Background Documents

N/A

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Between March 21 and April 1 2022 Ofsted undertook a full inspection of our Children's Service
- 1.2 Ofsted published their report on 18 May 2022. They said that the service is now delivering good outcomes for children, families, and young people in Torbay and have described our significant improvement as an "impressive achievement"
- 1.3 After receiving an 'Inadequate' rating following the last two inspections and years of underperforming historically, the Ofsted report acknowledges the "remarkable transformation". They attribute this change to a clear and ambitious improvement plan, based on evidence of what was causing long-standing, inadequate practice in Torbay, together with a strong political and corporate commitment to the improvement agenda.
- 1.4 Ofsted have judged the Council as 'Good' in all four areas of inspection
 - The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
 - The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
 - The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
 - Overall effectiveness.
- 1.5 Some of the strengths identified in the report include:
 - The local authority was recognised as a "highly ambitious corporate parent", which is the result of effective partnerships built on a strong political and corporate commitment
 - Inspectors highlighted that the Director of Children's Services, political leaders and the council's Chief Executive have worked assiduously over the past two years, transforming the quality of help, protection and care for their vulnerable children. A clear and ambitious improvement plan and associated sufficiency strategy, underpinned by a 'root and branch' analysis, have addressed the long-standing history of inadequate practice in Torbay. The services that children now receive are consistently effective
 - The radical transformation and development of Early Help Services means that children and families in Torbay benefit from responsive, well-coordinated, universal, and targeted support to help reduce harm and promote children's welfare
 - The in-house Learning Academy was recognised to have made a major contribution to the highly successful recruitment and retention of staff, as well as to the increased skills base of the workforce
 - A highly effective approach to recruitment and retention has enabled the creation of a more stable permanent workforce. As a result, the number of children and families they are working with is more manageable enabling stronger and more constructive relationships to be built
 - A multi-agency approach with clear and well-established systems provides timely and effective management oversight of referrals. This was described as a "significant improvement" since Ofsted's last inspection

- The report noted that a ‘team around the family’ model delivers a holistic, multi-agency perspective on families’ needs. It recognised that this was starting to make a real difference to children’s day-to-day lives
- Social workers were acknowledged as working hard to build meaningful relationships, ensuring that children’s voices are heard and that their views are informing planning

1.6 Areas for improvement identified in the report include:

- Having greater oversight of arrangements when care leavers move in and out of temporary accommodation
- Increasing the focus on reading in personal education plans
- Improving further the quality of planning for some children in need
- Increasing the frequency and quality of management oversight

1.7 These areas for improvement have been incorporated into the new Continuous Children’s Improvement Plan which was agreed at the CCIB on 18.5.2022.

2. Options under consideration

2.1 N/A

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 N/A

4. Legal Implications

4.1 N/A

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 N/A

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 N/A

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 N/A

8. Associated Risks

8.1 N/A

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	The Ofsted Report states that '...services for children in Torbay have significantly improved. This improvement is demonstrable and making a tangible difference for Torbay's children'		
People with caring Responsibilities	The 'experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers' has been given a rating of 'good' advising that 'Children in care are seen and seen alone regularly by their social workers, who work hard to build meaningful relationships.....this is ensuring that children's voices are heard and that their views are informing planning' Please see sections 18 – 32 of the Ofsted report for more details.		
People with a disability		The Ofsted report advises that '...The quality of this child in need work is not consistent for all disabled children. This means that a small number of children are experiencing delay in making progress in line with their assessed needs. However, inspectors did not identify any children left in situations of significant risk.'	

		<p>The following mitigating actions are in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight as part of children's service performance surgeries • Strengthening of responses to children with SEND as detailed in the WSOA 	
Women or men			No differential impact
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No differential impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact
People who are transgendered			No differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			No differential impact
Public Health impacts (How will your			No differential impact

proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			
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10. Cumulative Council Impact

- 10.1 Services for children in Torbay have significantly improved. This improvement is demonstrable and making a tangible difference for Torbay's children. Strong political and corporate commitment to the improvement agenda has enabled the local authority to change the trajectory of social work practice so that services in Torbay are now good.
- 10.2 This means that we are achieving good outcomes for our children and young people, and that we are made significant improvements which Ofsted inspectors have described as an 'impressive achievement'.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

- 11.1 It was recognised by the inspectors that strategic partnerships are now strong – here are a few related comments taken from the report:
- 'Strategic partnerships are now strong'
 - '.....well planned and cohesive partnership arrangements'
 - 'Effective information sharing results in the right decisions being made for children'
 - 'Tenacious work across the partnership....'
 - 'Effective multi-agency work...'