

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 12th February 2020

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Children's Services – Improvement Plan Quarterly Update and Monitoring Visit

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? As soon as possible

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1. Purpose and Introduction

- 1.1 This report is before Overview and Scrutiny to provide members with an update on the progress of the Children's Services Improvement Plan over the last quarter (appendix two) and to provide an opportunity to consider the feedback received at the most recent Ofsted monitoring visit undertaken on the 7th, 8th and 9th January 2020 (appendix one).
- 1.2 **Monitoring Visit:** Following the Ofsted Inspection undertaken in August 2018 Torbay Council Children's Services is currently rated as 'Inadequate'. As a result Children's Services are subject to regular Ofsted 'monitoring visits', the most recent of which was undertaken on the 7th, 8th and 9th January 2020. It is important that Members consider the feedback provided following this visit.
- 1.3 **Improvement Plan:** The attached 'Improvement Plan Highlight Report' presents an overview of progress against our improvement plan towards the aim of achieving the delivery of 'good' services by April 2021.

The highlight report details the following:

- Tracking of progress over the last quarter in completing agreed actions- i.e. 'are we doing what we said we would?'
 - Current performance against key performance indicators- i.e. 'are our actions having the required impact?'
- 1.4 The highlight report is designed to facilitate scrutiny of our improvement activity by summarising our progress and its impact. It will be produced monthly and discussed at the Council's Corporate Leadership Team/Transformation Board and the Children's Services Improvement Board. The report will also provide the Improvement Board with an

opportunity to highlight areas for further attention that they may wish to schedule into their forward plan.

1.5 The highlight report is formatted as follows:

- A summary page showing overall progress narrative, key areas of concern and risks.
- Further detailed pages for each of the 4 improvement themes ('Leadership & Management', 'Robust model of Social Work Practice', 'Sufficient and Skilled Workforce' and 'Quality Assurance and Audit'), showing current performance against key performance indicators and progress against the agreed activity timeline, with narratives.

2. Proposed Decision

2.1 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board considers the submitted Ofsted monitoring visit feedback letter and the Improvement Plan Highlight Report and makes any identified recommendations to the Cabinet/Children's Improvement Board.

Supporting Information

3. Position

Monitoring Visit:

3.1 Following the Monitoring Visit undertaken in January 2020 the feedback received from Ofsted acknowledges the progress that is being made in Torbay (please see appendix one)

3.2 Ofsted report that there is emerging evidence of a coherent systematic approach to cultural change specific to the needs of Torbay's children and that this is supported by the recently revised augmented Improvement Plan (see below).

For more information please see the Ofsted Monitoring Visit letter at appendix one.

Improvement Plan:

3.3 The Improvement Plan highlight report reflects the prioritised, focused and robust action that is being taken and supports the scrutiny of our improvement activity by summarising our progress and its impact.

3.4 Areas of progress highlighted in the January Improvement Plan Highlight Report are:

- A revised Quality Assurance Framework is now in place
- Exploitation activity has been considered a priority with a review of all the processes that underpin good practice
- Work is also underway focused on the rest of the child's journey. The approach has involved ensuring that there is greater clarity in what 'good' looks like, compliance with standards and rigorous use of child level data and audit to monitor practice.

Whilst this progress is encouraging, there remain significant challenges in achieving a consistently 'good' service.

3.5 The current issues highlighted in the January Improvement Plan Highlight Report are:

- Recruitment & Retention
- Quality Assurance
- Exploitation
- Sufficiency

3.6 The highlight report also highlights the following issues for attention in the medium term:

- Social Work Model
- Permanence
- Early Help
- Looked after Children & Care Leavers

For more detail please see the Children's Services Improvement Plan Highlight Report at appendix two.

Appendices

Appendix One: Ofsted Monitoring Visit Letter – January 2020

Appendix Two: Children's Services Improvement Plan Highlight Report