

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	15 February 2023
Title of Report:	Ofsted Focused Visit Update and Response
Lead Member:	Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People)
Lead Strategic Director:	Sharon Muldoon (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Jane Anstis, Service Director CYPFS
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Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the findings from the Ofsted Focused Visit to Plymouth's Front Door Services in December 2022 and the associated improvement plan.

Update

The Focused Visit took place on 13th December. The letter published on 30th January set out the follow areas for improvement in social work practice;

- The quality and timeliness of assessments and initial plans.
- Response at the front door to domestic abuse.
- Timeliness of initial child protection conferences.
- Quality of supervision.
- Management oversight and decision-making.
- The specificity, prioritisation of actions and impact focus of the local authority's improvement plan.

The letter set out two areas for Priority Action;

1. The consistent understanding and application of thresholds for intervention and when to obtain or dispense with parental consent to ensure children are appropriately safeguarded.
2. The convening and timeliness of child protection strategy meetings and initial child protection case conferences when significant risks are evident for children.

The findings are fully accepted and support our diagnostic work through late summer 2022 from which we had implemented a robust improvement focus. Since the visit we have;

- Revised the Front Door Improvement Plan
- Undertaken a range of immediate improvements as set out in the Priority Action Plan

- Agreed an interim accelerated Improvement Board for the Front Door from February, chaired by Service Director pending the wider Improvement Board
- Increased our Team Management capacity including an Improvement Manager
- Launched our new Early Help Pre-Book Advice Line
- Developed multi-agency engagement at practice, operational and strategic levels.

Achieving improved practice and outcomes for children necessitates a relentless focus on the practice improvements needed within the Front Door and partnership focus, engagement and action.

The Department will be creating an Improvement Plan across Early Help and Social Care (currently under construction) and will have a number of agreed KPIs and milestones for improvement. Progress against this plan will determine the length of the Improvement notice. We will continue to benefit from our Sector led improvement Partners, Dorset.

Senior leaders have led direct meetings with staff across all service areas on publication of the letter to ensure staff are supported in taking the learning from the findings and that this meaningfully influences practice and the improvement work across the service.

Recommendations and Reasons

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None, this is an update report on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

None, this is an update report on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

None, this is an update report on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection

Financial Risks

None, this is an update report on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None, this is an update report on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

There are a number of issues arising from the report from Ofsted and these will be dealt with and addressed in the Improvement Plan.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Ofsted Letter - 30 January 2023							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Jane Anstis, Service Director for Children, Young People and Families											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 13/02/2023											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Carlyle, Cabinet Member for Educations, Skills and Children and Young People											
Date approved: 14/02/2023											