

REPORT TO:	CABINET 23rd MARCH 2020
SUBJECT:	Findings from Ofsted Inspection of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services
LEAD OFFICER:	Robert Henderson, Executive Director of Children, Families and Education
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
WARDS:	All
<p>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/ AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON</p> <p>This report focuses on progress achieved that will ensure that all Croydon's children live a happy, healthy life, free from harm and that they have every opportunity to thrive and become fulfilled adults.</p> <p>Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022</p>	
<p>FINANCIAL IMPACT</p> <p>There are no specific financial impacts arising from the content of this report.</p> <p>Investment of £22.2m has been allocated to Early Help and Children's Social Care base budgets in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to support the drive to improve children's services. This is in addition to transformation funding of £20m over the same period.</p>	
<p>FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: Not a key decision</p>	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.1. Note the findings from the full re-inspection of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services by Ofsted which concluded on 14th February 2020.
- 1.2. Note that the final inspection report on Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services was published on Ofsted's website on 16th March 2020

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report advises cabinet of the outcome and findings from Ofsted's re-inspection of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services which concluded on 14th February 2020.
- 2.2 The final report on the findings from the inspection was published on Ofsted's website on the 16th March 2020 (see hyperlink¹).

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 Following the Ofsted inspection in 2017 which judged children's services as 'inadequate', Ofsted has completed seven Ofsted monitoring visits and a full re-inspection of Croydon's services took place between 27th January and 14th February 2020.
- 3.2 Under Ofsted's framework (known as 'ILACs') inspectors provide four judgements;
 - The quality of services for children in need of help and protection
 - The quality of services for children looked after and care leavers
 - The Impact of leaders on social work practice
 - Overall effectiveness
- 3.3 A full re-inspection concluded on the 14th February 2020 and the lead inspector together with the inspection team provided verbal feedback on Ofsted findings to:
 - The Leader of the Council
 - Lead Member for Children, Families and Education and her Deputy
 - The council's Chief Executive
- 3.4 The final inspection report on Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services was published on Ofsted's website on 16th March 2020.
- 3.5 The Ofsted gradings for Early Help and Children's Social Care Services in Croydon were as follows;
 - Children in need of help and protection – 'Good'
 - Children looked after and care leavers – 'Requires improvement to be good'
 - Impact of leaders on SW practice – 'Good'
 - Overall effectiveness – 'Good'

¹ <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/306>

- 3.6 Ofsted recognised during their re-inspection of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services in February 2020 that services for children and families have been "transformed" through strong corporate and political support and leaders were creating "the right conditions for effective social work".
- 3.7 However, there is still work to do to ensure that change is sustained in our services for children in need of help and protection and we to continue to improve our services and support for children in care and care leavers.
- 3.8 The department is determined to build upon the momentum and success of the Children's Improvement Programme to ensure we are delivering outstanding outcomes for children and young people. At a high level, our priorities across the partnership for Children Young People in Croydon are set out in the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2020-24.
- 3.9 Following the inspection outcome, the Children's Plan for Improvement 2019/20 is being reviewed and new priorities and actions developed to respond to Ofsted's recommendations ('what needs to improve' set out on page 2 of the final Ofsted report).

4 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

- 4.1 This report has not been reviewed by Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee as the inspection report is due for publication on 16th March. The next Committee, on 14th April, will scrutinise and comment on the draft improvement plan in response to the report's recommendations.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications.

Approved by Kate Bingham, Head of Finance, Children, Families and Education on behalf of the Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and Section 151 Officer

6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Head of Social Care and Education Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer.
- 6.2 The framework for Ofsted inspections of Children's Services is set out in sections 135-142 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 ('the Act') and associated Employment and Education Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007 ('the Regulations').
- 6.3 Croydon was inspected from 20th June to 13th July 2017 under Ofsted's

“Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Reviews of Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards” (‘the SIF’), which sets out a single assessment framework for assessing local authorities during inspections conducted under section 136 of the Act. Local authorities are graded outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate in each of the areas inspected.

- 6.4 Ofsted introduced a new “Framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspections of local authority children’s services” in November 2017 (“the ILACS”). This is a more flexible regime and uses information held about each local authority to inform decisions about how best to inspect that authority. Since the framework for inspection was published in 2017 it’s been updated several times & brought all inspections under the ILACS framework.
- 6.5 On January 27th 2020 Croydon was notified of a full re-inspection under the ILACS framework which concluded on 14th February 2020.
- 6.6 If the outcome of the subsequent re-inspection is better than ‘inadequate’, Croydon will then begin to follow the pathway for local authorities which either require improvement or are graded good. This will include the Minister for Children and Families lifting the statutory direction for Croydon to improve.

Approved by Doutimi Aseh, Head of Social Care and Education Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no specific human resources impacts arising from the content of this report. Recruitment and retention activity remains a key priority for Croydon Early Help and Children’s Social Care.

Approved by Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no specific equalities impacts arising from the content of this report

Approved by Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 There are no specific environmental impacts arising from the contents of this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

10.1 There are no specific crime and disorder reduction impacts arising from the contents of this report.

11. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific data protection impacts arising from the contents of this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A