

Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet

18th January 2022



Subject: FOCUSED OFSTED VISIT TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Report of: Sue Harrison
Director for Children's Services/ Executive Director of Education and Skills

Relevant Cabinet Member: Cllr Sharon Thompson - Vulnerable Children and Families

Relevant O &S Chair(s): Cllr Narinder Kooner - Education and Children's Social Care

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Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: N/A		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:		

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is to note the progress that Ofsted found during a recent focused visit to Birmingham Children's Trust. The letter is appended to this report.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to note the report.

3 Background

- 3.1 Birmingham Children's Trust was established in 2018 to provide children's social care services in Birmingham, commissioned by the City Council. This followed many years of poor performance of these services. The Trust and the Council work effectively together, and, with other partners in the NHS, Police, schools and the voluntary sector, are improving services for the city's most vulnerable children, young people and families.
- 3.2 Since its establishment, The Trust has had one major inspection, in December 2018, and two Focused Visits: the first, in 2020 looked at our 'front door' referral and assessment arrangements, and in October 2021 services to children in care were examined. Both Focused Visit reports indicate clear evidence of improvement in services for children. Many strengths are noted in both letters from Ofsted, as well as recommendations for action to achieve further improvement. All recommendations following the 2020 visit have been implemented.
- 3.3 In addition, the Trust's Fostering and Adoption services have been separately inspected: both are rated 'Good'. The Youth Offending Service has also been inspected and is rated 'Requires Improvement'.
- 3.4 It is a priority for the Trust and the Council to maintain the progress that Ofsted has found. There will be a full inspection of children's safeguarding services within the next 12 months. Ofsted will examine the quality of services delivered by the Children's Trust, the Council and other partners to ensure that children remain safe and children requiring statutory services are able to thrive.

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

N/A

5 Consultation

- 5.1 The Chief Executive of Birmingham Children's Trust has been consulted on this report

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 The Children's Trust and the Council manage the risk of not achieving progress in Children's Services through their corporate risk management procedures.

7 Compliance Issues:

7.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?

- 7.1.1 This report is in line with the City Council's priority to improve protection of vulnerable children and young people.

7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 None

7.3 Financial Implications

7.3.1 Ofsted highlight some areas including improving sufficiency, to which part of the Trust's response to this is the capital proposals to expand and improve their residential offer. A contract variation will be considered in response to the increase in the complex needs of children to enable this demand pressure to be effectively managed between the Council and the Trust. Other pressures will be managed within the contract sum.

7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)

7.4.1 None

7.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)

7.5.1 None

7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

7.6.1 N/A

8 Appendices

8.1 Focused Ofsted Visit Letter

9 Background Documents

9.1 None