

Subject:	External Scrutiny of Children's Services		
Date of Meeting:	7 March 2016		
Report of:	Executive Director for Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Carolyn Bristow	Tel: 293736
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of key elements of external scrutiny that the children's services directorate is subject to, covering inspection frameworks, sector led improvement approaches and key national data returns we are required to make to central government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee notes the content of this and the appended report.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The children's services directorate is answerable to a wide range of inspection frameworks from Ofsted. We also work closely with partners across the city who are subject to inspections.
- 3.2 The Single Inspection Framework (SIF), which focuses on children in need of help and protection, children in care, care leavers and the local safeguarding children's board (LSCB), is still being rolled out by Ofsted across all Local Authorities in England and Wales. In Brighton & Hove we had our SIF inspection in 2015. They have recently announced this programme will continue until the end of 2017, therefore we can expect a new round of national inspections will commence in 2018.
- 3.3 We are however currently preparing for another social work inspection, the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). This is a new, multi-agency inspection between Ofsted, Probation, Police and the health inspectorate. A 'deep dive' theme will be used for every 6 months of this new framework, starting with Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home, Care and Education.
- 3.4 Schools in Brighton and Hove are performing well overall and the number of pupils attending good or outstanding schools in the city is above the national average. The new Ofsted common inspection framework was introduced last autumn and colleagues within the Education & Inclusion branch continue to review school performance termly and provide appropriate support and challenge.

- 3.5 The city's community and adult learning provision was recently inspected and we are awaiting the results to be published.
- 3.6 Ofsted plan to introduce a new inspection in May 2016 focussing on how local areas fulfil their responsibilities towards disabled children and young people and those with special education needs and we are currently preparing for that new framework.
- 3.7 Brighton & Hove's two residential children's homes for children with disabilities are inspected yearly and were last judged to be good or outstanding.
- 3.8 Children's Centres are subject to an Ofsted inspection but this framework is currently on hold due to a review, the outcome of which is expected in Spring 2016.
- 3.9 As a local authority, our main interaction is with Ofsted, however, we do need to be aware and prepared for inspections from other organisations such as Care Quality Commission, Police and Probation, particularly for integrated services such as children's centres and youth offending.
- 3.10 We also have a number of requirements to submit data to central government which is essential for our public accountability and comparing our performance against other local authorities.
- 3.11 Key elements of any inspection are the views and experiences of children, young people and their families and we are continuously developing ways to capture and consider these to influence service delivery.
- 3.12 We are committed to a sector led improvement approach and have used peer reviews to help us on our improvement journey in areas such as Missing Children and Children's Centres.
- 3.13 As Corporate Parents, elected Members have an enhanced role in social care inspections and are expected to understand the needs of local children and the quality of services provided. Ofsted and others have provided helpful guidance on their roles and responsibilities.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Not applicable. Inspections and key national data returns are subject to statutory requirements.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Not applicable, this report is for information only.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report summarises all key elements of external scrutiny that the children's services directorate is subject to including the new Ofsted inspection frameworks for schools and social care. It is recommended that elected members understand their role and responsibilities in relation to our inspection activity.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of the recommendation of this report. However, in order to comply with the Council's statutory obligations or address issues raised within inspections, it is possible that action would need to be taken that would place additional financial burden on the authority. In that instance it is important that any actions are properly costs, provide value for money and funds identified prior to implementation.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis

Date: 23/02/2016

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Inspection frameworks and external scrutiny provide a degree of validated assurance that will assist the committee in evaluating whether services are meeting statutory and regulatory requirements.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson

Date: 23/02/2016

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Much of the work that Ofsted and other inspectorates want to look at involves children and young people with protected characteristics. A lot of activity is focussed on these groups and full equalities impact assessments are carried out routinely for both day to day business and for any significant changes to services.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 None

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Children's Services and external scrutiny: inspection frameworks, peer reviews and national returns. March 2016

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

