



15 January 2018

Agenda Item: 4

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

INSPECTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES FROM 2018

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Committee on Ofsted's new framework and guidance for inspections of local authority services for 'children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers'.

Information and Advice

2. On 29 November 2017, Ofsted published the 'Inspection of Local Authority Children Services' (ILACS) Framework, which seeks to implement a risk-based and proportionate inspection 'system' across the country. The ILACS Framework will commence from 1 January 2018 and is available as a background paper.
3. ILACS inspections focus on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements in relation to:
 - help and protection of children and young people
 - the experiences and progress of children in care
 - the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption
 - the experiences and progress of care leavers.
4. In addition, Ofsted evaluate the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people.
5. The ILACS inspection is intended to be truly bespoke to each and every area that Ofsted inspects; the length and intensity of the judgment inspection will be based on intelligence and information that Ofsted has about the local authority, including the authority's previous inspection judgement. There is no fixed cycle or end date for the ILACS regime.
6. Local authorities judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding' at their most recent inspection will usually receive a **short inspection**¹:
 - a. The short inspection will usually take place about three years after the previous inspection. As Nottinghamshire's previous inspection took place in May 2015 and

¹ Local authorities that required improvement to be good will get a **two week** standard inspection every three years. Ofsted's approach to authorities judged to be inadequate will remain the same as now – quarterly monitoring followed by an inspection under the [single inspection framework \(SIF\)](#).

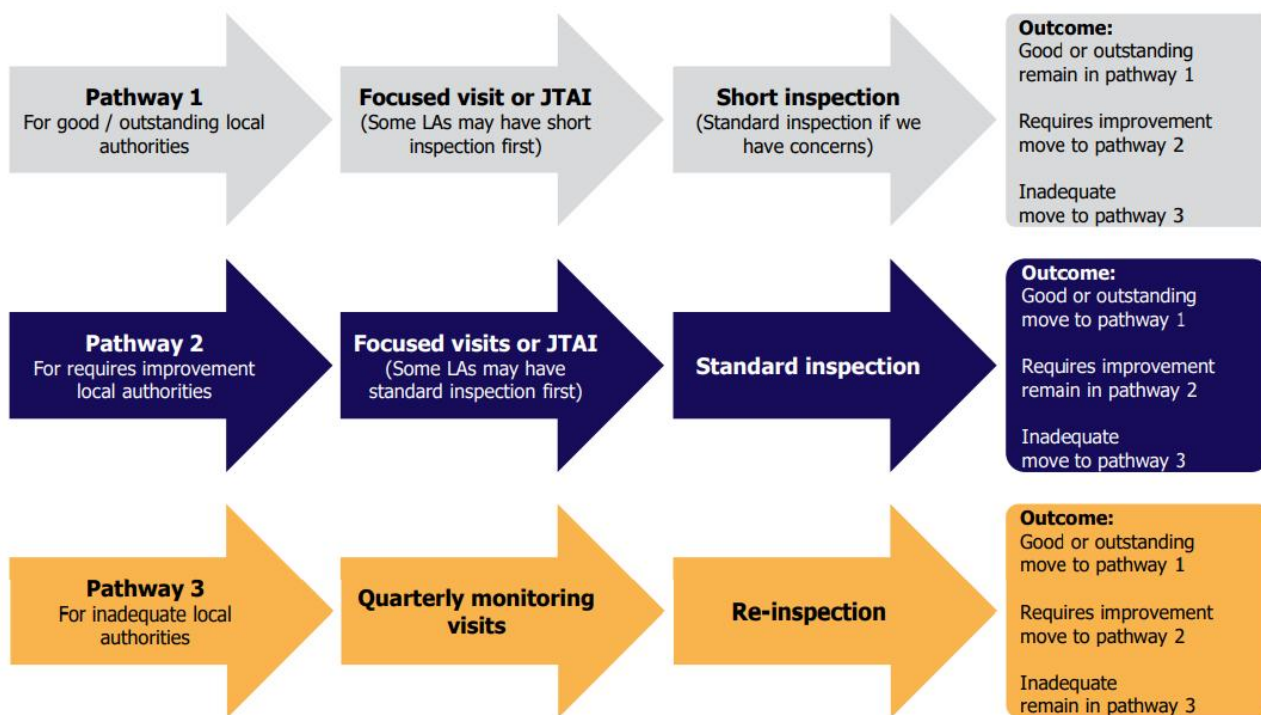
received an overall grade of 'good', the next 'short' inspection under the ILACS Framework will be due in 2018.

- b. A short inspection is contained within one working week and is undertaken by four social care inspectors.²
 - c. The Director of Children's Services will be notified by telephone of the inspection five working days before fieldwork activity commences.
 - d. Short inspections will result in judgements on the established four point scale: outstanding; good; requires improvement to be good; inadequate.
 - e. In a short inspection, inspectors will seek to answer three questions:
 - Has the quality and impact of practice been maintained?
 - Are there any areas where the quality and impact of practice have improved?
 - Are there any areas where the quality and impact of practice have deteriorated?
7. In between inspections, the local authority will usually receive one or more **focused visits**. These give the local authority and Ofsted the opportunity to identify what is going well and what needs to improve before the next judgement inspection:
- a. A focused visit will usually last for two working days and will be undertaken by two social care inspectors.
 - b. A focused visit will look at one or more aspects of service, themes or cohorts of children. Leadership is a feature of all focused visits, principally through the lens of the impact of leaders on practice with children and families.
 - c. Inspectors will not make graded judgements at the outcome of a focused visit. The outcome will be findings about strengths and areas for improvement, reported in a published letter.
 - d. For some local authorities, a **Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)**³ will substitute a focused visit. A JTAI is a three-week inspection undertaken jointly by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). The inspection seeks to examine how local agencies – including local authorities, health, police and probation services – are working together to protect children and young people against a particular 'deep dive' theme.

² In addition, a social care regulatory inspector will be on site for up to two days and a schools inspector will be on site for one day.

³ [Joint Inspections of Local Area Services](#) – published 14 January 2016

Figure 1: Summary of Inspection Pathways



- Central to the new inspection system is an ‘annual conversation’ between Ofsted and local authorities. This formal discussion is informed by a self-assessment of practice, developed by the local authority, to help local authorities to critically evaluate their own performance and articulate what they think is working well for children in their area. The annual conversation and self-assessment will also form part of the intelligence Ofsted uses to decide where and when to inspect.

Inspection Readiness and Preparation

- The Local Authority is in the process of developing the self-assessment of practice in conjunction with senior managers across the Department. This self-assessment is supported by robust performance and management information, workforce and service-level data, quality assurance activity, audit findings, existing strategies and actions plans, as well as local and national benchmarking.
- A series of mock social care inspections and independent reviews of service areas have also been commissioned, in order to identify strengths and areas for development.
- A review of Nottinghamshire’s children’s services is also being undertaken by looked after children and care leavers, via the Young People’s Board and associated sub-groups, in order to inform service development and improvement. Participation activity forms a significant part of the Department’s quality assurance activity, with feedback from service users, families and carers being used to continuously inform service improvement.

Other Options Considered

- No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

13. It is important that Committee members understand the current and future regulatory inspection frameworks, as well as implications in terms of service provision.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

15. Achieving good inspection outcomes would imply high quality services that safeguard children and young people.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That Members consider whether there are any actions or information they require in relation to the content the report.

Colin Pettigrew
Corporate Director, Children and Families

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Natasha Wrzesinski
Senior Practitioner, Quality & Improvement
T: 0115 9934648
E: natasha.wrzesinski@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (SLB 19/12/17)

16. Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. If Committee resolves that any actions are required it must be satisfied that such actions are within the Committee's terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 20/12/17)

17. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Report to Full Council, 17 September 2015 – Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services

Report to Children & Young People's Committee, 16 October 2017 - Update on Regulatory Inspections of Children's Services

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1068