

**16 October 2017****Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND  
CULTURAL SERVICES****UPDATE ON REGULATORY INSPECTIONS OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides an update on the national and local developments in relation to regulatory inspections of children's services, and requests the Committee to ratify the preparatory activity underway.
2. To request a further update to Children and Young People's Committee on regulatory inspections in six months' time.

**Information and Advice****Single Inspection Framework (SIF)**

3. Since November 2013, Ofsted has been assessing local authority children's social care services under the Single Inspection Framework (SIF)<sup>1</sup>, which focuses on services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, care leavers and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The SIF inspection programme is due to be completed across 152 local authorities by December 2017.
4. As at 14 July 2017, 142 local authorities (93%) have been inspected under the SIF framework, of which two have been graded 'outstanding' (1%), 42 have been graded 'good' (30%), 64 are judged as 'requiring improvement' (45%) and 34 have been deemed 'inadequate' (24%).
5. Nottinghamshire County Council was inspected under this framework in May 2015 and were graded 'good' overall<sup>2</sup>, putting the Local Authority in the top 30% nationally of local authority children's services under the SIF regime.

**Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)**

6. To complement the SIF programme, a series of joint targeted area inspections (JTAI)<sup>3</sup> were introduced from February 2016, 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

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted's [Single Inspection Framework](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Nottinghamshire County Council Single Inspection Report](#) – published 20 July 2015

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

agencies – including local authorities, health, police and probation services – are working together to protect children and young people.

7. Each inspection focuses on a particular theme, referred to as a 'deep dive'. The theme changes on a 6-monthly cycle, with inspections on child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse having already been undertaken across 11 local authority areas. The current 'deep dive' theme is "children living with neglect", which will run until December 2017. The JTAI regime is expected to surpass the lifetime of the SIF and continue from 2018 onwards.
8. JTAI inspections are unannounced and run alongside existing inspection regimes undertaken by the respective inspectorates. The inspection is not graded, with only around six inspections being conducted per theme.
9. It is not yet known whether or not Nottinghamshire will be subject to a joint targeted area inspection; however, inspection preparation is underway across the local partnership, led by the County Council, to ensure that appropriate preparatory activity is underway for a potential JTAI in Nottinghamshire.

### **Local Area SEND Inspection**

10. In May 2016, Ofsted and the CQC commenced joint inspections to see how effectively local areas are fulfilling their responsibilities for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)<sup>4</sup>. The inspections focus on how effectively local areas have implemented SEND reforms, as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.
11. Nottinghamshire County Council was inspected under the Local Area SEND framework in June 2016<sup>5</sup>. On the whole, the outcome of the Nottinghamshire inspection was positive, with a number of strengths identified across education, health and social care. Inspectors also identified a number of areas for development, which have been captured within the partnership's SEND Action Plan. An Improvement Plan and Accountability Board have been operational since January 2017, to support continual improvement and development.

### **Social Care Common Inspection Framework**

12. From 1 April 2017, Ofsted introduced a social care common inspection framework (SCCIF)<sup>6</sup> across a range of children's social care settings, including children's homes, independent fostering agencies (IFAs), residential special schools and residential holiday schemes for disabled children. The framework is tailored to reflect and address each distinct type of children's social care provider, whilst providing greater consistency across the inspection arrangements.
13. Nottinghamshire County Council currently runs three mainstream children's homes, three homes for children with disabilities and one secure children's unit. All of Nottinghamshire's homes have been graded 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted in their most recent inspections.

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<sup>4</sup> [Local Area SEND inspection: framework](#) – published 27 April 2016

<sup>5</sup> [Nottinghamshire County Council Local Area SEND Inspection Outcome Letter](#) – published 14 July 2016

<sup>6</sup> [Social Care Common Inspection Framework](#) – published 22 February 2017

## Youth Justice Inspections

14. Inspections of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. The current inspection programme, *Inspection of Youth Offending Work*<sup>7</sup>, consists of two inspection components – the Full Joint Inspection and Short Quality Screenings.
15. Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Service was inspected under the Full Joint Inspection in 2012, followed by an inspection under the Short Quality Screening arrangements in May 2015. Whilst there were no graded judgements, the inspection outcomes were positive, with the 2015 inspection acknowledging that the service had continued to make improvements.
16. From May 2017, HMIP announced a series of six thematic inspections of public protection work undertaken by Youth Offending Teams, focusing on work undertaken with young people who pose the highest risk of serious harm to others. Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Service was selected for the thematic inspection and was subsequently inspected in June 2017. Verbal feedback at the end of the inspection was positive and highlighted further service improvements since 2015. The formal narrative report is due to be published in September 2017.

## Future of Social Care Inspections

17. In June 2016, Ofsted published a consultation seeking views on proposed changes to children's social care inspections, pending the culmination of the SIF regime in December 2017. The outcome of the consultation and next steps were published in February 2017, titled *Future of Social Care Inspection*<sup>8</sup>, which describes the future inspection landscape for children's social care services.
18. The publication set out the principles underpinning all of Ofsted's inspections of social care services in the future:
  - **To focus on what makes the most difference in children's lives:** taking a rigorous focus on progress and experiences across all inspection frameworks
  - **Being clear about expectations of providers**
  - **Prioritising inspection where improvement is needed most:** taking a risk-based and proportionate approach to inspections.
19. The publication also introduced the new "Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services" (ILACS), which will commence from January 2018 as a replacement for the SIF. The new regime seeks to shift from a universal programme to a more risk-based and proportionate rolling programme of inspection. The ILACS Framework is expected to be formally published in December 2017.

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<sup>7</sup> [HMIP Inspection of Youth Offending Work](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Future of Social Care Inspection: Consultation Outcome & Next Steps](#) – published February 2017

20. The length and intensity of the judgment inspection will be based on what Ofsted currently know about the local authority, including previous inspection judgements. As Nottinghamshire County Council were graded 'good' under the Single Inspection in 2015, the Local Authority will be subject to a short inspection (contained within one week), supplemented by possible modular inspections (2-3 days), focussing on a particular aspect of a children's journey.
21. In advance of the publication, the Local Authority is developing a self-assessment of practice against the expected key judgments. 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.

### **Other Options Considered**

22. No other options have been considered.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

23. 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**

24. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, 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, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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**

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

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Committee:

- 1) ratifies the preparatory activity for regulatory inspections of children's services that is underway
- 2) agrees to receive a further update on regulatory inspections of children's services in six months' time.

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**Constitutional Comments (LM 19/09/17)**

26. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

**Financial Comments (SAS 18/09/17)**

27. 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 Children and Young People's Committee, 13 July 2015 – Outcome of the Youth Justice Service Short Quality Screening Inspection

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

Report to Children and Young People's Committee, 19 September 2016 - Joint Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inspection in Nottinghamshire

Children & Families Act 2014.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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