

07 December 2017

Agenda Item: 6

Children's Trust Executive Sponsor: Colin Pettigrew

UPDATE ON REGULATORY INSPECTIONS OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. To update to the Children's Trust Executive on the national and local developments in relation to regulatory inspections of children's services; and
2. To update the Children's Trust Executive on our current position in relation to preparation for an Ofsted inspection.

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)¹, 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 10 November 2017, 151 local authorities (99%) have been inspected under the SIF framework, of which three have been graded 'outstanding' (2%), 46 have been graded 'good' (30%), 67 are judged as 'requiring improvement' (44%) and 35 have been deemed 'inadequate' (23%).
5. Nottinghamshire County Council was inspected under this framework in May 2015 and were graded 'good' overall², putting the Local Authority in the top 32% 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)³ 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 agencies – including local authorities, health, police and probation services – are working together to protect children and young people.

¹ Ofsted's [Single Inspection Framework](#)

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

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

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. Previous themes will be revisited by the inspectorates from January to September 2018.
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 and NSCB, 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)⁴. 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 2016⁵. 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)⁶ 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.

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*

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

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

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

*Offending Work*⁷, 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.
17. The thematic report was published in October 2017 by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation⁸, entitled 'The Work of Youth Offending Teams to Protect the Public'. Nottinghamshire's youth offending team was praised in the report, particularly in relation to areas of good practice identified during the inspection.

Future of Social Care Inspections

18. 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*⁹, which describes the future inspection landscape for children's social care services.
19. 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.
20. 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](#) was published on 29 November 2017.
21. 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),

⁷ [HMIP Inspection of Youth Offending Work](#)

⁸ [HMIP - "The Work of Youth Offending Teams to Protect the Public" - published 26 October 2017](#)

⁹ [Future of Social Care Inspection: Consultation Outcome & Next Steps](#) – published February 2017

supplemented by modular inspections (2-3 days), focussing on a particular aspect of a children's journey.

22. In advance of publication, the Local Authority has been 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.

Care Quality Commission Inspections

23. The CQC are responsible for inspecting all registered health services provided to children and work in partnership with other inspectorates. This encompasses both the Joint Targeted Area Inspection programme (as described in paras 6-9) and the SEND Inspection programme (as described in paras 12-11). The CQC also undertake Children Looked After and Safeguarding Reviews (CLAS), evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the quality of health provision to children looked after and care leavers; a review of health services for children looked after and safeguarding in Nottinghamshire took place in October 2015, with the final report published on 21 March 2016¹⁰.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the information provided on the current and future arrangements for regulatory inspections of children's services be noted

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Background Papers

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.

¹⁰ [Nottinghamshire: Review of Health Services for Children](#) – CQC Report published 21 March 2016.