

OFSTED APA OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2008

Report By: Director of Children's Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To update the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee and formally report the outcome of the recent 2008 APA inspection of Children's Services.

Background

A copy of the APA letter from Ofsted is attached for reference as Appendix 1.

1. It is particularly pleasing to note the continued progress made in Children's Services with most outcomes having improved since the last APA and the specific improvements in grade awarded in 'capacity to improve' including the management of services for CYP and Achieving Economic Well Being.
2. Overall the inspectors agreed with many of our own judgements and evaluation about our service delivery, which is positive.
3. The partnership with the PCT and Council has been noted as a positive step.
4. Issues or risks should be noted:
 - a. The greatest risk is the area of safeguarding with an increased public awareness following the 'Haringey Baby P' case and the inevitable closer scrutiny to come, meaning that this will remain a national and a local high profile issue.
 - b. A recent external review of safeguarding has been commissioned which also includes a review of all cases where children are subject to a child protection plan. A separate report will follow with full details and actions required for information. The HSCB will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this action plan.
 - c. The Director of Children's Services is leading the Local Safeguarding Board for Children to ensure it is appropriately focussed on developing good practice and quality assurance across agencies.
 - d. Recruitment and retention of social workers will remain a high profile issue for the Directorate and obviously impacts upon the overall performance of the area.

- e. Performance monitoring of safeguarding key indicators remains a focus for the Directorate as well as the HSCB and the Children's Trust.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications

RECOMMENDATION

THAT;

- (a) The committee note the content of the report and commend staff and partners on the progress made this year.
- (b) The committee note the areas for improvement for the coming year- particularly safeguarding- in preparation for the forth coming anticipated CAA inspection in 2009.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - Ofsted APA letter 2008.