

# Title of report: Children's Services Improvement Plan

**Meeting: Health and Wellbeing Board**

**Meeting date: Monday 26 June 2023**

**Report by: Corporate Director - Children & Young People**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To provide an update on progress against the children's services improvement plan.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) **The Health and Wellbeing Board note the progress reported on the children's services improvement plan and recent feedback from Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) following the first Monitoring Visit since the inspection in summer 2022.**

## **Alternative options**

1. The Health and Wellbeing Board could choose not to consider this update report, however given the importance of the subject matter it is presented to this meeting. This is not recommended. A key remit of the Health and Wellbeing Board is to encourage those who arrange the provision of any health or social care services in Herefordshire to work in an integrated manner for the purpose of advancing the health and wellbeing of the people of Herefordshire

## Key considerations

2. On September 21 2022 Ofsted published a [report](#) rating Herefordshire Council children's services as inadequate following an inspection that took place between 19 and 29 July 2022 and the council was given three months to prepare an improvement action plan in response.
3. Following the publication of the Ofsted report a [statutory direction](#) was issued by the Secretary of State to Herefordshire Council and Eleanor Brazil was appointed as Commissioner for Children's Services in Herefordshire.
4. The [Children's Services Improvement Plan](#) was updated setting out how the council is addressing each of the areas identified for improvement by Ofsted and a tenth area identified during a recent Local Government Association Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Peer Review.
5. Having been presented to [Scrutiny Committee on 13 December](#), [Scrutiny Committee recommended](#) for Cabinet to endorse the Improvement Plan and for Cabinet to authorise for the Improvement Plan to be submitted to Ofsted.
6. The Improvement Plan was endorsed by [Cabinet on Thursday 15 December](#) and submitted to Ofsted on 20 December. The Plan aims to improve the outcomes for children and young people across the county.
7. Progress against the improvement plan is overseen by the Improvement Board, chaired by Gladys Rhodes White (Department for Education Improvement Advisor). The Board meets on a six-weekly basis and has adopted a thematic approach in its focus on areas of the overall plan.
8. The most recent progress report submitted to the Board for its meeting on 7 June is shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for information.
9. The Improvement Plan is wide-ranging and progress should be noted in a broad range of improvement plan actions with a shift now in progress from measuring activity to measuring impact. Activity is driven through a number of programme boards.
10. Ofsted also monitor progress against the improvement plan and conduct a series of monitoring visits following an inadequate inspection judgement. The first monitoring visit to Herefordshire children's services took place in March 2023 and the feedback letter will be presented to Cabinet on 22 June 2023. The second monitoring visit is expected later in June and will focus on children in need and child protection activity.
11. It is expected that work with a long-term (2yr) improvement partner, funded and supported by the Department for Education (DfE) will also commence in June.

## Community impact

12. The Ofsted inspection judgement of 'Inadequate' has a direct and indirect effect on the lives of both current and future children and families in Herefordshire.

## **Environmental Impact**

13. There are no specific implications for the environment arising from this report.

## **Equality duty**

14. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
16. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
17. There are no equality issues arising from this report.

## **Resource implications**

18. There are no resource implications associated with this report. The resource implications of any recommendations supported by the HWB will need to be considered by the responsible party in response to those recommendations or subsequent decisions.

## **Legal implications**

19. There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report. The improvement as described is a necessary response to the requirements of the Statutory Direction and Ofsted findings.

## **Risk management**

20. There are no new risk implications identified emerging from the recommendations in this report.

## **Consultees**

21. None.

## Appendices

Appendix 1 Improvement Board cover report  
Appendix 2 Improvement Board progress report

## Background papers

None identified.

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	John Coleman	Date 16/06/2023
Finance	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 16/06/2023
Communications	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Equality Duty	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Procurement	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
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Approved by	Darryl Freeman	Date 16/06/2023

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**