

**15 February 2018**

**Children's Services Ofsted Working Group**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolio** Councillor A. Nawaz - Children's Services and Education

**Report:**

At its meeting on 9 January 2018, the Committee received a report on establishing a working group on the Ofsted inspection. It was agreed that the working group's first meeting would be held on 22 January 2018 and that its membership would be Councillors C. Towe, T. Jukes, J. Fitzpatrick, E. Hazell and T. Wilson, and Mrs T. Tunnell.

The first meeting of the working group has now taken place and it has identified two of the twelve recommendations from the Ofsted inspection report for further review:

- Recommendation 1: Ensure that thresholds of need are understood and applied at every stage of the child's journey.
- Recommendation 2: Ensure that frontline management oversight of practice improves the quality of decisions and the provision of help to children.

The working group's initiation document is attached at Appendix 1, and this sets out objectives and scope, together with the people that the working group would wish to be involved in the review process.

A timetable and reporting schedule has also been included and the working group will be meeting on 1 and 5 March 2018 to consider each of these recommendations in turn. It is anticipated that the working group's report will be presented to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 27 March 2018.

**Recommendation:**

To note the report and approve the initiation document of Children's Services Ofsted Working Group.

**Contact Officer:**

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**Walsall Council Overview & Scrutiny Working Group  
Initiation Document**

<b>Work Group Name:</b>	Children's Services Ofsted Working Group
<b>Committee:</b>	Education & Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>Municipal Year:</b>	2017/18
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Aftab Nawaz
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Ms Debbie Carter, Assistant Director (Children's Social Care)
<b>Support Officer:</b>	Dr Paul Fantom, Democratic Services Officer
<b>Membership:</b>	Councillor Julie Fitzpatrick Councillor Liz Hazell Councillor Tina Jukes Councillor Chris Towe Councillor Tim Wilson Mrs Teresa Tunnell
<b>Co-opted Members:</b>	N/A

<b>1. Context</b>	
	<p>The Ofsted inspection of the Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers was held between 20 June and 13 July 2017. The inspection report was published on 4 September 2017 and it made twelve recommendations that have been addressed by the Children's Services post-Ofsted action plan dated 1 December 2017. This document has now been forwarded to Ofsted.</p> <p>At its meeting on 16 October 2017, the Education &amp; Children's Services Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee agreed that a working group should be established to carry out a more in-depth examination of one or more of the individual issues arising from the inspection. In due course, the recommendations of the working group would then be presented for consideration by the Committee.</p>
<b>2. Objectives</b>	
	<p>The working group has identified two of the twelve recommendations from the Ofsted inspection report that they would wish to review:</p> <p>Recommendation 1: Ensure that thresholds of need are understood and applied at every stage of the child's journey.</p> <p>Recommendation 2: Ensure that frontline management oversight of practice improves the quality of decisions and the provision of help to children.</p> <p>With reference to the post-Ofsted action plan, the working group propose to review the actions, measures and timescales for tackling the Ofsted recommendations and to submit a report and recommendations to the meeting of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 27 March 2018.</p>

<b>3.</b>	<b>Scope</b>
	<p>The working group have adopted the following approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who do you want to see?</li> <li>• When do you want to see them?</li> <li>• What will you ask them?</li> <li>• What other data will you want to see?</li> </ul> <p>To review each of the recommendations in turn, two meetings have been arranged for 1 and 5 March 2018 respectively.</p> <p>For each meeting, the individual people or groups of people that the working group would like to see have been identified. In order to maximise responsiveness, it is proposed that the working group is split into two sub-groups to facilitate this and to operate in a more informal way via focus groups.</p> <p>A comprehensive list of questions has been provided by working group members and other data/information required in advance of the meetings has been specified to be supplied by Children's Services.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Equalities Implications</b>
	<p>The working group will ensure that its recommendations will take into account the different strands of equality and ensure that no group is disadvantaged.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Who else will you want to take part?</b>
	<p><u>1 March 2018 meeting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair of Walsall LSCB</li> <li>• MASH: Group Manager, member of Staff, health representative, police representative</li> <li>• Service users, i.e. children and families</li> <li>• Head of Safeguarding</li> <li>• Front line social workers</li> <li>• Head of Performance</li> </ul> <p><u>5 March 2018 meeting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Director (Children's Social Care)</li> <li>• Head of Safeguarding</li> <li>• Principal social worker (Lisa Harris)</li> <li>• Group manager (to ask about their experience of supervision) and members of their team (to ask whether this has been done)</li> <li>• Selection of team managers/social workers from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Front door</li> <li>○ Safeguarding</li> <li>○ Corporate parenting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

6. Timescales & Reporting Schedule		
Date	Action	Who
22 January 2018	Prepare terms of reference	Working group
15 February 2018	Approve terms of reference	E&CS O&S Cttee
1 March 2018	Consider/review recommendation 1	Working group
5 March 2018	Consider/review recommendation 2	Working group
27 March 2018	Present final report/recommendations	E&CS O&S Cttee

  

7. Risk factors		
Risk	Likelihood	Measure to Resolve
Being unable to cover all identified themes within the available time	High	Organise a schedule of meetings to plan ahead where possible
Officer time available to support the working group may limit its ability to deliver the outcomes desired	High	Select two of the twelve recommendations, with one meeting of the working group to review each recommendation
Interviewees may feel intimidated by a formal committee-style setting	High	Minimise by: 1. Splitting working group into two sub-groups 2. Interview some participants in groups, rather than individually

Date Agreed:		Date Updated:	
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**Working group timetable:**

Date	Activity
22 January 2018	Meeting 1: Consider terms of reference, etc.
26 January 2018	Group members to provide any further questions
9-16 February 2018	Administrative arrangements for meetings (Democratic Services) and invitations to participants (Children's Services) to be progressed.
22 February 2018	Children's Services to provide data/information in advance of meetings
1 March 2018	Meeting 2: Consider/review recommendation 1
5 March 2018	Meeting 3: Consider/review recommendation 2