

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to: Children and Education Policy & Accountability Committee

Date: 09/11/2020

Subject: Children's Services Inspection Frameworks

Report of: Jo Pymont, Assistant Director Performance and Improvement

Responsible Director: Jacqui McShannon

Summary

The report provides an overview of the framework for inspecting of Children Services, including the interim arrangements put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations

For the Committee to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

H&F Values

Please state how the subject of the report relates to our values – delete those values which are not appropriate

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Building shared prosperity	Delivering strong practice and effective services that improve outcomes for children and young people, and are rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Doing things with local residents, not to them	Involving children, young people and families in decision making and service development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Evidence based, targeted and innovative services that improve outcomes and effectively manage demand

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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

Interim Arrangements for Children Services

Full inspections have been suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic and inspectorates have put in place interim arrangements.

Children's Social Care

1. The Annual Engagement Meeting (AEM) with Ofsted, which is part of the routine framework for inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS), is continuing to take place alongside the interim arrangements. The Annual Engagement Meeting explores the authority's internal self-evaluation of its practice and outcomes for children and young people and considers what actions have been taken in response to previous inspections. Further details of this meeting are found in the accompanying Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services report.

Ofsted commenced a series of interim Focused Visits in September 2020 which will extend until December 2020/March 2021. The scope is broader than a standard focused visit covering all areas of children's social care and the interface with education and other multiagency partners placing an emphasis on the quality and impact of decision making during the pandemic. Ofsted is prioritising local authorities that they have concerns about as well as a sample of those judged good/outstanding to identify and share good practice. H&F had an annual engagement meeting on 30th September. A Focused Visit could occur at any time.

Children's Homes

2. Routine inspections were suspended in March 2020 and assurance visits are being carried out (September – March 21). H&F has one children's home, the Haven, which was last inspected in December 2019 and rated as requiring improvement. Ofsted is prioritising visits based on the most recent inspection judgements, other information we hold about the provider, the amount of time since the last inspection and whether the provider is newly registered and therefore has not yet been inspected.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

3. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have begun a series of interim visits to extend into the spring term of 2021. The visits are intended to provide insight into how well the SEND system is working and the readiness of local areas for routine inspections to restart. A limited number of areas with different characteristics (geographical make-up, population characteristics and previous inspection outcomes), will be invited to participate. Areas can decline to take part

in a visit. The invitation and the area's response will be kept confidential by Ofsted and CQC. The SEND service was last inspected in December 2018.

Youth Offending Service (YOS)

4. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) has suspended their normal inspection activity. For the remainder of this year HMIP is using remote inspection techniques to conduct thematic inspections and inspect a number of small YOS' between August and October 2020. H&F YOS is not classified as a small YOS, however could become subject to a thematic inspection. The service was last inspected in January 2016.

Education Annual Engagement Meeting

5. Ofsted started a phased return to inspection in September 2020 in schools and intends to resume full inspections in January 2021. These visits will look at how leaders are managing the return to full education for their pupils, including considering remote learning and safeguarding in line with Department of Education guidance. Ofsted will visit all inadequate schools and a sample of schools across the other Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement).

In common with children's services, the Education Annual Engagement Meeting is continuing to take place alongside the interim arrangements. H&F are expecting an engagement meeting later in the year.