

**For General Release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 11 MAY 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of Early Help and Children's Social Care</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Robert Henderson, Executive Director of Children, Families and Education</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/ AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON</b> This report focuses on progress achieved that will ensure that all Croydon's children live a happy, healthy life, free from harm and that they have every opportunity to thrive and become fulfilled adults. <a href="#">Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022</a>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b> There are no specific financial impacts arising from the content of this report. Investment of £22.2m has been allocated to Early Help and Children's Social Care base budgets in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to support the drive to improve children's services. This is in addition to transformation funding of £20m over the same period.	
<b>FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: N/A</b>	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below:

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.1. Note the findings from the re-inspection of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services by Ofsted which concluded on 14th February 2020 and was published on Ofsted's website on 16th March 2020

**2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report advises cabinet of the outcome and findings from Ofsted's re-inspection of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services which concluded on 14th February 2020 and judged the Council's services for

children as 'good', up two grades from the previous 'inadequate' Ofsted judgement in September 2017.

2.2 The Ofsted report is included at appendix 1.

### 3. DETAIL

3.1 Following the Ofsted inspection in 2017 which judged children's services as 'inadequate', Ofsted completed seven Ofsted monitoring visits to children's services followed by a full re-inspection between 27th January and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

3.2 Under Ofsted's framework (known as 'ILACs') inspectors provide four judgements:

- The quality of services for children in need of help and protection
- The quality of services for children looked after and care leavers
- The Impact of leaders on social work practice
- Overall effectiveness

3.3 The full re-inspection concluded on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and the lead inspector together with the inspection team provided verbal feedback on the findings to:

- The Leader of the Council
- Lead Member for Children, Families and Education and her Deputy
- The council's Chief Executive

3.4 The final inspection report was published on Ofsted's website on 16th March 2020 and is included at appendix 1.

3.5 The Ofsted gradings for Early Help and Children's Social Care Services in Croydon were as follows;

- Children in need of help and protection 'Good'
- Children looked after and care leavers 'Requires improvement to be good'
- Impact of leaders on SW practice 'Good'
- Overall effectiveness 'Good'

3.6 Inspectors made four recommendations, to improve:

1. The quality of written plans for children in need, children in care and care leavers
2. Services provided to homeless 16 – 17 year olds
3. Services for care leavers, particularly the range of suitable accommodation, responses to emotional health needs and preparation for independence

4. Placement sufficiency for children in care, and accommodation for care leavers
- 3.7 Details of the strengths and areas for improvement for each of the above four gradings are included in a presentation to Cabinet.
- 3.8 Ofsted recognised that services for children and families had been “transformed” through strong corporate and political support, and leaders were creating “the right conditions for effective social work”.
- 3.9 However there is still work to do to ensure that the change is sustained in our services for children in need of help and protection, and we to continue to improve our services and support for children in care and care leavers.
- 3.10 Inspectors described the children’s improvement programme as ambitious, and the department is determined to build upon the momentum and pace gained in the last twelve months to push on to deliver outstanding services to children, young people and families. It will be important to sustain the methodology of an outcome-focused project approach coupled with intelligence that draws on a continued deep understanding of the quality of practice alongside strong performance management to achieve this.
- 3.11 A children’s continuous improvement plan 2020/22 is being developed that builds on the previous children’s improvement plan. This new plan will include actions to respond to Ofsted’s recommendations, as well as new priorities for service innovation and further improvement to achieve the ambition of outstanding services for children and families in Croydon.

#### **4 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications.

Approved by Kate Bingham, (Interim) Head of Finance – Children, Families and Education

#### **5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 The Head of Social Care and Education Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer.
- 5.2 The framework for Ofsted inspections of Children’s Services is set out in sections 135-142 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 (‘the Act’) and associated Employment and Education Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007 (‘the Regulations’).
- 5.3 Croydon was inspected from 20th June to 13th July 2017 under Ofsted’s “Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

and Reviews of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards" ('the SIF'), which sets out a single assessment framework for assessing local authorities during inspections conducted under section 136 of the Act. Local authorities are graded outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate in each of the areas inspected.

- 5.4 Ofsted introduced a new "Framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspections of local authority children's services" in November 2017 ("the ILACS"). This is a more flexible regime and uses information held about each local authority to inform decisions about how best to inspect that authority. Since the framework for inspection was published in 2017 it's been updated several times & brought all inspections under the ILACS framework.
- 5.5 On January 27<sup>th</sup> 2020 Croydon was notified of a full re-inspection under the ILACS framework which concluded on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
- 5.6 If the outcome of the subsequent re-inspection is better than 'inadequate', Croydon will then begin to follow the pathway for local authorities which either require improvement or are graded good. This will include the Minister for Children and Families lifting the statutory direction for Croydon to improve.

Approved by Doutimi Aseh, Head of Social Care and Education Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer.

## **6. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 6.1 There are no specific human resources impacts arising from the content of this report. Recruitment and retention activity remains a key priority for Croydon Early Help and Children's Social Care.

Approved by Nadine Maloney, Head of HR Children, Families & Education on behalf of Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

## **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1 There are no specific equalities impacts arising from the content of this report

Approved by Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 8.1 There are no specific environmental impacts arising from the contents of this report.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 9.1 There are no specific crime and disorder reduction impacts arising from the contents of this report.

## **10. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no specific data protection impacts arising from the contents of this report.

---

### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Robert Henderson, Executive Director,  
Children, Families and Education  
[Robert.henderson@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.henderson@croydon.gov.uk)

### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

Appendix 1 – Ofsted Inspection of children’s social care services London borough of Croydon, March 2020

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None