

Statement from the Director of Children Families and Communities at Worcestershire County Council regarding children's safeguarding services

29.06.17

- On 24 January 2017, Ofsted published their Single Inspection Framework (SIF) report of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, care leavers, adoption and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- The overall judgement for Worcestershire was 'inadequate'.
- Following publication of the report, the Cabinet Member with Responsibility (CMR) for Children and Families, the Director of Children, Families and Communities (DCS) and the Assistant Director: Safeguarding Services outlined to various stakeholders including the local media, scrutiny panels, partners and our social care workforce that plans were already in place to deliver service improvement prior to the inspection and that this work has continued and been further strengthened to form an improvement plan to cover all recommendations from Ofsted.
- Our 8 point improvement plan is now underway with various activities having been completed or initiated to bring about the improvements required to help safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people across Worcestershire
- In May, the Local Authority was revisited by Ofsted to check progress on the improvement plan - and whilst some positives were identified, there is still a lot of work to be done to tackle all of the challenges faced. For example, whilst caseloads for social workers are reducing, they still remain too high.
- Our vision is for Worcestershire to be a wonderful place for all children to grow up. Our mission as a Directorate is to deliver high quality services. Where children and young people are identified as at risk, we will put in place the necessary support to address their needs. Our core value is that we believe that all children and young people should be at the heart of everything we do.
- Our improvement progress is not currently in keeping with our highly ambitious vision, and we are committed to re-doubling our efforts and focusing on the key areas to improve services.
- We are committed to learning and continuous improvement. We are not defensive and are keen to get it right. Our experience of talking to other Local Authorities who have been on a similar improvement journey is that 'getting to good' can take 3-5 years.
- We have the ambition, drive and shared commitment on what matters most to our children and young people, and we recognise this is the start of a tough and challenging 3-5 year improvement journey - but are looking to make a difference now.
- We have again listened to Ofsted's most recent feedback and in response have further honed our key priorities to ensure resource is focused on the right areas to make the biggest difference to children and young people.
- We intend to be able to evidence demonstrable improvements in our services over the coming weeks, ahead of Ofsted's next visit in the Autumn