



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

14 July 2021

Report Title:	Children and Young People's Service Ofsted Restart Visit Feedback
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
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Borough priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	x
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	x
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	x
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	x
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	x

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report to Cabinet provides an update on Children and Young People's Services Ofsted Restart Visit (May 2021).

2. Recommendations for Decision

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) To note the feedback from Ofsted

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 To share the feedback from Ofsted following the Restart Visit conducted in May 2021.

4. Background

- 4.1 In November 2019 Ofsted ILAC judged St Helens Children's Services to be Inadequate. As a consequence of this judgement the Secretary of State made St Helens Council the subject of formal intervention and an Intervention Manager was appointed. The Intervention Manager is a member of St Helens Children Improvement Board (CIB) and provides feedback to the Department for Education (DfE). The CIB has an Independent Chair who also provides monitoring reports to DfE.
- 4.2 Due to the Inadequate judgement, alongside the 6-monthly DfE Reviews, an authority would usually have several Ofsted Monitoring and Focused Visits to ascertain progress and as part of preparation for a full inspection. COVID-19 has impacted this timetable greatly. St Helens was the first authority to receive a virtual Focused Visit in Summer 2020.
- 4.3 As the second lockdown occurred, Ofsted announced a new framework to begin Restart Visits. This framework would cover three areas; Help and Protection, Children in Care and Care Leavers. The team of inspectors would also include an Education HMI.

- 4.4 In May 2021 Ofsted announced they would be undertaking a Restart Visit to St Helens. The visit was conducted online, detailed feedback was shared on the final day of the visit and covered a wider range than the framework. The official letter was published 2nd July 2021 and solely covers the Restart Framework. (Ofsted Restart Feedback - Appendix one).

5 Community Impact Assessment

- 5.1 A Community Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

6 Consideration of Alternatives

- 6.1 There are no alternative options related to this report.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The initial feedback from Ofsted Restart Visit found that St Helens knows itself well and the inspection team found what the authority told them they would find. Recognition was given to the workforce; how well staff know their children and all the work undertaken during the past year to keep our children safe.
- 7.2 The Inspectors acknowledged the changes made by the Local Authority (WOW) and how staff had responded and adapted well to these; feeling informed, valued and supported.
- 7.3 Recognition was given to the partnership work between schools, education, health and social care and the work undertaken to protect our vulnerable children and young people. Positive feedback was also received from our Care Leavers who shared how supported they had felt during the past year.
- 7.4 There were areas identified that require further improvement; most of these are contained within the Children's Improvement Plan (which is reported to CIB) and work continues to address these. Ofsted found inconsistencies within practice and whilst they noted cases of good work, they also shared cases where we could do better.
- 7.5 The revised Improvement Plan will capture what is working well, how are we assured and what needs to happen – this will continue to be submitted to CIB for monitoring, but it will also allow CIB to request deep dives into any areas they wish to have further assurance on.
- 7.6 The Improvement Plan will be a focus for the Heads of Service Improvement Journey/Ofsted Readiness fortnightly meeting which will provide a more comprehensive picture as feedback will be collated from a range of services and challenge given from an 'on the ground' perspective.
- 7.7 The next discussion with Ofsted is whether the authority will receive a focused visit or a full inspection regardless of the outcome Children's Services improvement journey continues and until then progress will continue to be reported to CIB and DfE.
- 7.8 The next DfE 6-month review will take place in August and this will provide a benchmark to evidence progress made since the Restart Visit.

8 Implications

8.1 Legal Implications

- 8.1.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.2.1 Social Value

8.2.1.1 Progress made through the improvement journey will impact greatly on children, young people and their family's quality of life

8.2.2 Sustainability and Environment

8.2.2.1 There are no sustainability and environmental impacts arising from this report.

8.2.3 Health and Wellbeing

8.2.3.1 Improving outcomes impact greatly upon children, young people, their families and staff. Ensuring St Helens is a great place to live and work provides a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

8.2.4 Equality and Human Rights

8.2.4.1 There are no direct impacts to Equality or Human Rights emerging from the improvement journey.

8.3 Customers and Resident

8.3.1 It is hoped by continuing the improvement journey the impact will be a positive one as more families receive support at an earlier point, children have greater aspirations and health outcomes improve greatly.

8.4 Asset and Property

8.4.1 There are no asset or property issues arising from this report.

8.5 Staffing and Human Resource

8.5.1 Training and development will be reviewed following Ofsted's feedback and adapted to target key areas. CIB have challenged the service to evidence the 'So What' following Audit findings; a work programme will be developed to support this.

8.6 Risks

8.6.1 The risk identified is not improving and failing our young people and Ofsted.

8.7 Finance

8.7.1 There are no direct financial implications emerging from the progress made as part of the improvement journey.

8.8 Policy Framework Implications

8.8.1 There are no policy framework implications.

9 Background papers

None

10 Appendices

10.1 Ofsted Restart Feedback Letter