



PAPER C

Purpose: For Noting

Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date	23 NOVEMBER 2017
Title	ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT – CHILDREN’S SERVICES
Report to	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the safeguarding children activity within Children’s Services during 2016/2017.

BACKGROUND

2. The journey of improvement, supported through the partnership with Hampshire County Council enabled Isle of Wight Children’s Services to move out of the inadequate judgement from Ofsted in 2012 to one of requires improvement to get to good in 2014. This journey of improvement continued during 2016/2017. The direction of travel remained clear, the resources were available and the ambition to get to good and outstanding was held by all staff.
3. Cabinet will recall that in 2014, Ofsted carried out an inspection of Isle of Wight Children’s Services’ safeguarding practice and associated arrangements for children in care and adoption services under the Single Inspection Framework. The outcome of that inspection was that the local authority’s performance was assessed as required improvement to get to good. This report provides an update on national developments, local performance and activity data and ongoing challenges during 2017.
4. The outcomes of the peer inspection by Hampshire County Council in March 2017 and a pilot thematic Ofsted inspection in August 2017 identified significant improvements within the service. The areas of strength and for improvement were articulated clearly and there continues to be focused action to address the areas identified for change.
5. The annual safeguarding report (Appendix A) provides a summary of the progress achieved across children’s social care through the delivery of the 2016/2017 service plan and quality improvement plan. Areas of strength and for improvement are identified in a recent letter from Ofsted following the pilot thematic inspection of

arrangements for children in need and child protection in August 2017 (Appendix B).

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

6. The annual safeguarding report provides evidence of how the Isle of Wight Council has continued to deliver an improved service to safeguard children while ensuring that all the resources available to the Island are used in the most effective way to achieve the Isle of Wight Council's priorities as articulated in the Corporate Plan.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OR PANEL VIEW

7. The annual safeguarding report for children's services will be considered at the Children's Scrutiny and Policy Committee following Cabinet.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

8. During 2016/2017 the service achieved the required corporate budget savings of £1 million. Nationally the rate of children subject to child protection and children in care continued to rise. Locally there had been an incremental decrease in the rate of children subject to child protection planning and children in care, however the numbers rate remained significantly above the national average and was higher than statistical neighbours.
9. The budget pressures remained in placements and the need to recruit and retain local in-house foster carers remained a priority.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The annual report provides evidence of how the Isle of Wight Council is fulfilling its statutory duties in terms of safeguarding children. This includes meeting the statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the director of Children's Services and the Cabinet member for Children's Services.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

11. The council, as a public body, is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
12. Under the Equality Act 2010 we had due regard to our equality duties when making decisions, reviewing services, undertaking projects, developing and reviewing policies during 2016/2017.

RECOMMENDATION

13. To note the annual safeguarding report for children's services.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

14. [Appendix A](#) - Isle of Wight Annual Safeguarding Report for Children's Services 2016/2017
15. [Appendix B](#) - Ofsted letter following the focused visit of Isle of Wight Children's Services (pilot)

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