

**From:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

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**To:** Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 22 November 2017

**Subject:** INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ILAC) FRAMEWORK

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Previous Pathway of Paper:** None

**Future Pathway of Paper:** None

**Electoral Divisions:** All

**Summary:** This paper provides an overview of the new inspection framework, Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services which replaces the Single Inspection Framework which was first used in 2013.

**Recommendation:** The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the content of this report.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The following report outlines the key aspects of the new inspection framework and how the new framework might impact on Kent.
- 1.2 This information can be used to help focus the Council's inspection preparation over the coming months.

## **2. Background and Context**

- 2.1 Ofsted will start contacting Local Authorities about self-evaluation and annual engagement opportunities over the coming months. Further details about the new framework should be published by Ofsted at the end of November 2017.
- 2.2 The first inspections will be announced during January 2018. The inspection framework will run alongside the Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs), which are referenced later within this report.

## **3. Key Themes of the New Inspection Framework**

- 3.1 The key themes of the new Inspection of Local Authority Childrens Services (ILAC) Framework are

### Self-Evaluation

There is no set format but each Local Authority should be able to answer three questions:

- a) What do we know about the quality and impact of social work practice with children and families within the authority?
- b) How do we know it?
- c) What are the plans to maintain or improve practice?

The self-evaluation should draw on existing documents and activity. It should also reflect 'business as usual' and not be created for inspection.

### Annual Engagement Meeting

The meeting is designed to be an open and honest conversation that discusses the self-evaluation, performance data and intelligence. It will consider any future focused visit and how this might support a Local Authority improvement plan. There will be no published outcome but Ofsted will write to the Director of Children's Services (DCS) summarising the discussion.

### Focused Visits

These will focus on a particular area of service or cohort of children. The focus would usually have been discussed at the annual engagement meeting. The focused visits will be used to evaluate and highlight good practice and areas of concern.

### Judgements and Report

There will be no graded judgements following the focused visits. There will be a narrative letter which outlines both strengths and areas of improvement. If serious concerns are identified, Ofsted will give the Local Authority unequivocal areas for priority action. It will also inform the decision as to whether Ofsted should undertake a standard or short inspection.

### Standard and Short Inspections

Ofsted will use small teams of inspectors who work closely together to ensure they spend less time reporting their findings to one another. They will seek to close lines of enquiry and reach robust judgements more quickly. Inspectors will spend most of their time looking at case files with social workers. They will talk to managers if their findings indicate a strength or concern that requires further triangulation. They will hold regular keep in touch meetings with the DCS.

- 3.6 Short inspections take place where a Local Authority was rated Good or Outstanding at its most recent Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspection and Ofsted have no reason to believe there has been a decline. Inspectors will look at whether the quality of practice has improved, been maintained or deteriorated. They will also consider the accuracy of the self-evaluation.

## **4. Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI)**

- 4.1 These inspections examine how local partners, including Local Authorities, police, probation, and health services, work together to protect children. The JTAs are carried out by inspectorates Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, HMI

Constabulary and HMI Probation. The JTAI and the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services will overlap and Kent could be subject to one or both of these inspections. The next theme for JTAI is believed to be children at risk of, and subject to, sexual abuse within the family.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The length and intensity of an inspection will be proportionate, based upon an authority's last inspection and the evidence provided within both the face to face meetings and the self-assessment.
- 5.2 As Kent has been recently inspected and received an overall grading of Good, it is likely that Kent will be an authority that is subject to the short inspection under the new inspection framework. In addition, Kent will also be subject to short focused visits, where the inspectorate will be concentrating on specific targeted areas. The notice that is given is likely to be very short and therefore Kent needs to remain focused on all areas of our services to children.
- 5.3 The expectation is that our self-assessment will be based primarily upon our management information including in-house team and service reporting and other activity, such as auditing, that assists us in understanding the strengths and areas of development of our services for children and young people in Kent. It is also worth noting that any data and/or information published on our website could be a source of information for inspectorate. It is proposed that a group is formed to look at the self-assessment process to ensure we are able to plan for the inspection.

## **6. Recommendation**

6.1 Recommendation: The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the content of this report.

## **7. Background Documents**

Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)  
<http://adcs.org.uk/inspection/article/inspection-of-local-authority-childrens-services-ilacs-ncasc17>

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