

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 14 July 2020

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency responses to children's mental health in East Sussex

Purpose: The report sets out the outcome of the joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency responses to children's mental health in East Sussex 24 – 28 February 2020 and the multi-agency action plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to note the findings of the inspection into the multi-agency responses to children's mental health in East Sussex which was published 14 April and the multi-agency action plan which has been developed to address the areas for development.

1 Background

1.1 This joint inspection was undertaken by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), the Care Quality Commission (Health), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (Police) and HMI Probation (YOT). This was a joint agency, three week inspection, with the inspectors on site from 24 to 28 February 2020. The inspection included an evaluation of the 'front door' and the effectiveness of practice and arrangements, in the different agencies, for identifying and managing risks of harm to children and young people. In particular, the inspection evaluated how agencies identify and respond to the inspection theme of children's mental health.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The outcome of the inspection was published 14 April and is attached at Appendix 1. The inspection letter does not include an overall judgement. It sets out the areas of strength across the partnership and areas for development.

2.2 The report includes positive feedback on the work of staff, leaders and key partners across the different partnerships in East Sussex, and the difference this is making to the lives of children, young people and families across East Sussex.

2.3 East Sussex was one of six local authority areas to be inspected under the deep dive area of mental health. Ofsted will publish a report later in the year which will pull together the findings from the six inspections and identify learning and good practice from all six inspections.

2.4 The report noted that:

- Partnership arrangements in East Sussex are well established and effective. Children's emotional well-being and mental health are a high priority in strategic planning. Service development directed through the East Sussex local transformation plan is delivering improving services for children and young people with mental health needs.

- Assessments of children's needs are of consistently good quality across a range of agencies within the partnership. They are comprehensive, consider history and demonstrate an in-depth understanding of emotional well-being and mental health needs.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to co-production with children and young people when implementing new or revised services. Leaders have continued to develop existing services to meet a greater range of children's emotional and well-being needs and have created new services to address emerging or lower levels of need. This work is supported by a highly effective Safeguarding Children Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board.

2.6 The inspection letter also identifies 18 areas for development, across the partnership. The letter sets out that the Director of Children's Services should prepare a written statement of proposed action responding to the findings outlined in the inspection letter and that this should be a multi-agency response setting out the actions for the partnerships and, where appropriate, individual agencies. A multi-agency action plan, attached at Appendix 2, has been developed in response and has been shared with the inspectors for review. The inspection letter and action plan will be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board and East Sussex Safeguarding Children's Board in July.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Despite the very challenging financial context, in partnership we have maintained a focus on children's emotional wellbeing and mental health and on the key priority outcome of keeping vulnerable people safe. The focus on children's emotional wellbeing and mental health continues to be a priority in our response and recovery from Covid19. Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the inspection report and the multi-agency action plan which has been developed to address the areas for development.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Appendix 1 Ofsted inspection letter
- Appendix 2 Multi-agency action plan