

Improvement Notice

To: Kingston Upon Hull City Council ('the Council')
The Guildhall
Alfred Gelder Street
Hull
HU1 2AA

This Improvement Notice is issued to (Kingston upon) Hull City Council (the Council) on 5 August 2022. This was done on the advice of the Children's Services Commissioner, who has also stepped down from his role, on the basis that children's social care services have improved enough since March 2020 to no longer require this level of scrutiny. The Council's children's social care services were identified as inadequate in the Ofsted inspection report published on 17 May 2019 and so this Improvement Notice should remain in place until sufficient evidence has been provided by Ofsted at reinspection.

1. This Notice is given to address all the areas for improvement identified in the report of the inspection of the Council's children's social care services published on 17 May 2019.
2. A particular focus should continue to be given to the areas for improvement recommended by the DfE-appointed Commissioner (the Commissioner) as follows:
 - a. Reducing reliance on agency staff.
 - b. Ongoing investment in training and development for frontline workers and newly qualified staff and team managers.
 - c. Joining up of services when children and young people move between agencies.
 - d. Ensuring timescales for assessments are met.
 - e. Communicating with and listening to the lived experience of service users and putting that at the core of all decision making. The expertise of families, knowledge about their children's needs and personal responsibilities need to be harnessed to support planning, progression and decision making.
 - f. Continue a relentless focus on the numbers of children in care ensuring the legacy issues are addressed so children can be moved on to alternative arrangements when the time is right.
3. To comply with this Notice, the following actions are required of the Council, working with its partner agencies ("partners") as identified by the Children Act 2004 (Section 11).

Intervention arrangements

4. The statutory direction issued to the Council under s.497A of the Education Act 1996, dated 16 March 2020, is revoked.
5. The Council will work with the Department for Education's intervention officials (the intervention officials) until some such time that the Secretary

of State is satisfied this is no longer required.

Improvement plan

6. The Council's improvement plan will deliver appropriate and sustainable improvement. The plan should cover the areas identified in the Ofsted report published on 17 May 2019.
7. To ensure there is clear evidence of progression:
 - a. the content of the improvement plan and a record of progress against it must be kept up to date;
 - b. the Council must ensure there is an improvement board with an independent chair in place to oversee implementation of the improvement plan and report to the improvement board on progress against the objectives in the plan, to a timetable agreed with the Department. It can commission updates from partners in order to do this;
 - c. reports to the improvement board should include data, analysis and recommendations supported by evidence of impact of improvements on the quality of practice and experience of children and families;
 - d. the Council should highlight those objectives which are slow to progress and highlight where contributions need to be strengthened; and
 - e. the views of frontline staff and of children and young people will be taken into consideration in the development of practice and standards.

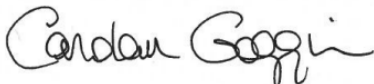
Department for Education reviews

8. Officials from the Department will undertake reviews of progress against the improvement agenda at least every six months and more regularly where appropriate.
9. These reviews may cover but are not exclusive to: culture; performance; leadership, management and governance; workforce and management oversight; early help; and multi-agency arrangements.
10. From time to time, the intervention officials may require that a diagnostic review or assessment of performance in a specific service area is undertaken by a local authority or other party agreed with the Department.
11. For any review or assessment, the Council must provide the person(s) conducting it with:
 - a. access to, and time with, staff and leadership;

- b. accurate and up to date data on performance and quality;
 - c. facilities to carry out the reviews;
 - d. access to case files, minutes of meetings, supervision records or any other relevant information.
12. Prior to any reviews, the Council should provide its own assessment of improvement. This may reflect, but is not limited to:
- a. progress against the improvement plan objectives;
 - b. staff surveys;
 - c. staff supervision and the quality of feedback.
13. Taking account of the measures set out in this improvement notice, the Council should aim for actions included in the improvement plan to be delivered by 31 December 2022 or sooner, where appropriate.

Failure to comply with this Improvement Notice by the assessment dates or poor progress:

14. Should the Council be unwilling or unable to comply with this improvement notice, or should ministers not be satisfied with the Council's progress at any stage, ministers may choose to invoke their statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the Council to enter into an appropriate arrangement to secure the improvements required in children's services.

Signed:  **Date:** 5 August 2022

Carolan Goggin
A senior civil servant in the Department for Education