

Improvement Notice

To: Liverpool City Council (the Council)
Cunard Building
Water Street
L3 1AH

This Improvement Notice is issued to Liverpool City Council (the council) in June 2023 following the judgement that children’s social care services are inadequate, as identified in the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) report published on 25 May 2023.

1. This Notice is given to address the areas of inadequacy as identified in the ILACS report dated 13-24 March 2023.
2. 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 10).

Adviser arrangements

3. The Secretary of State has chosen to appoint an adviser to provide advice to the Department and the council, working alongside the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities appointed Commissioners. The council will work with the Improvement Adviser for a minimum of 24 months, and until some such time that the Secretary of State is satisfied that the Improvement Adviser is no longer required.

Improvement plan

4. The council’s improvement plan will deliver appropriate and sustainable improvement. The plan should cover the areas identified in the Ofsted report of May 2023 as well as recommendations made by the Improvement Adviser appointed by the Department. The plan should be submitted to the Department for Education (“the Department”), by a date determined by the Improvement Adviser.
5. 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 it establishes and maintains an improvement board, which the council will be responsible for. The improvement board is to have an independent chair in place who will oversee the 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 services for children in need of help and protection;

- d. the council should highlight those objectives which are slow to progress and highlight where contributions need to be strengthened;
- 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

- 6. Officials or advisers from the Department will undertake reviews of progress against the improvement agenda at least every six months and more regularly where appropriate.
- 7. These reviews may cover, but are not exclusive to: culture; performance; leadership, management and governance; workforce and management oversight; arrangements at the front door/Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), early help; and multi-agency arrangements.
- 8. From time to time, the adviser 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.
- 9. 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.
- 10. 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.
- 11. Taking account of the measures set out in this Improvement Notice and the adviser's feedback, the council should aim for actions included in the improvement plan to be delivered by the end of May 2024 or sooner, where appropriate.

Improvement against the above measures will be assessed as follows:

- 12. The adviser will provide to the Department regular reports of progress or concern against the areas set out in this notice; improvement against the

Ofsted requirements; and any other such information relevant to the improvement journey including, but not limited to, feedback from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities appointed Commissioners.

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

13. 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MT', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Signed:

Date: 09/06/2022

Mark Taylor

A senior civil servant in the Department for Education