

<b>KIRKLEES HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING BOARD</b>
<b>MEETING DATE: 26/01/2017</b>
<b>TITLE OF PAPER: Children's Improvement Programme</b>
<p><b>1. Purpose of paper</b></p> <p>To bring in view the Children's Improvement Programme work to members of the Health &amp; Wellbeing Board and to ensure that priority activity is understood along with the key timescales. This programme of work requires members to ensure improvement work is linked and progress monitored through the recently established Improvement Board.</p> <p>The board are being asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help shape our local response to this key strategic issue</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Background</b></p> <p>A rigorous internal review of Family Support and Child Protection Services began in late 2015. This arose from a number of factors including a Safeguarding Board audit of practice carried out in August 2015.</p> <p>The consequent wholesale review included audits, case discussions, direct observations of practice and a number of external reviews. In summary, significant deficits were identified across the service that we recognise were systemic and cultural.</p> <p>In May 2016 Kirklees Cabinet endorsed a report which outlined the areas for improvement and a Development Plan which was put in place to address them.</p> <p>In September 2016, Ofsted carried out an unannounced inspection of Kirklees Council's Child Protection Services which occurred in month 7 of the above improvement journey. The four-week inspection focused on local services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers.</p> <p>Following the publication of its Single Inspection Framework report on 25th November, the report also highlighted a number of known concerns about standards of practice in Kirklees and gave the Council an overall judgement of 'inadequate' with separate judgements in the following areas:</p> <p>Help and Protection – Inadequate  LAC – Inadequate  Adoption – Requires Improvement  Care Leavers – Requires Improvement  Leadership Management and Governance– Inadequate  Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) – Inadequate</p> <p>Ofsted have made 27 recommendations (see attached Appendix) of which our improvement plan will be based.</p> <p>The Secretary of State issued a direction notice and appointed a Commissioner to work with the Council until the end of March 2017. Following this the Commissioner will make a recommendation to the Minister about the future of Children's Services in Kirklees. The Council's task is to satisfy her that we have the leadership and management capacity and skill to make the changes that are required. The Commissioner will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make recommendations for the immediate improvement of Children's Social Care, including additional support required.</li> <li>• Review our leadership and management capability and capacity to drive the changes we need.</li> <li>• Make a recommendation to the Secretary of State about whether alternative arrangements would be the most effective way of achieving long-term improvement.</li> </ul>

### **3. Proposal**

The Council and Children's Services fully recognise that delivering the level of complex change needed will require us to have a clear programme in place. The work that needs to be done is extensive and complex, with a clear requirement to deliver in close collaboration with statutory and non-statutory partners, manage numerous dependencies and deliver the required improvements within a financial envelope that is affordable for the Council and its partners.

In order to manage this large and complex scope of work, with a clear programme of work split into the following four key priorities, each consisting of one or more projects;

Priority 1 - Stabilising and supporting the workforce

Priority 2 - Developing the MASH/Front Door

Priority 3 - Improving Placement provision through the Kirklees Sufficiency Strategy

Priority 4 - Embedding a Performance Culture

Each of these projects, in turn, will deliver against multiple recommendations from the Ofsted report as well as incorporating the Kirklees Safeguarding Board Action Plan and the Ad Hoc Scrutiny actions. It is also important for us to understand how each priority links to wider transformation projects that the Council is undertaking, such as delivering services Digitally by Design, developing a Mobile and Agile workforce, undertaking Organisational Development activity and adopting an outcome based, intelligence-led approach.

#### **Governance**

Governance for the Children's Improvement Programme is being politically led, with clear links into the Leadership Management Team and Cabinet via Councillor Erin Hill, Portfolio Holder for Family Support and Child Protection. The programme also has strong cross-party support, with clear commitment from all group leaders to support the improvement process.

We will have work stream plans for each of our key priorities that include outcomes, benefits, risks and mitigation, budget, resources and costs and performance measures. Each plan will be linked in to the governance structure and provide regular progress reports and a process for risk and issue escalation. The governance arrangements will support a cycle of accountability that will be clearly measurable, owned and evidenced.

The governance arrangements will be underpinned by a reporting cycle that ensures detailed progress reports against the priorities and Ofsted recommendations are provided. The frequency is:

- summary report including risks, issues and decisions escalated monthly to the DCS via the Operational Group
- dashboard and performance progress report and escalated risks and issues are considered monthly by Improvement Board.

We will:

- allocate appropriate resources to deliver the improvements and have a process in place for ensuring the action plan is owned politically, strategically, corporately and operationally.
- have clear governance and accountability arrangements in place that ensure strong leadership and management lead the improvements.
- have a reporting cycle that underpins the governance arrangements to evidence improvement is being made.
- have performance measures in place that set targets and tolerance levels, demonstrate impact and clearly articulate outcomes for children and young people.

- have a financial strategy that sets out the costs of the improvement work and recognises the financial pressures these place on the council as a whole.
- have a communication strategy and plan that ensures that staff and partners are engaged in the improvement planning and delivery and understand what needs to be done.
- The governance and accountability arrangements for the Children's Improvement Programme are aligned to the governance arrangements for New Council Board, and other key partnership arrangements so where there are interdependencies issues can be unblocked.

### **Improvement Plan**

Our improvement plan will be linked to 3 of the draft seven Kirklees partnership outcomes:

- Children in Kirklees have the best start in life
- People in Kirklees feel safe and are safe/ protected from harm
- People in Kirklees have aspiration and achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong learning

The following overarching themes will bring together a high level plan for what we are aiming to achieve, how we will do this and how we will know we are succeeding. A clear action plan will identify a key action owner and success measures for the next 12 months;

- Leadership, governance & management accountability
- Child and Family Experience
- Working in Partnership
- Quality of Practice

### **4. Financial Implications**

The Council has already made additional funding available to Children's Services to support improvement activity and will continue to make targeted investments, in line with the Improvement Plan, to improve the outcomes being delivered for children in Kirklees.

Finance capacity will be pivotal to ensure that there is a clear and structured financial strategy that sets out the costs associated with realising the ambitions of the improvement plan.

A financial strategy is currently being developed in conjunction with Debbie Hogg, Assistant Director for Finance and Performance, that sets out the costs of the improvement work and recognises the financial pressures these place on the council as a whole. The Council's revised Medium Term Financial Plan recognises that there are considerable financial pressures currently being borne by the council and additional support requirements need to be fed into the budget process for 2017/18.

### **5. Sign off**

Gill Ellis  
Director for Children's Services

### **6. Next Steps**

A draft of the Improvement Plan will go to the next Improvement Board on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017 for approval and then to Council Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> March before submitted to Ofsted on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

A post Ofsted workshop for Council officers is planned for 24<sup>th</sup> January but it is envisaged that this will quickly be followed up by a 'Getting to Good' seminar for partners.

The Commissioner is due to report her findings to the Minister at the end of March 2017.

## **7. Recommendations**

Members of the Health & Wellbeing Board to have in view the work of the Children's Improvement Programme and ensure the following;

- Cascade Children's Improvement Newsletter
- to look at the Improvement plan once disseminated and feedback any amendments to the Improvement Programme Manager
- to identify and understand which actions relate to areas of work linked to Health & Wellbeing Board
- Pay particular attention to the 27 Ofsted recommendations (see attached Appendix) within own organisation

## **8. Contact Officer**

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# Putting Children First in Kirklees

## Recommendations

- 1.** Take urgent action to ensure that all children currently being provided with a service are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.
- 2.** Ensure that all staff, including agency staff, are supported to have more consistent relationships with children and to deliver high-quality services through manageable caseloads, induction, supervision and training.
- 3.** Ensure that concerns identified in the dispute resolution process are dealt with promptly and comprehensively, including by independent reviewing officers and child protection chairs.
- 4.** Improve the timeliness and quality of response to complaints from children and their families, including disseminating the learning.
- 5.** Ensure that robust performance data drives improvements in the service.
- 6.** Fully embed the quality assurance framework across children's services.
- 7.** Ensure that the procured electronic recording system is fit for purpose and supports improved practice across the whole service
- 8.** Improve the oversight and challenge of the corporate parenting board by ensuring the availability of robust performance data, and that children's views influence the focus and decision making of the board.
- 9.** Ensure that all assessments and plans focus on reducing risk and improving children's outcomes, with clearly defined timescales for actions, responsibilities and regular review.
- 10.** Ensure that assessments consider the needs of all children in a household and that records of this work are unique to each child.
- 11.** Ensure that the children and young people are visited within the timescales identified in the plans and that, when appropriate, children are seen alone.
- 12.** Ensure that all partner agencies are sufficiently involved in the multi-agency safeguarding hub information sharing and decision making, and that thresholds are consistently applied.
- 13.** Ensure that the services for children who are subject to domestic abuse give robust consideration to safeguarding issues. This is to include consideration and recording of risks identified in multi-agency risk assessment conference meetings.
- 14.** Ensure that child protection strategy meetings involve relevant agencies, that plans are made together and that actions are recorded.



- 15.** Ensure that all child protection conferences are held to statutory timescales and that planning meetings, including core groups and child in need meetings, are held as required.
- 16.** Ensure that the responses to pre-birth concerns are timely and robust.
- 17.** Develop edge of care services and ensure that timely support is available in a crisis.
- 18.** Ensure that, when children need to become looked after, this is actioned promptly, to include improving the quality of pre-proceedings letters to parents, clear contingency planning and ensuring robust monitoring of cases in pre-proceedings.
- 19.** Review all arrangements when children are placed with parents to ensure that these are appropriate and that children are not unnecessarily made subject to a care order.
- 20.** Increase the availability of local placements to ensure that children and young people do not need to be placed at a distance from their communities.
- 21.** Ensure that children looked after have access to an independent visitor when they need one.
- 22.** Continue to improve adoption services for children, to include improving the timeliness of decision making, recording a clear rationale for decisions made and using the learning when adoption placements breakdown.
- 23.** Improve care leaver support, through ensuring that children all have a personal advisor from their 16th birthday and that they have sufficient support to live independently.
- 24.** Robustly address the high rate of care leavers who are not in employment, education or training.
- 25.** Improve access to therapeutic and mental health support for children looked after and care leavers.
- 26.** Improve the quality of pathway plans to ensure that they underpin high-quality support packages.
- 27.** Ensure that there is a robust needs analysis to underpin strategic planning and commissioning of services for children.

